

Syracuse University Institutional Effectiveness (IE)

Assessment Leadership Institute (ALI)

ALI Inception

In May 2019, the IE Assessment Working Team sponsored its first Assessment Leadership Institute (ALI), a \$750 mini grant opportunity for faculty in the academic program assessment role.

Inspired by a similar initiative at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, the overarching goals in creating the ALI were to:

- Enhance student learning outcomes assessment momentum
- Support program-level assessment as a faculty-owned and faculty-driven process

Curriculum

The two-day curriculum was developed around:

- Applicants' expressed interests
- The AWT's interest in furthering collaborative curriculum mapping efforts, encouraging use of facilitation techniques to build faculty engagement, and creating opportunities for faculty to spend time with and learn from faculty guests engaged in excellent assessment work

Agendas for both days are provided on the reverse page.

Inaugural Cohort

Eight participants from five schools and colleges participated in the two-day Assessment Leadership Institute and formulated 2019-20 action plans for their academic programs.

Learning Goals

- Gain assessment knowledge and skills
- Identify facilitation techniques to guide faculty conversations about student learning outcomes assessment
- Develop a sense of agency to inform program-level decision-making

Impact

In final reflections offered nearly a year later, participants indicated that the ALI:

- Provided time to reflect, clarify approaches, identify areas of improvement, and create a plan for the academic year
- Strengthened their knowledge of assessment strategies and tools
- Increased their comfort level with program-level assessment, resulting in higher confidence to engage with their faculty
- Afforded them an opportunity to learn from assessment colleagues in other schools/colleges, which sparked new ideas for their own practice

In the spring semester, one participant published an article based on her work.

Grant Expectations

- Attend the ALI on May 21 and 22, 2019 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- By the end of the ALI, draft an action plan to be implemented during the 2019-20 academic year
- Create a poster for the 2020 One University Assessment Poster Session detailing action plan implementation (postponed)
- Provide a final reflection on experience, progress, and impact of participation (May 2020)

Participant 2019-20 Action Plans

Action plans varied and included rubric development, curriculum mapping activities, redesign of the capstone experience, faculty coaching, and student engagement in the assessment process. Some encountered roadblocks, particularly in light of campus events during the academic year. Despite setbacks, indications are that these participants will continue to move forward with their plans in the future.

- Engage instructor team and develop strategies to help students improve receptive skills so that they could demonstrate better results
- Create a four-year assessment cycle plan, rubrics, and a program exit survey
- Develop new course learning objectives and redesign of capstone experience
- Engage part-time faculty to enhance awareness of student learning outcomes and how their courses align and develop resources for them
- Provide coaching to faculty in rubric development and increase the number of courses that use rubrics to address time constraints and burden of grading
- Construct graduate comprehensive exam rubric and share with students to clarify expectations; hold focus groups resulting in student representation on faculty search committee, a student survey, and increased collaboration between doctoral students and faculty
- Develop with and use course rubrics for equity and agency for undergraduate students

Agendas

Day 1

Topic	Timeframe	Outcome by Timeframe's End
Introductions	8:45-9:15 a.m.	Shared who we are, where we're from, and our assessment story
Ground Rules	9:15-9:30 a.m.	Established shared expectations for the next two days
Facilitation	9:30-10:15 a.m.	Identified strategies for engaging faculty in assessment through collaboration and facilitation
Break	10:15-10:30 a.m.	
Curriculum Mapping	10:30-11:45 a.m.	Participated in a collaborative mapping process considering facilitation strategies and questions of program coherence
Lunch	Noon-1 p.m.	
Conversation with Anne Mosher	1-2 p.m.	
Criteria	2:15-3:15 p.m.	Examined how to establish meaningful criteria for selected measures
Reflection and Action Planning	3:15-4:15 p.m.	Developed a first draft of your 2019-20 action plan
Minute Paper	4:15-30 p.m.	Provided day 1 feedback via the minute paper

Day 2

Topic	Timeframe	Outcome by Timeframe's End
Ground Rules and Unanswered Questions	8:45-9 a.m.	Reviewed the ground rules and addressed any unanswered questions from the day before
Rubrics and Conversation with Jonna Gilfus	9-11:45 a.m. (with break in between)	Considered the use of rubrics at the course and program level and evaluated an existing rubric using the Stevens & Levi criteria
Lunch	Noon-1 p.m.	
Student Engagement	1-1:30 p.m.	Identified strategies for engaging students in different aspects of the assessment process
Action Planning & Presentation Prep	1:30-3 p.m.	Completed 2019-20 action plan and presentation prep
Action Plan Presentations	3-4:15 p.m.	Presented 2019-20 action plans
Debrief & Minute Paper	4:15-4:30 p.m.	Debriefed on the institute and provided day 2 feedback via the minute paper

Final Comments After Day 2

- “Great program. Lots of resources. Lots of individual attention.”
- “I love the small size of the group and the fact that it’s a two-day event (to sleep on things and literally come back). I learned a lot about SU, and more about other schools and disciplines. What a supportive group! I go home more confident and with a certain goal in mind, both for our students, our program, and my personal research. I could not ask for more!”
- “I thought it was a fantastic session - beautifully structured with balance and rigor. I found all the content very helpful and liked the guest speaker contributions. I appreciated the notes taken throughout the sessions that were posted on the wall as I found myself referencing them frequently. I also really liked the organization of the workbooks.”
- “Thank you for organizing it - I feel more confident and comfortable doing assessment.”
- “Thank you for provocative discussions with a variety of thoughtful colleagues and a structure of important questions.”
- “The workshop was helpful in introducing new ideas and processes related to assessment. It was great to share ideas and resources with each other. The process of creating a course matrix was very helpful and reassuring.”
- “This was outstanding! I am very thankful that you selected me to participate.”

During and After the ALI

- Participants were provided with workbooks each day that included content, lists of relevant resources, and notes/action planning space.
- The AWT connected with participants as they implemented their plans during the academic year, and the group came together at the end of the fall semester to share progress with one another.
- The grant award was split with \$500 applied to a participant’s research account or through payroll after the institute and the remaining amount upon completion of the final reflection in May 2020.