The inaugural Showcase on Assessment took place on Wednesday, January 23, 2013, from 1-5 p.m. in the Plaster Student Union. The goals of this event were to “celebrate the approaches and perspectives of faculty and staff involved with the assessment of student learning at Missouri State University” and “to promote open conversations on our campus about assessment.” Based on the feedback collected after the event, it is clear that these goals were met.

After several months of planning, twelve sessions were presented by 26 members of the University representing all six academic colleges, the School of Agriculture, academic advising, and Student Affairs. The sessions highlighted assessment practices utilized across these areas of campus and provided information on the Higher Learning Commission, the Quality Initiative Project (QIP) Public Affairs Assessment, and the revised General Education Program assessment plan. In addition to these concurrent sessions, the Showcase culminated with a keynote presentation by assessment expert, Dr. Jean Henscheid, from Portland State University. Dr. Henscheid shared her perspective on the simple and complex sides of assessment. She also emphasized the importance and necessity of viewing assessment as a method for sharing strengths and weaknesses openly with colleagues to improve the learning process for all students at the University.

Showcase Attendance
- Total number of recorded unique attendees – 59
- Average number of attendees per concurrent session timeframe – 45
- Average number of attendees per individual concurrent session – 11

Showcase Feedback
Word of mouth feedback about this first Showcase on Assessment was very positive. Several people praised the individual sessions provided by faculty and staff on our campus, and positive comments were also made about the Showcase marketing materials. Attendees at the Showcase were asked to complete a feedback form, and the following is an overview of their responses:

1. What did you gain from the concurrent session(s) you attended?
   - Information specific to the session topics (i.e. advising, grading, HLC/QIP, etc.)
   - Pros and cons of different assessment methods
   - Practical advice on department and classroom assessment
   - Insight into how departments handle assessment and improve their processes
   - Great insight on grading papers for useful feedback and student learning
   - Further knowledge of assessment committee changes on divisional learning domains
   - Better idea of what others are doing to meet the challenge
   - Good ideas for formative and diagnostic assessment
   - Better understanding of assessment terminology
   - New ideas about improving student interaction
   - Some good ideas/examples of diagnostic and formative assessment to incorporate into my curricula.
     Also, I found the session on HLC and QIP to be very informative.
   - Assessment and the direction Student Affairs is going
   - I gained valuable assessment techniques

2. What did you hope or expect to gain from the session(s) you attended?
   - I expected practical advice but not as good as I got
   - Ideas for how to improve our processes
   - Identified samples from different colleges
   - More ideas about assessment from other departments
   - Using assessment in Student Affairs
• Background of the Quality Initiative Project (QIP)
• Specific information on assessment for new General Education Goals
• Advice for how to assess students in a step-by-step process
• Ideas for program evaluation
• I hoped to have a better idea of how to simplify and improve our department’s assessment process and my own grading
• How to properly conduct assessment

3. What did you gain from the keynote presentation?
   • Keep assessment simple
   • A breakthrough in insight!
   • New perspective to bring to my department and my classroom
   • Great message in integrated learning and program assessment
   • Interest in checking out some of the available resources
   • Don’t be afraid of assessment, and have fun with it
   • Updates on what’s going on with assessment outside of our campus
   • Learned about a few of the latest developments in higher education and assessment
   • Practice integrative learning and assessment – get everyone on the same page
   • This was a motivating, entertaining, and overall great presentation
   • Integrative learning is the way to go (for now), and all the best assignments boil down to asking students, "what do you think?" I like the second statement.
   • Information about LUMINA was interesting – looking at what those with AA degrees should know/skills possessed

4. What did you hope or expect to gain from the keynote presentation?
   • Philosophical ideas about assessment
   • What assessment is; how to conduct it; the purpose, etc.
   • More specific content, examples, and processes for assessment
   • Help in implementation or “how to” advice (i.e., insight into techniques/methods)
   • Examples of effective assessment
   • Ideas, guidelines, and best practices from other universities on how to assess General Education programs so I could have help designing an assessment for my Gen Ed course
   • Concrete ideas about how to do assessment better . . . a justification
   • How to engage students

5. What was something that stood out to you about this showcase?
   • Participation/attendance rates (some thought high, some thought low)
   • Chance to interact with other departments and colleges
   • Excellent keynote speaker
   • New view of assessment for me
   • Organization of ideas (some thought this was succinct, some thought this was circular)
   • Great way to open up conversation about assessing learning so faculty can learn too
   • The question, “Are we jumping into assessment projects without doing a thorough review of the literature?”,
   • The focus on MSU’s numbers on assessment and not outside sources
   • The level of support for general education and program assessment
   • Ask Students, "What do you think?" Know your students. What are their personal interests, learning styles, and teacher satisfaction? Competence is testable only through demonstration of knowledge.
   • The quality of sessions. There are a lot of great assessment activities going on at MSU.
   • It was great to have MSU offices share what they were doing to improve their offices
6. What could have improved this showcase?
   - More advanced notice and better advertising
   - More sessions that appeal to a broader faculty audience (including non-teaching faculty)
   - Identification of where MSU is in the assessment process; More core message
   - Attendance
     - The time – it is nearly impossible to take four hours out of one’s teaching schedule to attend after classes have begun. It needs to occur before classes begin.
   - More hands-on activities; Handouts or access to Power Point slides
   - Change schedule and registration process (would like Showcase to occur before classes)
   - More direct expertise on General Education courses – who are the experts in that area?
   - Have a keynote speaker with more concrete/practical advice
   - Better quality concurrent sessions. Two of the sessions I attended were of little substance . . . seemed to be old information . . . didn’t really address how they used data to make improvements.

7. What topics related to assessment would you like to present at MSU?
   - Critical thinking exercises
   - Integrated learning
   - Assessment basics
   - Turning general grades into performance assessment tasks & rubrics
   - Program assessment and classroom assessment
   - How to engage students in social groups about topics that are of interest to them. Design projects for students to demonstrate their talents.

The Assessment Council Chair, Dr. Bob Willenbrink, also offered some insightful feedback on the Showcase on Assessment in his blog entry at http://blogs.missouristate.edu/coal/. In this report, he stated, “At [the Showcase on Assessment’s] conclusion, I am convinced that we are on the cusp of great success in the development and implementation of solid assessment plans University-wide.”

Plans for Improvement
- We have already added handouts and slides to our website as requested by several attendees
- Increase attendance by sending more personal invitations and advertising in more areas
- Provide refreshments at the beginning of the event rather than toward the end
- Cater better to presenter needs (i.e. bottled water, internet access, trouble-shooting for technology issues)
- Have a call for proposals for presenters to submit descriptions/titles in advance of event
- Provide more specific information to keynote if arranging separate consultations with units