

**MAY 2021**

# ANNUAL REPORT



**PREPARED BY**

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# UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT STEERING COMMITTEE



## INTRODUCTION

During the 2020-2021 Academic Year, the University Assessment Steering Committee met monthly through virtual gatherings from October through May. The following report showcases the accomplishments of the team this year. Our accomplishments included revising the committee guidelines, expanding collaboration efforts and membership, creating a strategic plan, hosting the virtual state-wide Assessment in Action Conference, awarding assessment mini grants, and awarding the Assessment Excellence Awards.

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# UASC GUIDELINES 2020-2026

The existing guidelines for the committee expired in 2020. In 2019-2020, a team started to work on the revisions and that work continued into the 2020-2021 academic year. The updated guidelines provide a revised purpose statement approved by the UASC, clear activities aligned with the purpose statement, and clear sub-committees to carry out the activities. A timeline of annual activities as well as a membership are also included. The core goals of the committee are to provide recognition, inform and education for the campus community, provide support, and engage the campus through learning and development. The new sub-committees are:

- **Recognition**
- **Information & Communication**
- **Support**
- **Engagement**

## UASC PURPOSE

The purpose of UASC is to collaborate with campus stakeholders in the curricular and co-curricular environment to develop and support a culture of assessment for continuous improvement with an emphasis on student learning outcomes. A periodic and university-wide assessment of programs, led and supported by UASC, can help to improve the educational experience and supports WMU's departments with accreditation where possible. The UASC aids campus community members in developing assessment in their classes, programs, and colleges. Acknowledging that some fields are subject to external accreditation, the UASC seeks to align assessment, accreditation, and program review processes.







# EXPANDING COLLABORATION

## BROADENING OUR MEMBERSHIP

Historically, a small executive team consisting of permanent members (Ciji Heiser, Dave Reinhold, Karen Stokes Chapo, and Tonya Dean) the chair and vice-chair of the UASC met monthly to prepare an agenda for the larger committee. As the 2020-2021 chair, Ciji Heiser worked with the existing executive team and the larger committee to **broaden the membership and better reflect the institution**. To this end, a representative from OneWMU, the Office of Diversity & Inclusion, Western Essential Studies, and the past-chair were invited to become permanent members of the executive team.

The leadership of the UASC alternates each year between a representative from an Academic Affairs or program area and a Learner Support or Student Affairs program area. In a typical year, finding a chair and vice chair for the coming year does not present as a significant challenge. This year, however, securing individuals who accepted the nomination for incoming chair and vice chair was an ongoing challenge. Early on in the year, the committee identified four nominees, one accepted. The committee voted on a vice chair from Academic Affairs, but due to multiple conflicts and consistently being unavailable during both executive team and UASC committee meetings, that individual stepped down. This required the committee to solicit a second round of nominations late in the year. The nominee that rejected the nomination did so due to workload and adjusting to the pandemic. In April, we secured an incoming chair, Kristal Ehrhardt. Four individuals were for nominated for vice chair from Learner Support or Student Affairs, and initially all four declined, citing workload. After much discussion, and the development of a supportive infrastructure for the sub-committees, Karen Stokes Chapo will be the incoming vice chair.



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# ASSESSMENT IN ACTION CONFERENCE

## ANNUAL WMU OPPORTUNITY

The 11th Annual WMU Assessment in Action Conference took place virtually on Friday, April 9. The conference theme was “using data for continuous improvement so that all may learn”. This theme was chosen based on the data collected from the culture of assessment reports showing that this was an area identified as a place for growth and improvement.

For the **first time, we opened attendance to all higher education institutions in the state of Michigan** to share resources and to start to build collaboration with colleagues across the state. There were **92 people** who attended the conference representing **13 different institutions** from across the state. The conference opened with a panel discussion with special guest assessment professionals Dr. Zebulun Davenport (West Chester University), Dr. Sara Finney (James Madison University), Dr. Ciji Heiser (WMU, moderator) and Dr. Vicki Wise (Oregon State University) who discussed their insights and ideas regarding using data for continuous improvement. We offered 9 different sessions throughout the day on assorted topics around outcomes assessment and student success. For more information:  
Conference proceedings: [https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/assessment\\_day/](https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/assessment_day/)  
Session recordings: <https://wmich.edu/assessment/2021>

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# ASSESSMENT MINI GRANTS

The UASC awarded 9 assessment mini grants for \$1000 to WMU faculty and staff for research on assessment that advances student learning and program quality. We were not able to provide funding for the Assessment Fellows Grants this year due to budgetary changes and so the mini grants were provided instead to continue to provide research support but on a smaller scale. Grant recipients are listed below.

Awardees will be asked to share a report with the results of their projects by July 16, 2021, and to participate in a panel discussion at the 2022 Assessment in Action Conference to share more about their ongoing project work.

## GRANT RECIPIENTS

- Adrienne Fraaza (Office of Student Transitions) and Ewa Urban (University College)
- Aamir Hasan (Haenicke Institute for Global Education) and Eric Archer (Educational Leadership, Research and Technology)
- Brian Gogan (Department of English)
- Ciji Heiser (Division of Student Affairs)
- Ciji Heiser (UASC, chair) and Karen Stokes Chapo (Office of Institutional Effectiveness)
- Janet Hahn (School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs, B.S. in Healthcare Services and Sciences program)
- Kourtney Bakalyar (Department of Psychology) and Katie Easley (Student Success Services, University College)
- Michele McGrady (School of Interdisciplinary Health Programs, Integrated Holistic Health and Wellness minor program)
- Megan Slayter and Jeremy Blair (School of Theatre and Dance)





# ASSESSMENT EXCELLENCE AWARDS

## ANNUAL WMU OPPORTUNITY

The UASC Assessment Excellence Individual award went to two candidates in 2021. The committee chose to award co-winners Adrienne Fraaza, (Office of Student Transitions), and Amanda Karsten, (Department of Psychology), as they could not decide on one winner as they were both so deserving. In the nomination of Fraaza, it was indicated that she has made multi-faceted contributions to improve the first year seminar course and curriculum. She was instrumental in implementing CliftonStrengths for Students and continues to work to improve the students' experiences and outcomes in FYS. In the nomination for Karsten, it was shared that she has been the driving force behind creating and implementing the first formal assessments in the Psychology hybrid Master's program. She has created and sustained multiple methods to assess the practicum work of the master's program students and has used the data to make significant improvements in student learning. One of the milestone achievements resulting from her assessment work is the increase in the international certification first time pass rate which has gone up from 55% in 2017, (10% below the national average), to 90% in 2019.

The 2021 UASC Assessment Excellence Collaboration award went to Katie Easley (Student Success Services, University College) and the Gateways to Completion Project team. According to the nomination materials, the team has used assessment data to address achievement gaps for historically marginalized students by focusing on inequitable outcomes in WMU course success data in regard to gender, ethnicity, Pell eligibility and first-generation status. Using the data, they have transformed 6 courses with more in the works, and through this work they have positively impacted approximately 15,000 undergraduate students during the past 5 years. Their work has improved pedagogy and student retention while strengthening the culture of student success at WMU.