Assessment Awards

The Office of Assessment hosts a biannual celebration to recognize the dedication and hard work of those collecting, using, and learning about assessment. The event started in 2016 with a breakfast to say thank you to those who have made program assessment successful. These individuals show they care about student learning through the ways they engage in assessment. The biannual celebration is an opportunity for the Office of Assessment to recognize these individuals and to thank staff, faculty, and others for their commitment to assessment and excellence in the previous school year. In 2018, the Office of Assessment hosted a come and go celebration. Read below for more information about award winners.

A group of faculty enjoying the 2016 Assessment Thank You Breakfast.
Assessment Innovator

The Award for Assessment Innovator recognizes individuals in programs that have adopted new processes to improve their assessment. This award goes to individuals and leaders who have sought out best practices in assessment in their field and implemented it in their program with zest and creativity.

2018 Winner: School of Arts, Technology, and Emerging Communications

In 2017-2018, the School of Arts, Technology, and Emerging Communications (ATEC) went through a curriculum redesign, piloted calibration of grades in one course, and began developing structures for a program electronic portfolio. Moving away from course assignments toward program ePortfolios as evidence of student learning is a shift in conversation about assessment in this School. In addition, each pathway in the School now has distinct learning outcomes, created through broad based faculty involvement. In fall of
2018, ATEC will continue their promotion of assessment as they expand their conversations on ePortfolios and alignment of curriculum to all pathways.

2018 Winner: Literature Subcommittee

At that time, in 2016-2017 Literary Studies (then named) faculty recognized that it was not clear to students how to progress through the program. A subcommittee of Sean Cotter, Charles Hatfield, Jessica C. Murphy, and Pat Michaelson met spring 2016. They looked at old reports, past proposed curriculum changes, external evaluation, and survey data, along with external examples and research, before proposing a new curriculum proposal that makes their curriculum more transparent and coherent. The subcommittee created a mapping of courses toward three program goals that has shifted the conversation on assessment from course level to track level. This is a significant shift. Their proposal for a revised degree plan has been followed by revisions of other Humanities curricula and generated a pilot project of calibration scoring between faculty. The new curriculum is being implemented in fall of 2018. We look forward to the results and impact on student learning.

2016 Winners: Dr. Bob Stillman & Dr. Shayla Holub

In 2016, we had joint award winners for the Award for Assessment Innovator. Drs. Stillman and Holub had a collaborative process that has resulted in meaningful changes at the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences.

Dr. Bob Stillman designed a clear, easy-to-understand chart that links student learning outcomes to course changes and improvements. He created this chart after hearing about all that faculty were already doing in “closing the loop” or using collected data to make changes, but the assessment reports were simply not capturing this information. He shared this chart with all the programs in his school to help them think about assessment. His hope was that this chart would act as a trigger for individuals to think about assessment and improvement.

Dr. Shayla Holub has been intentionally thinking about assessment in her program for some time. In 2014, her program redesigned its curriculum and learning outcomes. 2014 was also the first year our current Office of Assessment gave feedback about learning outcomes. Dr. Holub was eager to learn about assessment processes and best practices from other institutions and programs. We named Dr. Holub our 2016 Assessment Innovator because she took the map Dr. Stillman designed and made it a meaningful tool for her programs. She has tracked and summarized course improvements and
changes through this chart. In addition, she was her school’s representative in a meeting about assessment and accreditation where she summarized the processes for the entire school and emphasized the importance of continuous improvement through using assessment. It is clear that due to her leadership, assessment is meaningful and useful for her programs.

Assessment Champion

The Award for Assessment Champion recognizes an individual who is an advocate for meaningful assessment to improve student learning at UT Dallas. The Assessment Champion is someone who both recognizes the importance of assessment to learning and encourages those in his or her sphere of influence to participate in meaningful assessment.

2018 Winner: Dr. Julie Haworth

Dr. Haworth, Director in BS Marketing Program, has successfully created a dynamic blend of academic assessment data and engaging service learning to create a truly excellent and rewarding program. Her devotion to the overall academic experience through Social Marketing greatly not only enhances the student’s community service experience, but also has lead to engaging data and analysis for Marketing Analytics: data that is being used to improve and modify the experience for the undergraduate student.

2016 Winner: Dean Bruce Novak

Dean Bruce Novak received the 2016 Assessment Champion award. He has successfully engaged his faculty, program heads, and departments so that they have greater participation in meaningful assessment. Upon realizing the importance of faculty-led participation on assessment, he eagerly attended workshops presented by the Office of Assessment and encouraged conversations about assessment in his school, the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. He is enthusiastic about assessment and has corralled those in his communities to learn more about it. In the summer of 2015, he held daily meetings to talk about assessment and held each program in his school accountable for having robust assessment processes in place. He has created a structure for accountability and efficiency for assessment in his school. The dramatic improvement in the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and its engagement with assessment are a direct result of Dean Novak’s leadership.
Excellence in Assessment

The Excellence in Assessment Program Award will recognize outstanding assessment programs at UT Dallas for their progress in developing and applying evidence of outcomes as part of ongoing evaluation and improvement. For academic programs, the award encourages programs to showcase their achievements in student learning and exhibit their innovations in curriculum, learning design, and assessment. The award also promotes promising practices in curriculum and assessment. For administrative and support programs and units, the award promotes collecting meaningful data for assessment and using it to improve their programs, processes, and/or operations.

2018 Winners: The Department of Bioengineering

The faculty in the Department of Bioengineering in the Erik Jonsson School of Engineering and Computer Science has been intentional with their curriculum alignment and development since the beginning of the program in 2010. Student learning assessment is built into the fabric of how the program functions. Each instructor submits his or her assessment data after each semester. After the information is collected, the department meets together two times a year to discuss the results and make intentional changes to help student learning. Changes in the past include adding a prerequisite assessment to determine which students were struggling with mathematical concepts to help the department improve student learning by creating new interventions. This is only one example of how the department has collected, analyzed, and used their assessment data. Whenever there is a curriculum change from this program it is based on collected data on student learning. In addition, recognizing the importance of assessment, all TAs in the department take part in assessment training through informative emails and orientation.

2018 Winners: Bursar Office

For the Bursar Office, based on their 2016-2017 report and interim report submitted in 2018, collecting and using data are well-incorporated into their operations. They have analyzed data across multiple years and used patterns to make decisions. They have examined information sources when detecting and solving problems, and have used data analysis to examine the effect of solutions. The leadership shows consistent dedication to student success, carefully considers how the Bursar Office can support students, and uses assessment to examine the impact of their work.
We enjoyed celebrating the accomplishments from this past year and look forward to future celebrations. Thank you to all our special invited guests for their commitment to assessment and student learning.