

Breaking Down Silos in Assessment Work:

Intentional Community Building at a Large Decentralized University

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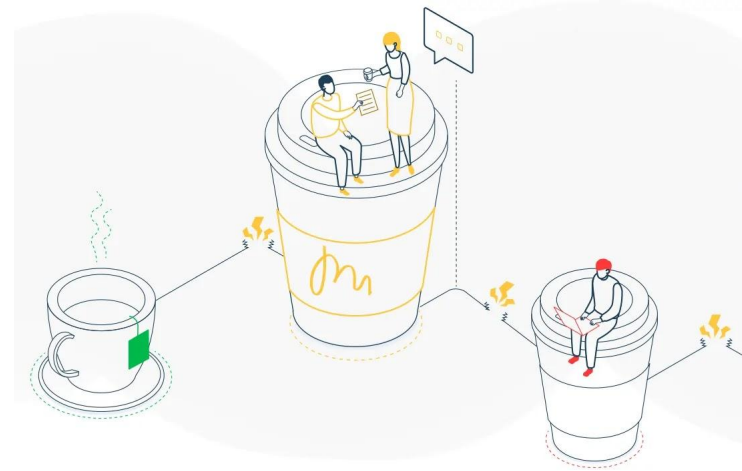
University of Washington

IUPUI Assessment Institute
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Today's session:

- Context of decentralization
- How we broke down silos
 - Retention Task Force
 - Survey Review Group
 - Assessment Working Group
- Lessons learned
- Discussion





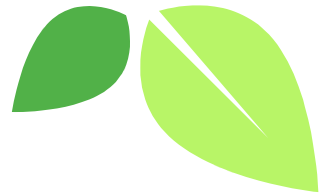
Learning Outcomes

- Become familiar with actionable strategies for breaking down silos of assessment work through community building best practices
- Learn about how other practitioners have addressed issues of decentralized assessment efforts at their institutions



Decentralization in Higher Education

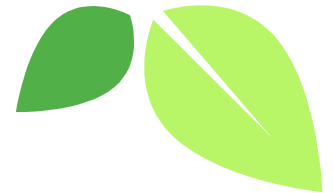
- When any organization gets big enough, multiple individuals will be doing the same work in different arenas
- “Natural state”
 - Academia is a siloed institution filled with specialized fields
 - Decentralized governance and activity are the norm
- But also a contemporary phenomenon
 - Rise of responsibility centered management funding structures in academia





Decentralization in Higher Education

- Siloed assessment work results in:
 - Duplication of efforts
 - Isolation of practitioners
 - Fragmented skills development
 - Inefficient data generation and storage resulting in data silos
- Assessment work is inherently interconnected
 - Majors have course and program objectives
 - But these often include elements like GenEd, regional accreditation standards, etc





Think about your institution

- Does it have an Office of Assessment?
- How many people work there?
- Across all departments, how many employees have “assessment” in their job title?
- If you distributed a short survey, how many employees do assessment work as 75% of their job responsibilities? 25%?

University of Washington

- Large public R1
 - 3 campuses
 - Including medical center
- Numbers
 - 60,000 students
 - 42,000 faculty and staff
- Year-round assessment activities
- Office of Educational Assessment



1. Retention Task Force/Data Synthesis Work Group

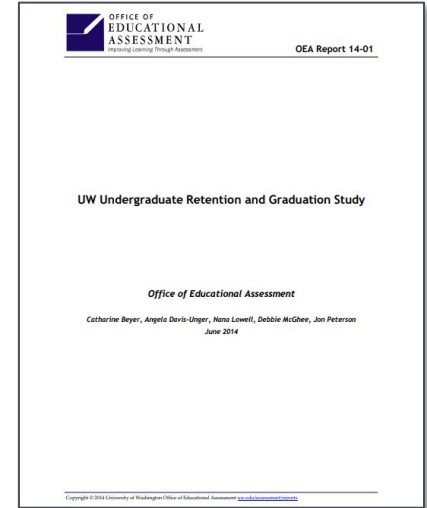


““ *The Retention Task Force convenes senior campus leaders to foster collective action to improve retention, persistence, and graduation among undergraduate students. The task force works in three key areas that inform decision making and resource allocation – data gathering and analysis, student interventions, and the reduction of systemic barriers.*



Retention Task Force

Formed as a response
to recommendations
from the *UW
Undergraduate
Retention and
Graduation Study 2014*





Retention Task Force

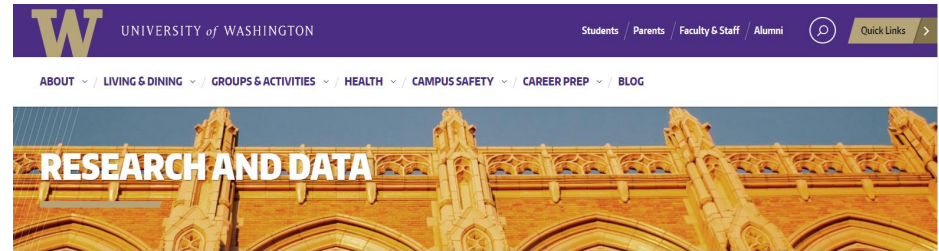
UW Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Study 2014 recommendations:

1. Disseminate findings
2. Hire an individual with the responsibility for coordinating retention efforts...
3. Convene a task force to work with the individual responsible for coordinating retention to review findings from this report and construct a strategic plan for retention at UW-Seattle



Retention Task Force

Data gathering and analysis was central to the work of the Task Force in informing initiatives and interventions.



Home > Student Life > Retention Task Force > Research and Data

Our Data Story

Data provides the foundation for our approach to understanding and responding to efforts at the University of Washington. Studies, reports, and recommendations generated through the [Office of Educational Assessment 2014 and 2019 Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Studies](#) serve as roadmaps that guide the work of the Retention Task Force.

Data can be used to tell a variety of stories. Our data tells us that we have success retaining and graduating students at rates we can be proud of and that other large urban research institutions strive for. Our interest in retention is regarding the year-over-year reenrollment of students at the UW, and for graduation we are most attentive of a student's ability to earn a degree in six years. The following dashboards provide visual and numeric data, and can be used to explore both retention and graduation data across the UW system and among specific populations. Special attention is paid to those who have been historically underserved in higher education. These dashboards utilize data organized for IPEDS reporting. To access the data you must have a UW NetID and turn on a UW supported VPN.



Retention Task Force

- Many initiatives and sub-groups emerged from Task Force's work
- Most relevant to breaking down silos is the Data Synthesis Working Group



Data Synthesis Work Group

- Gaining a deeper understanding of undergraduate retention and graduation at the UW **through data** was a goal
- The Taskforce requested new data reports and gathered existing reports from relevant campus partners
- While elements of this work were already informing decisions and interventions, it was difficult to draw connections across them



Data Synthesis Work Group

Membership from units across the university, including:

- Office of Educational Assessment (chair)
- Academic Advising/College of the Environment
- Enrollment Management
- Office of Minority Affairs & Diversity
- Office of the Provost
- Student Life
- Undergraduate Academic Affairs
- UW IT

Appendix A – Reports and Studies Reviewed



Study	Responsible Unit/Author	Categories
1. AAUDE Graduation & Retention (peer comparisons)	Institutional Data and Analysis (IDA)	Persistence, Graduation
2. ATI data (annual reporting & 4.25, 4.5, etc.)	IDA	Graduation
3. Data generated for TRiO grant renewals	Office of Minority Affairs & Diversity (OMAD)	Persistence, Graduation, Experience
4. Efficacy of First Year Interest Groups (FIGs)	Lavi Aulck (formerly Information School, currently OPB/IDA),	Persistence, Graduation, Experience
5. Exit survey data (for students who are eligible to register but have not done so)	Division of Student Life	Persistence
6. First Year Experience Study	Cassady Glass-Hastings, First-Year Programs	Experience
7. Grad rates by college	OMAD	Graduation
8. Housing and Food Insecurity	Rachel Fyall (Evans), Christine Stevens (UWT), Lynne Manzo (CBE) (Urban@UW)	Experience
9. National Student Clearinghouse (NSCH) 2011 Subsequent Enrollment Cohort Analysis	IDA	Graduation
10. Reinstatement qualitative study	Division of Student Life	Persistence
11. Resilience in the first year	Resilience Lab/UAA	Experience
12. Student attrition studies	Lavi Aulck	Persistence, Graduation
13. Student persistence predictive studies	Academic Experience & Design (AXDD)	Persistence
14. Student Success Research (e.g., Beaten Path, Prereq Map, Course Dashboard)	AXDD	Persistence, Experience
15. UW Seattle Graduation and Retention Study 2019	Office of Educational Assessment	Persistence, Graduation



Data Synthesis Work Group

Recommendations from the group:

- Target interventions to students who most need them
- Focus more attention on intervening years between students' first and fourth year
- Scale up first-year interest groups (FIGs), learning communities, first-year cohorts, and other similar targeted interventions
- Support a centralized solution to sharing and using data
- Solve the problem of tracking students' major program interests, applications, and admissions
- Better understand the impact of dual credit on students' experience and success



Recommendations

- Strive for balance between content experts and technical experts
- Cast a wide net when searching for assessment work across the campus



2. Survey Review Group



How does your institution manage surveys?

- Central survey calendar?
- Formal review process?
- Wild west of departmental distribution and assessment efforts?



UW Surveys

- Effort to standardized survey review process and centralize survey calendar in 2019
- Established UW Surveys website and review process
 - Overseen by Office of Educational Assessment
 - With cooperation of IT Department & others

UW Surveys



UW SURVEYS / SCHEDULED SURVEYS / SURVEY RESOURCES / POSTING SURVEYS TO MYUW



UW Surveys

UW surveys

Welcome to the UW Surveys site, operated by the Office of Educational Assessment.

This site assists UW campuses, colleges, and departments in designing and carrying out surveys of UW students, faculty, and staff.

Creating a large-scale survey? Unsure how to proceed? Uncertain how to get the right sample? Worried about survey fatigue? We're here to help you design & conduct surveys and analyze & report survey results. The better your survey, the more likely you'll get useful responses and findings that help you move your work forward. [Q&A](#) provides survey support services to faculty and departments at UW Seattle on a cost-recovery basis. Please contact surveys@uw.edu for more information.

Review the Survey Schedule to see:

- Large-scale surveys that are already scheduled
- Surveys that are relevant to your field of inquiry. Another UW unit may be collecting data that's useful to you.

CONTACT

surveys@uw.edu

- Centralized website: [washington.edu/surveys](https://www.washington.edu/surveys)
 - Collated information, resources, and support
- Publicly available scheduled surveys calendar
 - Enhances respondent trust
 - Reduces survey fatigue by limiting number of times student can be surveyed each quarter
- Formal application process and survey review group
 - Leverage access to student portal distribution by requiring review with the group
 - 4 week review period with expedited options



Winter 2022

Stemming the Spread of COVID-19: Coordinating Remote Work for Social Distancing Survey

Survey period	March 8, 2022 – March 30, 2022
Group surveyed	UW faculty and staff, and a random, representative sample of 4,000 UW Seattle students enrolled Winter Quarter 2022 who were employed by UW during the pandemic
Time to complete	25 – 30 minutes
Survey method	Online
Purpose	To understand the social and practical realities of remote work at UW during the pandemic.
UW contacts	Charlotte Lee , Computer Supported Collaboration Lab
Other	Survey managed by Jillian Morn of the Office of Educational Assessment

Husky Check-In

Autumn 2021

Husky Check-In

Tobacco-Free Generation Campus Initiative Student Survey

UW Surveys

- Survey Calendar
 - Centralized calendar for other researchers and broader campus community to learn about surveys in distribution and planned
 - Shares relevant information on who is surveyed, estimated time to complete the survey, survey purpose, and relevant contacts



MyUW Survey Posting Submission Form

The [Office of Educational Assessment](#) (OEA), in partnership with UW-IT's [Academic Experience, Design & Delivery](#) (AXDD) is facilitating the advertising of surveys targeting students on the [MyUW](#) website. In order to have your survey considered, please complete and submit this proposal, as well as a copy of your survey instrument, to surveys@uw.edu.

Please note, turnaround time from submission to posting to MyUW is approximately four weeks. *If you are seeking to post your survey sooner than four weeks from submission, please contact Sean Gehrke (sjgehrke@uw.edu) immediately to explore the feasibility of your request. Thank you.*

Primary Survey Contact

Name	Enter your name	Date	Enter the date
Title	Enter your title		
UW Department	Enter your UW department		
UW Email	Enter your UW email	UW Phone Number	Enter your UW phone number

Survey Information

Survey Title	Enter the title of your survey
Survey Purpose	In one or two sentences, please describe the purpose of your survey
Data Collection Period	List the date(s) you intend to launch the survey and/or post to MyUW
Survey Sample	Please describe your desired sample (e.g., all undergraduates, random sample of 2,000 graduate students)
Connection to UW Strategic Priorities or Initiatives	In a sentence or two, please describe how the results of your survey will contribute to advancing strategic priorities or initiatives of UW
Overview of Survey Development	In a few sentences, please describe the process for developing your survey instrument (e.g., Who was involved in developing the survey? Are you using pre-existing items or items designed by you/your department? How has the survey been vetted for quality prior to this submission?)

UW Surveys

Survey Review Group

- Made up of assessment and research professionals from other departments including IR, IT, CTL, Libraries, and others
- Members review standardized proposal forms and submitted survey instruments
- Members provide feedback to OEA to make recommendations to survey applicants



UW Surveys

- Survey Review Group
 - Members are not set, rotate based on availability
 - Departments benefit from review from a variety of stakeholders with unique perspectives
 - Often can provide information about where this information may already exist
 - Members get to learn about assessment efforts going on in other departments, greatly reducing siloing



UW Surveys

- Challenges
 - Rotating membership is positive, but sometimes it is hard to find members available to review
 - Tying the review process to access to student portal distribution improves likelihood of engagement with the process but doesn't guarantee it
 - Departments still distribute their own surveys that don't go through this process

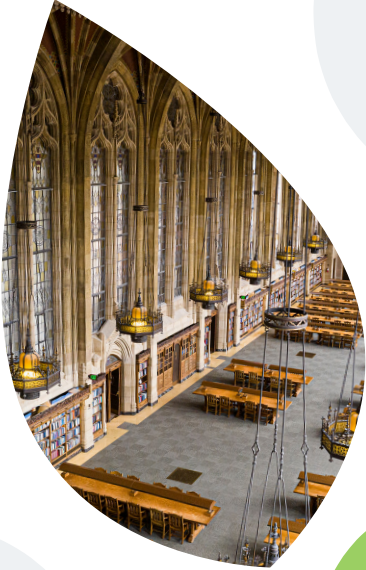


UW Surveys

- Recommendations
 - Consider implementing a set group of reviewers for a semester/quarter so you don't scramble to find reviewers when a project is submitted (or expedited)
 - Create a centralized survey schedule that provides a public list of current projects and who is involved:
 - Legitimizes survey recruitment emails
 - Helps others schedule survey requests.
 - Prioritize survey distribution and timing

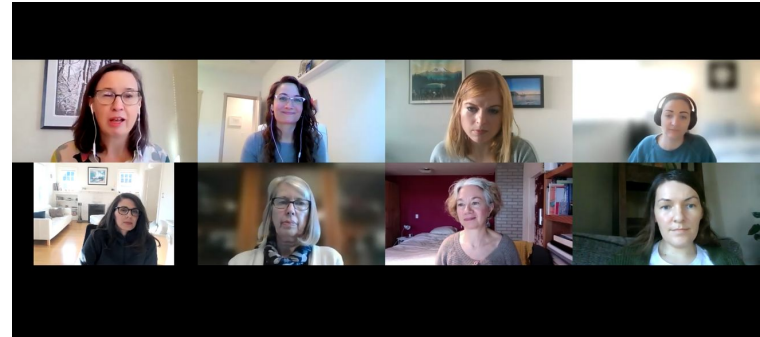


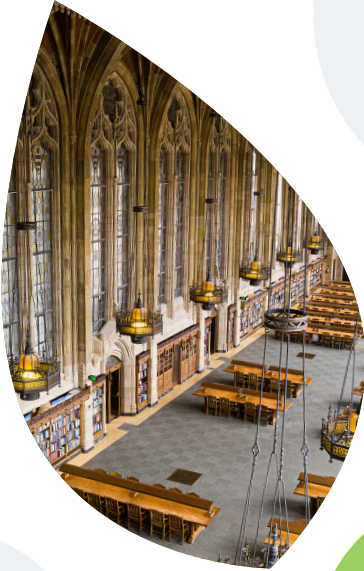
3. Assessment Working Group



Assessment Working Group

- Formed in 2018
- Membership: Student Life, Housing & Food Services, IT, Graduate School, Undergraduate Academic Affairs, Office of Educational Assessment, Libraries, all 3 campuses.





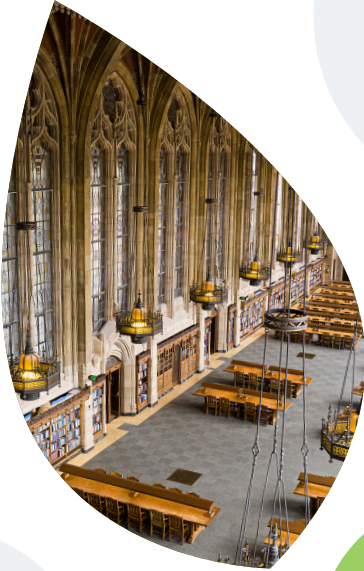
Assessment Working Group

Initial goal:

- Create an informal opportunity for assessment & institutional research leaders to:
 - share projects
 - discuss common challenges & questions

Evolution:

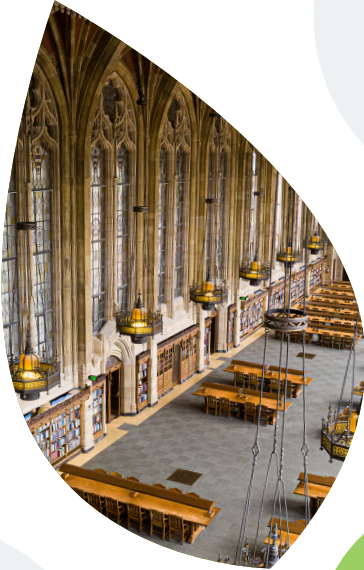
- Group broadened to include anyone involved in assessment in various campus departments;
- More formal speaker program and structured conversations added to informal discussions.



Assessment Working Group

➤ **Benefits:**

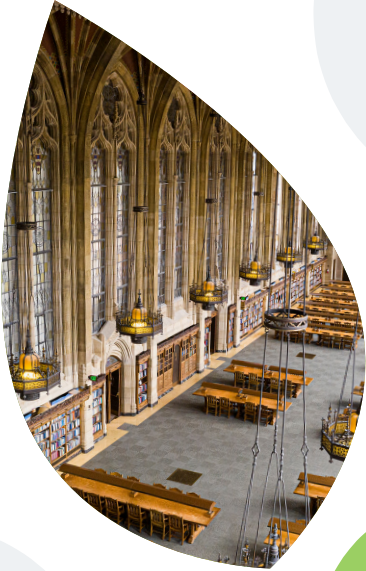
- Development of personal & professional relationships across departments
- Greater understanding of the broader institutional context for individual departmental work
- More effective data collection and sharing
- Collaborative skills development



Assessment Working Group

Successful strategies:

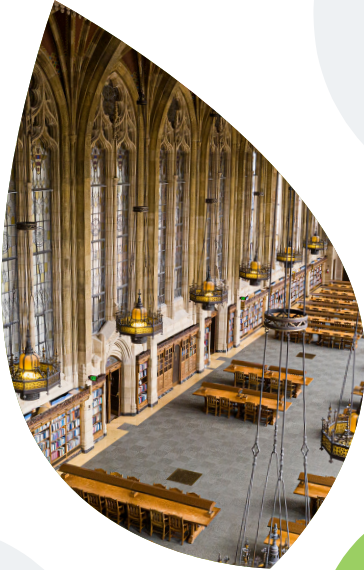
- Mix of content:
 - project sharing from members
 - invited speakers
 - facilitated discussions on topics of interest (e.g., equity in assessment)
- Core group of members who are willing to present & attend regularly
- Investment from co-chairs



Assessment Working Group

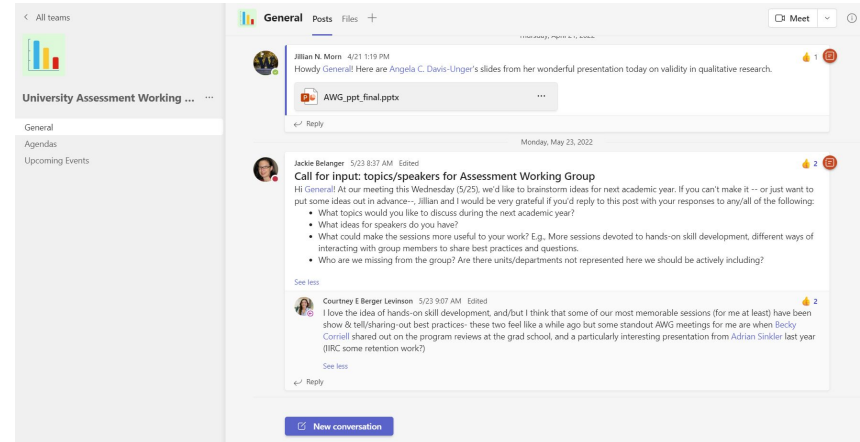
— Challenges:

- Identifying potential members, especially in the context of staffing turnover
- Encouraging active engagement & participation from members



Assessment Working Group

- **Future directions:**
 - Encouraging greater active engagement
 - Creating opportunities to identify partners and develop collaborative projects





Overall Takeaways & Discussion

What have we learned?

- **1+1 > 2:** Multiple strategies amplify the effects of these efforts and increase connection among the assessment community
- Focusing on the people is just as important as focusing on the work
- Getting started is actually the easiest part - sustaining this work can be harder



Discussion questions



- What strategies for sharing information and building community among assessment professionals have you experienced at your own institution?
- If any efforts were particularly successful, what contributed to that success?

Thanks!

ANY QUESTIONS?

You can find us at

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