

Collective Wisdom: Recent Themes from the *Leading Improvements in Higher Education* Podcast Series



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Session Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of our time together, participants should be able to:

1. Identify major crosscutting themes from the *Leading Improvements in Higher Education* podcast series' 12 inaugural episodes;
2. Incorporate insights from thought leaders in your local context;
3. Use resources from leading associations and research organizations to enhance your work; and
4. Listen to current and future episodes of the podcast series.



Plan for Attendee Engagement

- We will have periodic times when we ask you to provide a brief response in the **chat pane** to a question or prompt we give you
- Throughout the session, please register any questions in the **Q&A box** at the bottom of your screen; we will address these later in our time together



What is a Word or Short Phrase (3-4 words) to Characterize Higher Education in 2020?

- Think about the answer to the above question
- In the **chat pane**, record your brief answer
- We will provide a brief recap of some of the major themes recorded from the chat pane

About *Leading Improvements in Higher Education*

- A podcast service of the Assessment Institute in Indianapolis
- Profiles people, initiatives, institutions, and organizations improving conditions in higher education; primarily from a U.S. context
- Thought leaders for engaging discussions of enduring and emerging topics, themes, and trends affecting colleges and universities
- Purposely avoided the word “assessment” to give us an opportunity to explore broader themes and topics
- 12 inaugural episodes featuring leaders from Assessment Institute partners debuted in October; monthly episodes (1-2/month) commence in November

About *Leading Improvements in Higher Education*

- We are grateful to Watermark for serving as this season's podcast sponsor
- Podcast overview and episodes are available at the Assessment Institute website:
 - Overview: assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu/overview/podcast
 - Episodes: assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu/overview/podcast-episodes
- Episodes also available via common podcast streaming services and apps:
 - Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Amazon Music / Audible, Stitcher, TuneIn + Alexa, Podcast Addict, Podchaser, Deezer, and Listen Notes

Inaugural Episodes Feature These Partners

- s01e01: NILOA - Natasha Jankowski and Gianina Baker from the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (our Signature Partner)
- s01e02: AALHE - Jane Marie Souza and Andre Foisy from the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education
- s01e03: AAEEBL - Tracy Penny Light and Susan Kahn from the Association for Authentic, Experiential, and Evidence-Based Learning
- 01e04: AIR - Leah Ewing Ross and Stephan Cooley from the Association for Institutional Research

Inaugural Episodes Feature These Partners

- s01e05: AAC&U - Dawn Whitehead and Terrel ("Terry") Rhodes from the Association of American Colleges & Universities
- s01e06: CARS - Keston Fulcher and Caroline Prendergast from the Center for Assessment and Research Studies
- s01e07: CPR/NSSE - Jillian Kinzie from the Center for Postsecondary Research and the National Survey of Student Engagement
- s01e08: Grand Challenges in Assessment Project - Karen Singer-Freeman and Christine Robinson

Inaugural Episodes Feature These Partners

- s01e09: HBCU-CEEQA - Mark Howse and Verna Orr from the HBCU Collaborative for Excellence in Educational Quality Assurance
- s01e10: HEDS - Charlie Blaich and Kathy Wise from the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium
- s01e11: HIPs (High Impact Practices) - Pam Bowers, Ken O'Donnell, and Robin Schofield from HIPs in the States
- s01e12: SAAL - Sara Gordon, Joe Levy, Sara Ousby, and Aimee Shattuck from Student Affairs Assessment Leaders

An Overview of Themes from Inaugural Episodes

1. Reminders about enduring principles in assessment and improvement
2. Purposes/values of a college education, including the experiences necessary for student success
3. Attention to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion
4. Importance of data-informed decision-making in various contexts
5. COVID-19 adaptations and implications
6. Tools, resources, and communities for higher education stakeholders
7. Future trends

Reminders about enduring principles in assessment and improvement

- Student learning outcomes guide our work: what should students know and be able to do upon completion of [assignment/course/program/experience]?
- Assessment takes place in all parts of the collegiate context
- Need to connect assessment findings to ongoing improvements
- Institutional effectiveness increasingly important to determine how well the institution is meeting its stated missions
- Leadership at all levels is needed to create a student-centric culture that values evidence-informed interventions, improvements, and innovations

Jane Marie Souza on AALHE's Foundational Statement #1:

“We broke [the Foundational Statement] down into two areas: ***student learning outcomes assessment***, and, really, identifying what the student should be able to do, what the student should know...and to what degree we have met the goals that we have for our students. It really was about the teaching and learning process. The second part of our statement is on ***institutional effectiveness***. That focuses on the extent to which the institution is making progress toward its particular mission and vision.”

Purposes/values of a college education, including the experiences necessary for student success

- Higher education uplifts individuals, families, communities, and societies
- Personal, academic, professional identity development for students
- Student engagement in the learning process is critical to their success
- Giving students agency in their learning provides for them relevance, coherence, and significance; also values their background/lived experiences
- Increasing involvement of students in learning design, implementation, assessment, interpretation of findings, and improvements is taking place
- We need to continually make the case of higher education's ROI potential

Attention to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Colleges and universities continue to attract new majority students; these individuals have often been under-served and –resourced by institutions
- COVID-19 has highlighted and “unmasked” issues of systemic inequalities, although these predate the pandemic
- Instructional and assessment approaches often “privilege” certain individuals, learning styles, and levels of preparedness
- Equitable assessment practices are attracting more attention; these need to be tied to broader institutional equity agendas (“who is not here, and why?”)
- Priorities: disaggregating data; scaling interventions; broadening access

Mark Howse from HBCU-CEEQA on the Impact of HBCUs:

“HBCUs are one of America’s treasures...we want to make sure that everybody knows about the story of HBCUs. But more importantly that we capitalize on the power, on the passion, on the commitment of HBCUs. ***When it comes to racial equality, economic justice, social justice...HBCUs have been the tip of the spear and will continue to be...in this fight.*** And we take our hats off to HBCUs and the work they have done; the imprint on the world cannot even be valued...and so we must love and treasure these great institutions.”

Importance of data-informed decision-making in various contexts

- Institutions have a plethora of data sources; tremendous infrastructures exist to provide increasingly real-time intelligence to decision-makers
- Decision-makers often cite a *desire* to use data in performing their roles, yet may not always know *how* to do so effectively
- Complexity exists in using data to inform decisions; both specialists and end-users need to be involved in and comfortable with these processes
- Issues of ethical use and disaggregation of data are gaining prevalence
- Ultimately, data use is about understanding/improving conditions for *people*

Leah Ewing Ross from AIR on Role People Play in Data Use:

“I’m not a fan of the phrase ‘data-driven’...data don’t drive. The action of this work belongs with the people, not with the data. We need to do far more than count things. We need to ensure that the humanity stays in data use, and that we don’t approach this work as a series of algorithms...because ***this work is about people: students, faculty, staff, stakeholders.*** Their experiences and needs can’t be fully captured by computerized processes.”

COVID-19 adaptations and implications

- Remote, online, hybrid, and (limited) in-person instruction is new normal
- Clarifying/prioritizing learning outcomes; aligning assignments/assessments accordingly and communicating purpose/rationale/approach to students
- Flexibility and alternative means of teaching, assessing, and documenting learning; being creative in assuring quality while altering policies/practices
- Holistic supports for stakeholders needed: physical/mental wellbeing; wraparound services; housing/food insecurities; Internet access; finances
- Out of crisis comes opportunity: some pandemic-related interventions may “stick” going forward; a chance to both *interrogate* and *innovate* our work



Tools, resources, and communities available to higher education stakeholders

- Each partner association or research organization offers plentiful resources to support the higher education community; some provided free-of-charge
- Visit assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu/overview/partners for a listing of partners and links to their websites
- Some examples of resources include:
 - NILOA: Transparency Framework; Assignment Library; Occasional Papers
 - AALHE: Assess Listserv; Foundational Statement on Assessment in Higher Ed.
 - AAC&U: VALUE Rubrics and several reports, projects, and meetings
 - AAEEBL: ePortfolio pedagogy and research
 - Grand Challenges in Assessment Project: Grand Challenges Working Groups
 - SAAL: Resources to support co-curricular learning and engagement



Future trends

- *Necessity of higher education:* intellectual, cultural, social, economic, technological, global, and civic purposes/outcomes/influences
- *Watchwords for the future:* quality, opportunity, affordability, viability, continuity, safety, and sustainability
- *Equity as a focus:* continuing need to close equity gaps and serve the diverse array of students coming to our campuses
- *Collaboration and innovation:* fiscal constraints, global competition, and new entrants/disrupters require rethinking our approaches/structures/cultures
- *Embrace complexity/change/pace:* new ways to deliver our core mission

Terrel (“Terry”) Rhodes from AAC&U on a Future Trend:

“[Institutions] are going to have to innovate; they are going to have to see what we are going through...as an opportunity.

Let's see what the opportunities are here for us to indeed try to...recognize and achieve what the potential is of our students...Survival is something that is a motivator for institutions going forward that...will open up opportunities for us to decouple from some of the patterns of our behaviors and organizations and systems in the past.”

What is a Word or Short Phrase (3-4 words) that Characterizes Your Reaction to These Themes?

- Think about the answer to the above question
- In the **chat pane**, record your brief answer
- We will provide a brief recap of some of the major themes recorded from the chat pane

Looking Ahead: Topics for Future Episodes

- Conversation with our award-winning Pat Hutchings
- The Leadership/Executive Search Process in Higher Education
- Assessment Institute Recap with Track Leaders, including themes/trends
- Conversation with editors of: *Dean and Provost*, *The Department Chair*, *Research and Practice in Assessment*, *Student Affairs Today*, and *The National Teaching and Learning Forum*, and *Women in Higher Education*
- Enrollment management, community engagement, and DEI-related topics
- Summer reads and discussion of future trends for AY 2021-22

What are Topics You Recommend We Address in Future Episodes?

- Think about the answer to the above question
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Consider Joining Our Listener Advisory Board



- Purpose, Benefits, and Responsibilities of Advisory Board Membership
- To Apply:
 - Listen to all 12 inaugural episodes
 - Complete application at assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu/overview/podcast
 - Deadline is Friday, January 15, 2021

Q&A / Discussion

- In the **Q&A box** at the bottom of your screen, register your questions
- We will synthesize, summarize, and prioritize questions for our discussion



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Episodes also available via common podcast streaming services and apps

