Why we are here...
By Robert Munhenk, AALHE Past President

During the years when American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) Assessment Forum flourished, practitioners could learn from others what worked and what didn’t in a wide variety of institutional contexts. The Forum brought together professionals in Institutional Research, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs who were interested in learning more about assessing learning from one another. Administrators, faculty, and other higher education professionals mingled with a common purpose, to develop more effective strategies in assessing student learning, if not a common point of view. And it was this mixture of common purpose and different perspectives that made the experience of the Forum so rich. Researchers learned from professors, who learned from Student Affairs professionals, who learned from administrators, who learned from researchers.

When AAHE closed in 2005 that happy mixture of practitioners disappeared. While there has been extraordinarily good work in assessment since 2005 from such organizations as AAC&U, AIR, and NASPA, that worked has been focused by their missions and their constituencies. There has not been a site for cross-pollination of ideas and practices in assessment since AAHE’s closing.

The Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE) was designed as an organization for assessment practitioners, whatever their institutional function or affiliation. AALHE is attempting to be an ongoing, almost diurnal source of information and support for assessment practitioners. Its redesigned website will be a resource for assessment professionals, providing tools, resources, and scholarship. Although has already had two annual face-to-face conferences, its website is deliberately being designed to be an ongoing virtual conference, allowing for interactivity among practitioners through various interactive communities, including the ASSESS listserv, as well as webinars and other interactive features. Thus the association can be used by its membership as a medium to collaborate on ways deal with issues as they emerge on campus (through the interactive media) as well as source of ongoing professional development.

Third Annual AALHE Annual Conference
June 3-5, 2013 in Lexington, Kentucky
Visit: http://aalhe.org/content/third-annual-assessment-conference-2013

See page 3 for more information
The AALHE Membership Committee conducted a survey of current and past members during March 2013 to find out more information about the backgrounds and professional needs of its constituents.

The majority of our members who replied to the survey are consider their currently knowledge/skill level in regards to learning outcomes assessment to be Proficient or Advanced (72%; n=141).
Keynote Address
Why Are We Assessing? Linda Suskie

Linda Suskie is an internationally recognized consultant, writer, speaker, and educator on a broad variety of higher education assessment and accreditation topics. Her latest publication, the second edition of Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide (Jossey-Bass, 2009) ranks consistently as one of the top-selling books on assessment in higher education.

Plenary Session
Connecting Scholarly Teaching & Assessment of Student Learning: Reframing the Assessment Conversation. Dr. Janice Denton

Janice Denton is Professor and Head of the Chemistry Department at the University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College. She has presented workshops and papers at regional and national assessment and teaching conferences and has worked with faculty on student learning and classroom-based assessment at many colleges and universities across the country.

Plenary Session
How Will New Political Pressures Reshape Our Thinking About Quality, Competencies, Learning Outcomes & Accreditation? Dr. James Anderson

James Anderson serves as Chancellor and Professor of Psychology at Fayetteville State University. He is active in professional, civic, and higher-education organizations. Anderson’s research and writing has focuses on the assessment of student learning, the impact of diversity on student learning, retention, and overall institutional effectiveness.
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In this respect, AALHE is truly an association of assessment professionals, whatever their institutional titles. Its success will depend on its members’ engagement with one another in the solution of common problems and the development of common practices. Practice-oriented and –driven, it provides its members with the tools and information that they need to be effective practitioners, using the resources of other practitioners to do so. Unlike most other associations, AALHE will be very light on staffing (right now, all work is being done by volunteers, with extraordinary support from the University of Kentucky, which has provided AALHE with a virtual and physical home) and other overhead. In almost every respect, its members are its staff, and its success will be evident in their mutual learning and teaching.

Assessment may never develop as a single, coherent entity but AALHE has been developed to give it as much coherence or coordination as possible, through the efforts of its members. How assessment practice affects and informs the improvement of learning—and the improvement of assessment practice—is our common agenda. Within AALHE we can learn from and energize one another, whatever our roles or functional areas on campus. Within AALHE we can dedicate ourselves to improving learning.

About our members… continued from page 2

What processes related to learning outcomes assessment do you participate in at your institution? (n=139)

![Graph showing participation in various assessment processes]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institution wide learning outcomes assessment (across entire institution)</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmatic learning outcomes assessment</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional accreditation</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized accreditation</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program review</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual learning outcomes assessment reporting</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating and revising learning outcomes</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering and analyzing assessment data</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education learning outcomes assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Comments? Questions? Ideas?

About AALHE Please contact: Info@AALHE.org

About the AALHE Newsletter Please contact: Shari L. Jorissen (shari.jorissen@waldenu.edu)