Effective Institutional Practice in Student Learning Outcomes: CHEA Award Recipients

February 2012

The CHEA Award and Learning Outcomes

Attention to student learning outcomes has been at the center of the national discussion about quality assurance and quality improvement for some time. Colleges, universities, programs, faculty, higher education associations and accrediting organizations have all focused on the importance of learning outcomes, evidence of student learning and communication with students and the general public about the results of efforts to improve student performance.

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) has been involved in this national dialogue for more than a decade. As part of this effort, the CHEA Award for Institutional Progress in Student Learning Outcomes was established in 2005 by the CHEA Board of Directors, with the first awards presented in 2006. The award was designed to highlight institutional efforts to gather information on student learning outcomes, use this information for institutional improvement and provide information to the public.

In 2009, the award was renamed the CHEA Award for Outstanding Institutional Practice in Student Learning Outcomes, to acknowledge that the award's focus has shifted from "institutional progress" to "outstanding institutional practice." Since CHEA initiated the award, substantial gains have been made in addressing student learning outcomes as institutions and programs increasingly pay attention to this important issue.

The CHEA Award process involves the submission of proposals to be reviewed by an Award Selection Committee. Proposals may be submitted by CHEA member institutions or programs or majors within CHEA-member institutions. Up to four awards may be made annually. The call for Award proposals is made electronically, usually in August of each year. Awards are presented at the CHEA Annual Conference in January.

A committee selected from higher education institutions, higher education associations, accrediting organizations and the public judges the winners on the basis of four award criteria:

- Articulating expected outcomes for an institution, program or major.
- Providing evidence of success with regard to outcomes.
- Informing the public (constituents external to an institution) about expectations and success with regard to outcomes.
- Using outcomes for institutional improvement: evidence that outcomes have benefited the institution, program or major.

In addition to the four criteria, the committee looks for evidence that outstanding practice related to outcomes 1) is embedded in an institutional culture, 2) makes good use of current technology in the methods and tools to track outcomes, 3) includes extensive use of faculty and strong faculty support, 4) is supported by institutional leadership that is dedicated to the importance of outcomes and 5) involves approaches to outcomes that can be replicated at other institutions.

Since the establishment of the CHEA Award, 25 institutions and programs have been recognized. Each of the award winners is identified below, accompanied by a brief description of the work of the institution or

www.chea.org/chea_award/CHEA_Award.php#2012_Awards
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program and contact information. It is our hope that the effective practices developed by these award-winning institutions and programs will be helpful to colleagues seeking to make gains in this important area.

CHEA Award Recipients

2012

- Georgia Institute of Technology (GA)
- Rio Salado College (AZ)
- University of California, Merced (CA)

2011

- Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (CA)
- James Madison University Social Work Program (VA)
- Miami Dade College (FL)
- Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy (IL)

2010

- Capella University (MN)
- Portland State University (OR)
- St. Olaf College (MN)
- University of Arkansas – Fort Smith College of Education (AR)

2009

- Delaware Technical & Community College, Planning and Assessment Program (DE)
- Northern Arizona University, Office of Academic Assessment (AZ)

2008

- Hocking College, Academic Affairs Department (OH)
- Kennesaw State University, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (GA)
- Seaton Hall University, Stillman School of Business (NJ)

2007

- Bowling Green State University, Student Success Initiatives and Student Achievement Assessment Committee (OH)
- Mesa Community College, Student Outcomes Assessment Program (AZ)
- Oral Roberts University, University-wide ePortfolio and Infrastructure for a Culture of Evidence (OK)
- Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, The RosE Portfolio System and Institute-Level Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Project (IN)
- University of Saint Mary, Department of Education (KS)

2006

- The Community College of Baltimore County, High-Impact Course-Level Learning Outcomes Assessment Projects (MD)
- Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Implementing the Principles of Undergraduate Learning at IUPUI (IN)
- James Madison University (VA)
- Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (IL)

2012 CHEA Award Recipients and Award Descriptions

Georgia Institute of Technology
The Georgia Institute of Technology is a public research university in Atlanta, Georgia. Georgia Tech is part of the University System of Georgia and has branch campuses in France, Ireland, China and Singapore. The CHEA Award recognizes Georgia Tech's International Plan that integrates international knowledge and experiences into most undergraduates' academic majors. The International Plan goes beyond traditional internationalization approaches by tying together second language proficiency, coursework in international subjects, and significant international experiences, and by integrating this package into a student's academic major to produce graduates able to practice their discipline in a global context.

Assessment of the International Plan's learning outcomes has involved multiple approaches to defining and measuring global competence and has led to a longitudinal research program to track the development of intercultural communications skills over the course of the entire baccalaureate program of study.

For more information, please contact:
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www.gatech.edu

Rio Salado College

Rio Salado College is the largest of the ten Maricopa (Arizona) Community Colleges, with a student enrollment of more than 52,000. Rio Salado College has a strong focus on increasing the number of adult learners who find success in higher education. The CHEA Award recognizes Rio Salado College for building an accessible, comprehensive and systemic process for assessment, accreditation and accountability. Student learning outcomes are measured and improved via authentic assessment in a Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle.

In collaboration with the Transparency by Design initiative and the Higher Learning Commission's Assessment Academy, Rio Salado College shares and uses the results of assessment of student learning outcomes, completion data and program reviews to monitor and maintain high quality and successful learning systems.

For more information, please contact:
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University of California, Merced

The University of California, Merced is the tenth and newest University of California campus, having commenced educational operations in 2005. UC Merced is a research university that offers degrees at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The CHEA Award recognizes UC Merced for establishing student learning outcomes measures across all undergraduate programs, along with annual assessment plans and an infrastructure to encourage and monitor periodic assessment.

The campus has benefitted from a system of program-based Faculty Assessment Organizers of a Senate-Administration Council on Assessment that oversees continuing attention to program assessment, including co-curricular and administrative programs. Undergraduates participate in the assessment process through an innovative program, "Students Assessing Teaching and Learning." Also, through a Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education-funded initiative, graduate students have assisted with program assessment.

For more information, please contact:
Robert Ochsner
Director
www.chea.org/chea-award/CHEA-Awards-All.html#2012 Awards
2011 CHEA Award Recipients and Award Descriptions

Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center

The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in Monterey, California is the Department of Defense's (DoD) foreign language instruction provider. The Center serves all four branches of the U.S. military and select DoD agencies, teaching 23 basic course languages and providing enhancement and sustainment post-basic courses.

The CHEA Award recognizes the Defense Language Institute's institution-wide performance enhancement program to raise student learning outcomes to the highest levels feasible. The Foreign Language Center has proficiency-based graduation requirements across all languages and monitors student success as well as paying attention to, e.g., attrition and what is needed to further enhance student success.

For more information, please contact:
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James Madison University Social Work Program

James Madison University's Social Work Program in Harrisonburg, Virginia prepares generalist social workers who will work with and provide service to diverse individuals, families, communities and organizations. The department offers one major program, three minor programs of study designed for a wide variety of majors across the university, and one certificate program.

The CHEA Award recognizes the Social Work Program for its consistent record of strong program assessment, with multiple methods of evaluating student learning. All program faculty are engaged in evaluation of students, in continuous improvement of assessment methodologies, in review of finding and in the use of results for program, curriculum and student learning improvements.

For more information, please contact:
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Miami Dade College

Miami Dade College serves more than 170,000 students and eight campuses offering more than 300 programs of study. The CHEA Award recognizes Miami Dade College for the inclusion of faculty, students, administration, staff and community stakeholders in developing and implementing 10 institution-wide student learning outcomes.

Miami Dade College's courses align with institution-wide learning outcomes through curriculum mapping. Creating and sustaining these outcomes has been an ongoing effort involving the entire college community, with processes towards attachment of outcomes and dissemination of success accomplished through...