



MASSACHUSETTS  
Department of  
Higher Education

# The Statewide Organizing Approach to Advancing a Massachusetts Culture of Assessment (AMCOA)

## An Overview

*“In God we trust; all others, bring data”* (W. Edwards Deming)

- Real-Time Student Assessment is the immediate synchronous use of assessment results to continuously address persistent obstacles that students face as they progress towards a degree
- Real-Time student assessment at the institution and program levels is sustained by a continuous inclusive and collaborative commitment to students' equitable attainment of a high-quality degree. Achieving that commitment requires:
  - a) semester-by-semester reporting of assessment results
  - b) interrogating underperforming patterns documented in assessment results
  - c) nimbly developing on-time and longer term interventions to improve student learning performance

(P. Maki, 2017)

# Guiding Assessment Principles

- It's about improving our teaching practices to increase student learning/persistence and completion
- Uses the Improvement NOT the Compliance Paradigm
- It is about Continuous Improvement
- It should focus on the questions you want to know the answers to
- It should involve both curriculum and co-curriculum areas
- Document, document, document!

# Equitable Assessment

AT ITS CORE, EQUITABLE ASSESSMENT CALLS FOR THOSE WHO LEAD AND PARTICIPATE IN ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES TO PAY ATTENTION AND BE CONSCIOUS OF HOW ASSESSMENT CAN EITHER FEED INTO CYCLES THAT PERPETUATE INEQUITIES OR CAN SERVE TO BRING MORE EQUITY INTO HIGHER EDUCATION (G.Henning, 2020)

# Acting on Equity Findings

The authentic exercise of equity and equity-mindedness requires explicit attention to structural inequity and institutionalized racism and demands system-changing responses.



- Bensimon, E.M. (2018). Reclaiming racial justice in equity. *Change*, 50 (3-4), 95-98.

# Benefits of Equitable Assessment

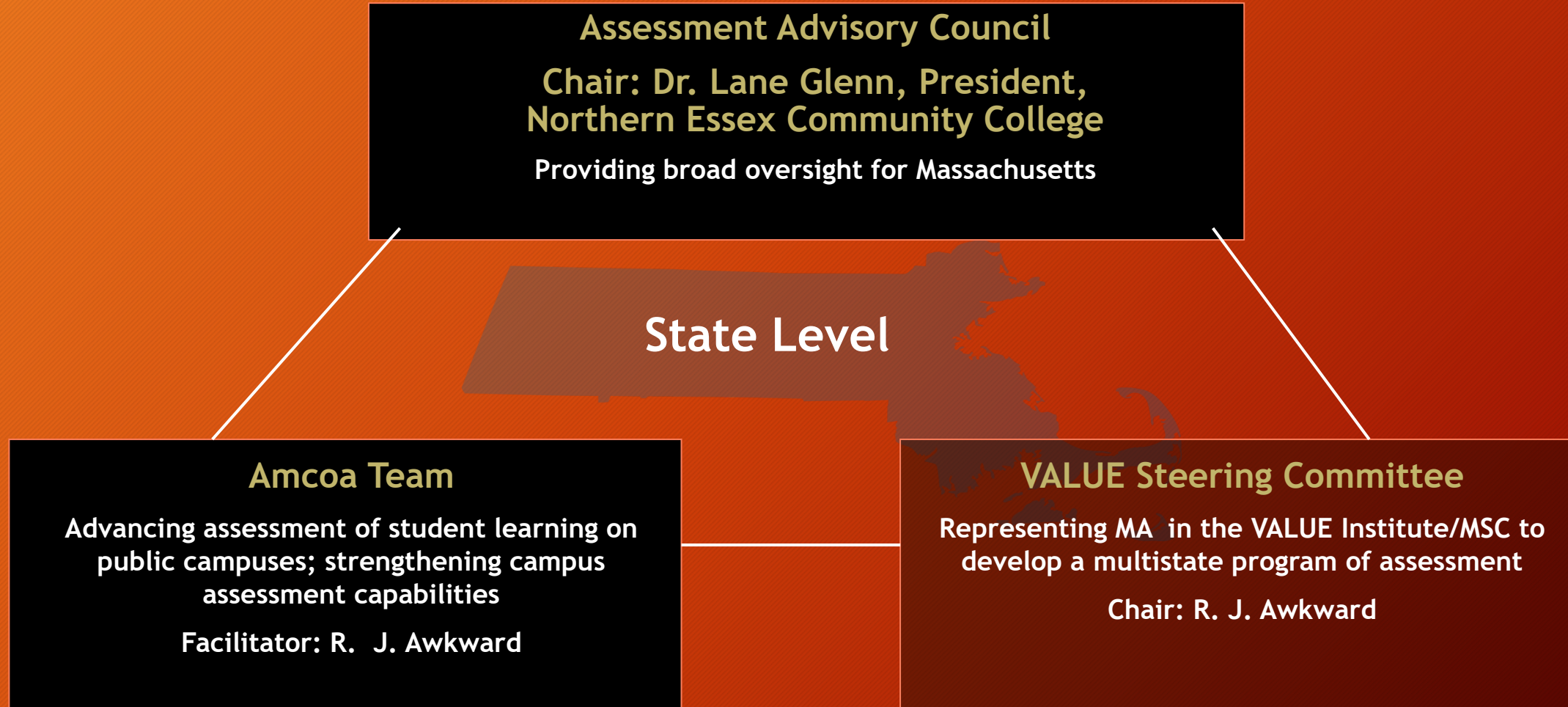
- Consider how systemic bias and discrimination can affect learning and student experience
- Validates and attends to students' identities and cultural background
- Exposes policies and procedures that can promote bias and discrimination
- Implements assessment in an equitable way that minimizes perpetuation of systems of power and oppression
- Helps educational practice be more inclusive and equitable

# Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Brief History

- Working Group on Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment established the following in January 2010:



# Massachusetts Organizing Structure





# Quarterly Meetings

- **Sept. 30, 2022**
  - Integration of the *New Undergraduate Experience* and the *Strategic Plan for Racial Equity* into equitable assessment
- **Oct. 28, 2022**
  - “Data-Informed Course Design & the DEI Integration;” Dr. Maura Devlin, Dean, Institutional Effectiveness & Accreditation; Bay Path University
- **Feb. 3, 2023**
  - “Co-Curricular Assessment 101;” Dani Lucitra, Bristol Community College; Kim McKeague, Greenfield Community College; Amanda Henrichs, and Sara Wims, Mt. Wachusett Community College
- **March 10, 2023**
  - “ChatGPT and the Future of Learning & Assessment in the Age of AI;” Peter Shea, Middlesex Community College

# Annual Assessment Conference

## Assessment Reconsidered: Using Equity as Our Guiding Framework

- Friday, April 28, 2023
- Westborough Doubletree Hotel
- Keynoters:
  - Dr. Gavin Henning, “Reframing Assessment to Center Equity,” New England College
  - Dr. Joseph Levy, “Aspirations & Accountability for Student Affairs Assessment,” Excelsior University
- Public and private presenters
- 98% rated the conference very satisfied/satisfied based on a 51% participation rate

# Regional Professional Development

- **Boston Metro Region**

- Bunker Hill Community College, Framingham State, Mass. Bay Community College, Mass. College of Art & Design, Roxbury Community College, UMass Boston
- *Transparent Instruction Increases Students' Engagement & Success*
- Dr. Mary-Ann Winkelmes
- February 10, 2023

- **Central Region**

- Fitchburg State, Mount Wachusett Community College, Quinsigamond Community College, Worcester State
- *Data Storytelling*
- Dr. Kimberly Yousey-Elsener
- February 10, 2023

- **Western Region**

- Berkshire Community College, Greenfield Community College, Holyoke Community College, Mass. College of Liberal Arts, Springfield Technical Community College, UMass Amherst
- *Liberation & Assessment: From Intention to Action to Impact*
- Dr. Divya Bheda

# Organizing Institutional Assessment

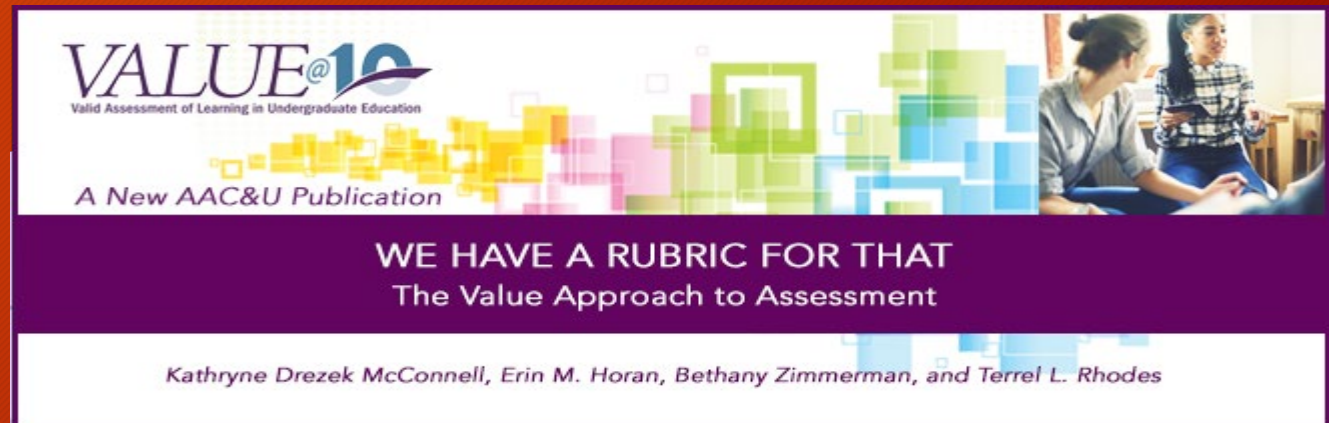
- Leadership commitment
- Designate an assessment leader or leadership (e.g., an assessment director/dean or faculty committee)
- Identify assessment faculty fellows (evangelists)
- Convene a cross-institutional assessment committee including curricular and co-curricular participants
- Establish institutional and program student learning outcomes
- Identify target areas of inquiry: department, program, and/or general education; and approaches (e.g., surveys, portfolios, standardized, authentic artifacts, mixed methods, etc.)
- Provide professional development including an assessment professional day
- Do it! Remember it is about continuous improvement; not one and done!

# VALUE Institute (nee MSC)



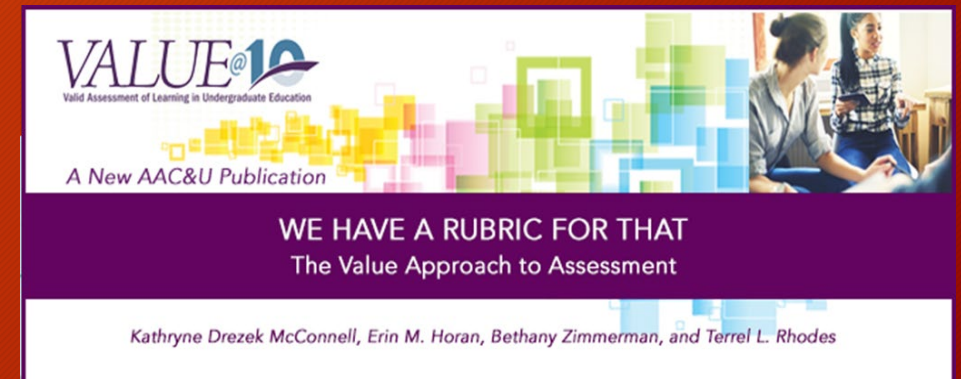
- Chronology:

- Massachusetts Pilot Assessment (2013-2014)
- Massachusetts Pilot II/Multi-State Collaborative Pilot (2014-2015)
- Multi-State Collaborative to Advance Quality Student Learning: Demonstration Year (2015-2016)
- Multi-State Collaborative to Advance Quality Student Learning: Refinement Year (2016-2017)
- Multi-State Collaborative to Advance Quality Student Learning: Refinement Year 2.0/VALUE Institute Inaugural Year (2017-2018)
- VALUE Institute Second/Third Year (2018-2019 and 2019-2020)



# Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Common Framework

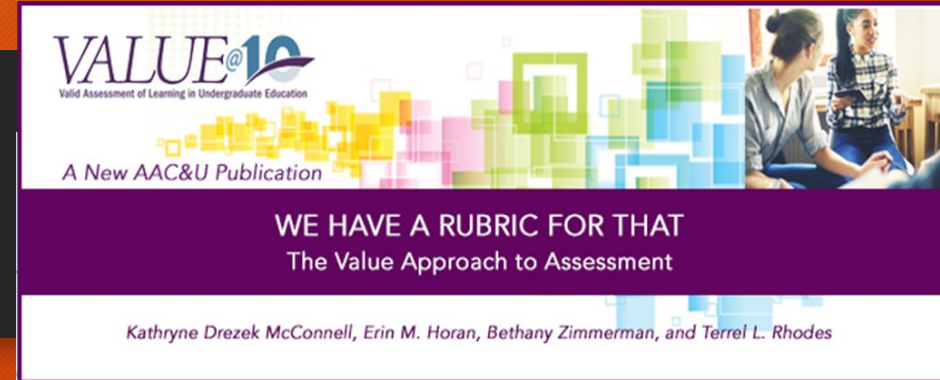
- Authentic Student Work
- LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes
  - Critical & Creative Thinking
  - Quantitative Literacy
  - Written & Oral Communication
- VALUE Rubrics



# Legal Mandate: MGL Chapter 15A, Section 32

- The DHE must:
  - Determine the best method of assessment
  - Utilize best practice to assess educational quality
  - Address matters of educational equity
  - Provide reporting to key stakeholders (e.g., public institution presidents, the secretary of education, the Board of Higher Education, institutional assessment leaders, et al.)
  - Inform the direction of statewide higher education policy and practice

# VALUE Institute



## Participating Institutions

- University of Massachusetts System:
  - UMass Amherst
  - UMass Boston
  - UMass Lowell
- State Universities:
  - Framingham State University
  - Westfield State University
  - Worcester State University
  - Salem State University

## Community Colleges:

- Cape Cod Community College
- North Shore Community College
- Northern Essex Community College



# Suggested Items for Individual Campuses & Statewide Action

- More activities related to Written Communications in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year courses, programs, and majors (except in Syntax and Mechanics)
- Resume or enhance existing “writing across the curriculum” activities
- Increase activities related to Quantitative Literacy in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year courses, programs, and majors
- Employ quantitative literacy across the curriculum in addition to general education courses
- DHE to provide regional assignment design workshops for faculty linked to VALUE Rubrics to improve teaching effectiveness, increase student learning, and improve outcomes results in 2018-2019
- DHE to provide training for faculty on how to employ Quantitative Literacy in curriculum at all levels by launching regional Quantitative Literacy faculty workshops in 2018-2019 (deferred to and conducted in Fall 2019)

# The Decline in Participation

Institution by Segment	Pilot Study: 2015	Demonstration Study: 2015-2016	Refinement Year: 2016-2017	VALUE: 2018-2019	VALUE: 2019-2020
UMass System	1	2	2	2	1
State Universities	3	3	4	4	3
Community Colleges	10	5	5	3	1
TOTAL	14	10	11	9	5

# Why?

Even though the DHE has been paying since FY2019:

- Statewide outcome doesn't align with campus assessment priorities
- Campus data often have small sample sizes that challenge the validity of generalizations
- MSCA labor contracts and WTR have undermined faculty participation
- Institutions are not always using VALUE to inform teaching
- Assessment resources are no greater now than they have been

# A New Approach: NECHE Alignment

Institution	Comprehensive (10 Year)	Interim (5 Year)
Framingham State	Spring 2024	
Bristol Community	Spring 2024	
Middlesex Community	Spring 2024	
Berkshire Community		Fall 2024
North Shore Community		Fall 2024
Bunker Hill Community		Spring 2025
Mass. College of Art	Spring 2025	
UMass Dartmouth		Spring 2025
UMass Boston	Spring 2025	
Mass. Bay Community	Fall 2025	
Holyoke Community	Fall 2025	
Northern Essex Community	Fall 2025	

# Benefits of the Proposal

- Addresses the issue of alignment with institutional assessment
- Addresses our need for statewide assessment information
- Use as part of the E2- External Validation: Part A
- Administer the year before as part of their self-study and incorporate the results into their written student learning narrative
- May be smaller sample size for statewide purposes, but the participants may have more robust results
- Would be open to others to participate as well