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AER mail

THE ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND RESEARCH
KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER.

Welcome New AER Co-Chairs Michael and Jeanna



At the NASPA Annual Conference in NOLA the AER KC welcomed new leadership. To learn more about our leaders read their joint candidate statement.

At our home campuses, we have championed assessment in student affairs for the better part of the last decade. Not because we were told to assess, but because we saw the value in assessing. Like you, we work daily to advance a culture of assessment on our campuses and in our profession. Similarly, NASPA's Assessment, Evaluation and Research Knowledge Community works to encourage and support student affairs professionals in assessing programs, services and activities on their campus while advancing the

movement towards the improvement of student learning.

We will lead our Knowledge Community by recognizing the important role our KC plays in our colleague's work and advancing efforts towards expanding NASPA's footprint as a leader in student affairs assessment.

As the elected NASPA Assessment, Evaluation and Research Knowledge Community National Co-Chairs, we are committed to:

⇒ **Expanding Professional Development Opportunities** - We will continue to work with our KC's leadership and the NASPA Office to refine and expand webinar offerings for practitioners of varying levels of

expertise. We know that some campuses are just starting, some are in the middle, and some are leading the way with innovative assessment, and we want to recognize that assessment is a journey, not a destination. Additionally, we will work to ensure that NASPA's annual Assessment and Persistence Conference provides participants with an innovative offering of program sessions and topical areas.

⇒ **Integrate Assessment Throughout the NASPA Domain and Beyond** - While our KC "encourages and supports" student affairs professionals as they assess programs and services on their campuses, we will also work to support and encourage



NASPA™

Assessment, Evaluation,
and Research KC

Reflections on the 2015 NASPA Assessment and Persistence Conference

This year's Assessment and Persistence Conference was hosted in historic Boston, Massachusetts, which provided a perfect backdrop to think about where we have been, where we are, and where we are going as a profession. The opening speaker, Dr. Estela Mara Bensimon, reminded us of the structural inequality that has been in place in higher education, but also spoke about the excellent programs currently in place that help students of color excel. Dr. Donna Younger challenged us to think deeply about the needs of adult students and how we design our programs, services, and systems to better serve this growing population. The vice presidents' panel (Marva Craig, Mitchell Levy, Jason Meriwether, and Greg Sammons) focused on student engagement and success, adding interesting perspectives about the political environment on college campuses. Although the final speaker couldn't make it, Ted Elling, Michael Christakis, Jeanna Mastrodicasa, and I filled in to peer into our crystal balls to predict the future of student affairs assessment.

The high quality concurrent sessions focused on assessment methods, retention of special populations, fundamentals of assessment, integrated assessment and persistence practice, and more. As a more seasoned assessment professional, I enjoyed the intermediate and advanced sessions, but there were plenty of sessions for those new to the profession as well. While some sessions were more theoretical, others were very practical. Sessions were presented by faculty, student affairs assessment professionals, and program coordinators so there was a breadth of perspectives. I loved hearing the deep conversations taking place and seeing the passion that participants had for improving the higher education system. On a more personal level, I enjoyed connecting with the colleagues I only see once or twice a year. We catch up on families, friends, pets, campus politics, and new jobs as if we have not been apart at all.

A few of the reflection questions I noted:

- What systems and support do we have for students as they transition in and out of our campuses?
- How do we assess what we do on a regular basis so that it provides actionable results, without overburdening already hard working staff?
- How do we "tell our story" to the right people in the right way at the right time?
- How can we partner with faculty to help graduate students learn about assessment?
- How do we know our programs actually accomplish what we say they do?
- What skills do we need to continue to develop to meet the continuing assessment demands?

I'm always excited about APC, since it brings my two passions together—assessment and professional development. I am thankful that NASPA sees assessment and persistence as a student affairs priority and plans an annual conference. I hope I will see you in Portland, Oregon, June 16-18, 2016 for the next conference!

Sincerely,
Darby Roberts
Past AER Co-Chair



INNOVATION AWARD WINNER 2015:

Danthai Xayaphanh, University of Arizona

We are pleased to announce the recipient of the **third annual NASPA Assessment, Evaluation and Research Knowledge Community Innovation Award**, *Danthai Xayaphanh from The University of Arizona for the innovative assessment of Vivir Mexico: Culture, History and People, a short-term study abroad experience.*

The Assessment, Evaluation and Research Knowledge Community Innovation Award recognizes and honors our innovative colleagues in the field of Student Affairs Assessment.

Danthai Xayaphanh and Vivir Mexico: Culture, History and People, The University of Arizona - 2015 Innovation Award Recipient

Additional support on this innovative assessment project was provided by Marla Franco, Director of Divisional Assessment at the University of Arizona.

The assessment of Vivir Mexico: Culture, History and People aimed to improve the University of Arizona's (UA) understanding of participant outcomes associated with experiencing a short-term study abroad experience. With the support of Assessment & Research and participating faculty and staff, a robust and sustainable assessment plan was developed in spring 2014 and will continue to guide programmatic efforts, data collection procedures, and communication related to the program's impact on student learning.

This program is a result of collaborations between Student Affairs and the College of Education, offering students a 5 week 6-credit hour experience to familiarize them with the history, culture, and society of Mexico and the heritage of Mexican-Americans/Chicanos in the U.S. through intensive study and direct personal experiences in Mexico. In spring 2014, 16 students participated in the Vivir Mexico: Culture, History & People Study Abroad Program, which included face-to-face sessions before students departed to Mexico, content and activities in an online learning management system, an abroad service learning project, along with other enriching in-country experiences led by a faculty expert.

The program's content was intentionally designed with 9 ways for students to demonstrate learning outcomes throughout their experiences. Data collection methods included: 1) program application, 2) daily reflections, 3) video commercials created as a group project, 4) individual digital stories created in VoiceThread (a visual discussion board), 5) photos and videos taken during the experience to be used in both the commercials and digital stories, 6) a closed Facebook group, 7) both pre and post assessments, 8) the creation of a service learning project, and 9) a final reflective essay.

The daily reflections supported deeper levels of learning and assist students in completing other assessments. Each day, students were asked to reflect on their daily experiences and respond to three questions. This helped students to focus on specific topics or leadership outcomes and proved instrumental in guiding students to produce richer commercials and digital stories.

The digital storytelling project provided students a multidimensional way to explore and share a rich learning experience. The stories enabled students to document personal reflections of their experience in Mexico and share the impact the journey had upon their lives.

Data analysis was conducted by two Assessment and Research staff (nonparticipants) and member check occurred with program staff (participants). Data revealed students experienced gains in the following domains: cognitive skills, global perspective, appreciation for diversity, and awareness of self and others. Findings suggested a need to reevaluate the learning outcomes stated on the syllabus to ensure congruency between expected learning and program content.

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NASPA 2016 Annual Conference

CALL FOR PROGRAMS

COMMON PURPOSE: SHAPING A VISION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Submit a program (or more than one!) and share your fresh and creative ideas with the participants at the 2016 NASPA Annual Conference. Gather your colleagues or use the NASPA Presenter Match to submit programs with multiple perspectives and from varied institutions.

The Call for Programs Deadline is Friday, September 4, 2015.

Both NASPA members and non-members* may submit programs to the NASPA Annual Conference. There are several program types and each has its own guidelines and review process. You can submit more than one program type, but make sure the description matches the delivery! All programs should include the following:

1. New and fresh contributions to the NASPA Annual Conference theme and/or student affairs profession.
2. Engaging program format that involves the audience and stimulates discussion.
3. Conceptually strong foundation, well-written, with clearly stated outcomes and appropriately documented research and/or experience.
4. Qualified presenters with expertise in the subject matter

More information on the conference themes, effective proposal writing, submission criteria, and how to submit can be found at <http://conference2016.naspa.org/present>



Common Purpose

Shaping a vision for higher education

2016 NASPA Annual Conference

Join us in **Indianapolis, IN** to connect with colleagues and redefine the future of higher education. You'll be inspired by thought provoking speakers, meet colleagues from around the world, and return to campus with the tools needed to navigate the constantly changing landscape of student affairs.

The NASPA Annual Conference is a four-day gathering of student affairs professionals who come together to learn, grow, and be inspired. Whether you're presenting or an active participant, the NASPA Annual Conference is the single best professional development and networking opportunity for you.

Visit: <http://conference2016.naspa.org/> for more information.
Early bird rates are available through 1/15/16

You can already start connecting by using [#NASPA16](#)



NASPA's other 26 Knowledge Communities to integrate assessment throughout their work. We believe that assessment is a cornerstone to our profession's many functions and characteristics. Assessment can contribute to the Public Policy work of NASPA as well, supporting advocacy with data. Additionally, we will continue to work to identify opportunities to engage in thoughtful discussions with other professional organizations that share our mutual interest in student affairs assessment.

- ⇒ **Honor Best Practices in Student Affairs Assessment** - We will continue to honor outstanding and innovative student affairs assessment through the KC's Assessment Innovation Award as well as identify new and exciting opportunities for research and scholarship through the KC's assessment and research grant program. We will seek to expand both programs to spotlight the best, brightest and most innovative colleagues throughout NASPA.
- ⇒ **Expand the (Social) Network of Student Affairs Assessment Professionals** - Through social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), we will continue to work to make our KC the "largest, most intimate" KC in NASPA. We know how important personal contacts can be in our work. We will continue to seek new ways to bring as many of our KC's members together - virtually.

We know how committed you are to advancing good assessment practices in our work in student affairs; we are too. We will do everything we can to ensure our Knowledge Community's continued commitment to *encouraging, supporting and advancing* assessment in student affairs.

Jeanna Mastrodicasa
Associate Vice President
University of Florida

Michael Christakis
Vice President for Student Success
University of Albany

You can find contact information for Jeanna and Michael on page 9.

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The assessment approach used has been transformative on many levels and has had far reaching implications for the program itself, for other units and departments in the Division of Student Affairs, and is quickly being perceived as a best practice at the UA for creatively engaging students in reflective processes, assessing for student learning, and completing the assessment cycle by communicating findings and further refining the program based on findings.

The program has shifted from assessing student satisfaction to assessing student learning. This is the first time that data was collected using VoiceThread and the first time that the closed Facebook group and student created videos were treated as data. This was also the first time data was analyzed this extensively and communicated in a summary of findings and published on the UA Assessment & Research website, exemplified for demonstrating a culture of evidence.

Read more about Vivir Mexico in the [2014 Executive Summary!](#)

Please join us in congratulating our 2015 Innovation Award Winner - **Danthai Xayaphanh**

The following two individuals have also been recognized as **honorary mentions** for their contributions to the field. The innovation, creativity, and impact of the assessment approaches seen through these initiatives embody the spirit and vision of the AER KC. You can read more about these honorary mentions on the AER KC Blog

- ◆ Randall Brumfield and the [Balance Scorecard for Academic Advising from the University of Kansas](#)
- ◆ Jordan Humphrey and [Question of the Week from St. Mary's University](#)

**Be on the look out in the early spring to see how you can apply
to be the next Innovation Award winner!**



NASPA Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Knowledge Community Mission Statement

The NASPA Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Knowledge Community encourages and supports student affairs professionals, faculty and graduate students at institutions across the country and throughout the world as they systematically assess learning, evaluate programs, and research theory and practice as it relates to our profession. By providing quality education and networking opportunities for those that engage in assessment, evaluation and research in student affairs, the Knowledge Community strives to serve as a driving force in the movement towards improved student learning.

Important Links

NASPA Homepage

<http://www.naspa.org/>

NASPA Annual Conference Homepage

<http://conference2016.naspa.org/>

Assessment and Persistence Conference

<http://www.naspa.org/events/2016APC>

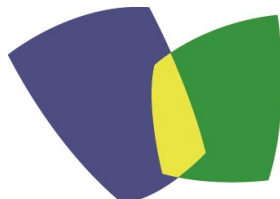
AER KC Homepage

<http://www.naspa.org/constituent-groups/kcs/assessment-evaluation-and-research>

AER Resources Page

<http://www.naspa.org/constituent-groups/kcs/assessment-evaluation-and-research/resources>

**If you have resources you think would make good additions to this page please send them to Kisubika@illinois.edu.*



Social Media



Become our fan
on Facebook



Follow us on
Twitter and use
#SAASSESS

To “like” the NASPA AER KC page, click on the following link or paste into your browser:

<http://www.facebook.com/NASPAERKC>

****New Posts every Wednesday!!****

Follow us [@NASPA_AERKC](https://twitter.com/NASPA_AERKC)

Join our the AER Blog!!

There are two great ways to be a part of the conversation on the AER KC Blog.

1. Sign-up to contribute and be published on the blog!

Read a great journal article? You can summarize it for the blog. Been working on some research or a great new process of assessment—give us the low down and share it with the whole AER Community. Contact Melissa Kisubika (Kisubika@illinois.edu) for information or sign up **HERE**

2. Comment on a blog post and keep conversations going!

Be sure to adjust your settings in your member profile to make sure you receive the blog digest for all KC's.

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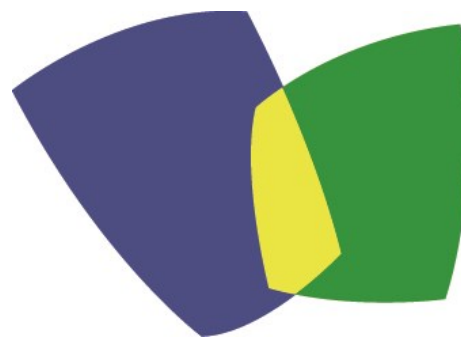
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