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2007 CHEA Award for Institutional Progress in Student Learning Outcomes

2007 CHEA AWARD

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) established the Award for Institutional Progress in Student Learning Outcomes in 2006 to acknowledge outstanding institutional progress in developing and applying evidence of student learning outcomes as part of the ongoing evaluation and improvement of college and university programs of study. For 2007, 31 applications were received and reviewed by an Award Selection Committee, using four award criteria:

- Articulation and evidence of outcomes
- Success with regard to outcomes
- Information to the public about outcomes
- Using outcomes for improvement

Additional description of the criteria may be found on page three.

Five applications were selected for awards. In addition to meeting the criteria, each of these applications reflected significant achievement in attention to outcomes embedded in an institutional culture, good use of current technology in the methods and tools to track outcomes, extensive use of faculty and strong faculty support, institutional leadership that is dedicated to the importance of outcomes, and approaches to outcomes that can be replicated at other institutions.

This newsletter contains a summary of each successful application and contact information for the awardees. This information will also be posted on the CHEA Website

(www.chea.org), accompanied by information about the 2008 CHEA award program.

AWARD RECIPIENTS

Bowling Green State University, Ohio
Student Success Initiatives
Student Achievement Assessment Committee

Bowling Green State University (BGSU) is a public, doctorate-granting university located in Ohio. The university addresses student learning outcomes through a comprehensive institutional focus on undergraduate majors and identification of seven university-wide learning outcomes: inquiry, creative problem solving, examining values in decision making, writing, presenting, participating and leading. Faculty in each academic unit decide what counts as success in these areas using cross-cutting activities, for example, electronic portfolios, to provide evidence of student achievement. Bowling Green also cites its graduation rate and its participation in national studies such as the National Survey of Student Engagement and the Collegiate Learning Assessment, as well as publicizing these results.

For more information, please contact:

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Mesa Community College, Arizona **Student Outcomes Assessment Program**

Mesa Community College (MCC) is a public community college that is part of the Maricopa Community Colleges in Arizona. The college's approach to student learning outcomes is focused at the cross-disciplinary level—what a student is expected to know or do upon completion of a structured course of study. Faculty have defined outcomes in nine areas: arts and humanities, cultural diversity, information literacy, numeracy, oral communication, problem solving/critical thinking, scientific inquiry, written communication and workplace skills. Evidence of student achievement is obtained through various means, for example, faculty-developed instruments, standardized tests and adaptation and application of national or other assessment tools. Data are collected annually and made public through reports and presentations as well as the Mesa Website

For more information, please contact:

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Oral Roberts University, Oklahoma **University-wide ePortfolio** **Infrastructure for a Culture of Evidence**

Oral Roberts University (ORU) is a private, doctorate-granting university in Oklahoma. It has focused on student learning outcomes through a variety of means, including a university-wide electronic portfolio system that documents how well students fulfill the five learning outcomes that are identified in the university mission statement. Graduates are expected to demonstrate that they are spiritually alive, intellectually alert, physically disciplined, socially adept and professionally competent. Students are required to maintain portfolios in general education as well as in their major or program. Faculty evaluates the evidence contained in the portfolios to measure student success.

For more information, please contact:

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Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, Indiana **The RosE Portfolio System and Institute-Level Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Project**

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology (Rose-Hulman) is a private undergraduate institution in Indiana that awards bachelor of science degrees in engineering, mathematics and science. The Institute has developed an institution-wide approach to student learning outcomes based on a defined set of 10 outcomes that all students should develop by graduation. These outcomes include abilities in areas such as ethics, communication, problem solving, interpreting data, experiment and design. Evidence of student learning is collected annually through the portfolios. All student submissions to the portfolio system are reviewed by a trained team of faculty raters. In addition to this evidence, Rose-Hulman regularly reviews curricula, undertakes alumni satisfaction surveys and uses information such as graduation rates, retention rates and placement rates to determine the effectiveness of its approach to learning outcomes.

For more information, please contact:

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University of Saint Mary, Kansas **Department of Education**

The University of Saint Mary (USM) is a private master's institution located in Kansas. Faculty in the department of education's Master of Arts Education and Master of Arts in Teaching programs have developed eight learning outcomes expected of graduates in areas such as education theory and research and measurement and evaluation. A key feature of the department's work is the emphasis on close alignment of student learning outcomes with course outcomes, instruction, assignments and ongoing review of program effectiveness. Student performance is tracked and summary results are available on program Websites.

For more information, please contact:

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CRITERIA FOR THE AWARD

The scope of an application may be institution-wide, focused on a specific program or focused on a major.

Applications are judged using evidence that demonstrates the extent to which four award criteria are met:

- Articulating and providing evidence of outcomes.
- Providing evidence of success with regard to outcomes.
- Informing the public about outcomes.
- Using outcomes for institutional improvement.

Evidence has to be relevant to what is being claimed, potentially verifiable through replication or third-party inspection and representative or typical of major, program or institutional performance. It may involve examination of student levels of attainment (e.g., individual students or representative samples) and may include faculty-designed comprehensive or capstone examinations and assignments, performance on external or licensure examinations, authentic performances or demonstrations, portfolios of student work over time or samples of representative student work. Self-study reports and student satisfaction surveys are not accepted as direct evidence of student learning outcomes.

Criterion 1: Articulation and Evidence of Outcomes

Evidence of development and application of expectations of student learning outcomes in one or more majors, program areas or institution-wide.

Applicants are asked to describe how a major, program or institution:

- Develops and publicly commits to specific student learning outcomes associated with various courses of study.
- Determines and clearly communicates what counts as evidence that outcomes have been achieved. This may include, for example,
 - faculty designed comprehensive or capstone examinations and assignments, or performance on licensing or other external examinations;
 - professionally judged performances or demonstrations of abilities in context, or portfolios of student work compiled over time; or
 - samples of representative student work generated in response to typical course assignments.
- Regularly collects and interprets evidence of outcomes.

Criterion 2: Success with Regard to Outcomes

Evidence of the extent to which expectations with regard to outcomes are successfully met by a major, program or institution-wide.

Applicants are asked to describe how a major, program or institution:

- Determines whether student learning outcomes have been achieved, either at an individual or aggregate level, for the major, program or institution.
- Documents whether actual achievement levels of students are acceptable given the mission, student population and resources available to the major, program or institution.
- Supplements evidence of student achievement levels with information about other dimensions of institutional effectiveness (e.g., graduation, retention, transfer, placement or admission to graduate school).

Criterion 3: Information to the Public About Outcomes

Evidence of the ways in which students and the public are informed of the success of a major, program or institution in achieving these outcomes.

Applicants are asked to describe how a major, program or institution:

- Routinely provides students and the public with information about major, program or institutional performance in terms of attainment of student learning outcomes, either individual or in the aggregate.
- Supplements this information with additional evidence of the soundness of operation and overall effectiveness of a major, program or institution with respect to mission fulfillment.

Criterion 4: Using Outcomes for Improvement

Evidence of how information about student learning outcomes is used to further improve a major, program or institution.

Applicants are asked to describe how a major, program or institution:

- Incorporates information about success with student learning outcomes into regular discussions and decision-making processes about a major, program or institution.
- Shares information about student learning outcomes across, for example, departments, faculty and schools.
- Uses information about student learning outcomes when making specific changes in, for example, curriculum, pedagogy or policy.

- Ensures that evidence of student learning outcomes is used to assure and improve the quality of a major, program or institution.

CHEA AWARD SELECTION COMMITTEE

The selection committee includes individuals from higher education institutions, accreditation organizations and the public.

- Roger Benjamin, President and Chief Executive Officer, *Council for Aid to Education*
- John Dill, Deputy Chancellor, *Office of the Chancellor for Education and Professional Development, Department of Defense*
- Peter Ewell, Vice President, *National Center for Higher Education Management Systems*
- Bret Eynon, Assistant Dean, Center for Teaching and Learning, *LaGuardia Community College*
- Debra Humphreys, Vice President, Communications and Public Affairs, *Association of American Colleges and Universities*
- Laura Palmer Noone, President Emerita, *University of Phoenix*
- Kathleen O'Brien, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, *Alverno College*
- Jerry Trapnell, Executive Vice President and Chief Accreditation Officer, *The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International*
- Belle Wheelan, President, *Southern Association of Colleges and Schools*

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