

## Navigating Complexity, Centering Reflection, and Reimagining Assessment

### Note from the Editor-in-Chief

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Welcome to the 2025 AALHE Conference Proceedings issue of *Intersection: A Journal at the Intersection of Assessment and Learning*! The Proceedings of the AALHE Conference serve several important functions: they act as a rich resource for anyone interested in assessment, offer best practices shared by member institutions at the AALHE Conference, and support, document, and affirm the valuable contributions of presenters. The Conference Proceedings are also reflective of AALHE's mission and values of advocacy, belonging, curiosity, and integrity.

This issue brings together a collection of 12 articles that originated as presentations at the 2025 Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE) annual conference. Our authors highlighted the ongoing cultural shift from compliance-driven assessment toward approaches that center on student learning and faculty engagement.

Since accreditation requirements are a key interest for the assessment community, [Carter \(2025\)](#) demonstrated the alignment of requirements across accreditation agencies, showing that many standards are highly comparable. This work supports advocacy for a more coherent and transparent approach to assessment that ensures institutions can meet expectations while prioritizing meaningful student learning. In *Reimagining Accreditation*, [Miller \(2025\)](#) challenged the compliance-driven assessment and argued for a more learning-centered and inquiry-driven process that fosters curiosity and reflective practice among faculty. The aim of this article is clear: to assess student learning more deeply and treat assessment as a scholarly inquiry, emphasizing integrity in evidence-based decision-making. In the *2023 Landscape Report* ([Song et al., 2025](#)), the authors provide survey results on current practices, challenges, and perceptions among assessment leaders. The findings underscore the importance of legitimacy, resource allocation, and institutional culture, highlighting how a sense of belonging within institutional communities shapes the effectiveness and impact of assessment efforts.

In *Upending Current Assessment Practices*, Flateby (2025) advocated for assessment as a collaborative, values-driven process, emphasizing alignment with faculty priorities and leveraging Gen AI to make evidence-based practices more accessible and sustainable. The theme of reflective practice is also developed in *A Reflective Practice Process for Using Student Feedback to Enhance Teaching* ([Barta & Mora, 2025](#)), which introduces a structured, research-informed instructional inquiry cycle for faculty to interpret and act on student feedback. I believe you will find the reflection sheet in this article to be very helpful.

Innovation in assessment design is exemplified by *Creating a Novel School-Wide Assessment for Evaluating the Effective Use of Information Technology Skills* ([Robertson et al., 2025](#)). Here, a small faculty cohort redesigned tools to assess students' Information Technology Skills and inform course development. Similarly, [Serslev & Wright \(2025\)](#) demonstrated how centralized efforts can advance

civic engagement through the curriculum and campus initiatives, highlighting how institutional practices can nurture students' sense of belonging and responsibility.

Expanding student learning outcome from cognitive to affective domains, *A Transformative Mixed-Methods Study: Legitimizing Affective Learning Outcomes Assessment* ([Song & Nix, 2025](#)) investigates how nursing programs assess values, attitudes, and dispositions, revealing a significant link between affective assessment efforts and student retention. This work underscores the need for holistic approaches that recognize the interplay of cognitive and affective domains in student success. Complementing this, *Nine Ways Collaborative Assessment Can Drive Student Success* ([Miller & Felix, 2025](#)) shows how Institutional Research & Assessment can shift from report-writing to informing strategic decision-making. In addition, [Schellpfeffer \(2025\)](#) presented a tool for curricular analytics designed to address structural barriers to learning, providing foundational information for users to engage curiously in their own educational contexts.

Leadership and organizational context emerge as critical factors in assessment practice. Navigating volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA) and brittle, anxious, nonlinear, and incomprehensible (BANI) ([Tucker & Polychronopoulos, 2025](#)), demonstrated reflective leadership at the conference presentation, emphasizing intentional and self-aware responses to external challenges.

Finally, the Intersection Committee leaders hosted a workshop at the conference on the topic of *Growing the Field* ([Gibbons et al., 2025](#)), providing insights on how to increase scholarship and detailing the manuscript journey from conceptualization to research design. This effort exemplifies our commitment to advocacy, belonging, and curiosity, as it fosters a supportive scholarly community that values rigorous inquiry and collaborative growth.

The articles in this conference proceedings issue also challenge us to reconsider what assessment can be. They remind us that assessment involves more than just outcomes; it also includes relationships, reflection, and responsiveness. I encourage assessment practitioners to reflect on how these ideas might influence our practice and to participate in the ongoing discussion about the future of assessment in higher education.

To contribute to this issue, the following is a list of Editors. Please note that editors do not take part in reviewing their own submissions. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the editors for their efforts and insightful comments that enhanced the quality of this issue.

Rebecca Gibbons, Amy Heston, Curtis Jefferson, Fiorella Penaloza, Nishala Silva, Roger Taylor, Sarah Wu

As we move forward, I warmly encourage all assessment practitioners to consider sharing your insights and innovations with the wider community. Publishing your work not only advances the field but also contributes to the collective growth and understanding of our dynamic profession.