

President's Letter

By André Foisy



Do you ask what progress I have made? I have begun to be a friend to myself.
-Hecato of Rhodes

A cloud of uncertainty lingers over higher education institutions. While higher education professionals have historically been slow to adapt to change, the current pandemic has forced faculty and staff members to quickly shift. Discussions about continuous improvement have been superseded by those focused on responses to the current crisis. The experiences of assessment practitioners have varied and must be understood through the lens of the complex imbrications of their work on individual campuses operating in specific localities within different governance regions. AALHE-related meetings and events, such as the Assessment Learning Exchange, have helped me to understand some of the myriad ways that other assessment practitioners have experienced the pandemic—on their campuses, in their workplaces, and throughout their lives.

As an executive director of institutional outcomes assessment at an online institution located in Albany, NY, I had to adapt to an almost entirely remote workforce. Fortunately, the pandemic minimally impacted our ability to provide educational experiences to students. It did, however, impact our students, many of which are employed adults spread out throughout the U.S. We have done our best to meet them where they are and respond flexibly and empathetically. Personally, I have found myself working longer hours and occasionally suffering from what has now been termed “Zoom fatigue.” Fortunately, my new office mate, Penelope, a quirky wire-haired dachshund, has reminded me that I’m a human. Even with her support, I have had to remind myself to engage in self-care practices to help me support AALHE members and Excelsior College students and faculty members more sustainably.

The quote from Hecato of Rhodes, a Stoic philosopher, is trenchant at the current moment since so many of us are spending time socially distanced or alone. Each of us are navigating the pandemic based on our own positionality. While many of us deal with new intra-campus anxieties, there are also new ones requiring responses outside the ivory tower. During this time, I encourage you to reflect on Hecato’s statement and think about how to become your own friend. If you’re successful, then you’ll always have a friend. Of course, our organization is here to help you connect with other assessment-related friends if you need them.

Lastly, I’d like to offer my gratitude to Kathleen Gorski, AALHE’s Publications Committee members, and authors for co-creating the current issue of *Intersection*. I continue to be impressed by the continual evolution of this publication and I am excited for you to experience the new design and look of the publication.

André Foisy is the President of the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education and the Executive Director of Institutional Outcomes Assessment at Excelsior College. He can be reached at afoisy@aalhe.org.

Letter from the Editor-In-Chief

By Kathleen Gorski

Welcome to the fall 2020 edition of AALHE's quarterly publication: *Persevering During a Pandemic*.

This spring as we entered the global pandemic, our Emerging Dialogues and Intersection committee members supported each other by sharing strategies on how each of our institutions were managing remote instruction and assessing student learning. These conversations helped us endure our new entirely remote environment. It was during these conversations that the idea for this edition of was formed.

This issue was created in collaboration with both the Emerging Dialogues and Intersection committee teams. We asked authors to share informal stories or reflections regarding how institutions are maintaining assessment practices (or not) during our current situation.

We received many quality submissions and hope you find some support in these articles as we continue to navigate the effects of COVID-19. We thank our authors; their work continues to inform and inspire.

We would like to thank our Emerging Dialogues and Intersection Committee members for their dedication to the completion of this issue during an especially difficult time. We also want to express our appreciation to Giovanna Badia, Assessment Librarian at McGill University in Montreal, Canada for her introduction to this issue.

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