

## Note from the Guest Editor

By Karen E. Singer-Freeman

Welcome to the latest edition of *Intersection: A Journal at the Intersection of Assessment and Learning*, The Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE's) quarterly publication. This issue of *Intersection* includes articles discussing ways to address Grand Challenges in Assessment.

I would like to thank the editorial board for the hard work of preparing this special edition!

The field of assessment has moved beyond conducting assessment to demonstrate compliance and is ready to use assessment for improvement. In 2018, a national survey identified three compelling challenges facing assessment in higher education: 1) Using assessment findings to direct immediate pedagogical improvements; 2) Using assessment findings to increase equity; 3) Producing visible and actionable assessment findings that drive innovation and improvement (Singer-Freeman & Robinson, 2020a; 2020b). This spring's edition resulted from a special call for articles discussing ways to address these Grand Challenges in Assessment. In this issue, authors describe practical ways campus leaders and assessment professionals can begin to address these challenges resulting in rapid and important improvements on their campuses that increase equity, learning improvement, and evidenced-based decision making.

The first group of articles explore ways to increase the extent to which assessment findings drive innovation and improvement. *Producing actionable and accessible results that drive innovation and improvement* (Dear et al.) presents a broad overview of ways to improve the creation of assessment plans, collection of assessment data, and reporting of assessment findings that will increase the extent to which assessments effectively direct innovative improvements. The next two articles focus on challenges to and opportunities for improving the quality of assessment data that examine student learning. *Making assessment actionable through assessor training: A tool for building trust through moderation and calibration* (Karnas-Haines) lays out a process by which the creation of online calibration training can improve the validity of assessments across different instructors. *Connecting assessment with teaching through faculty capacity building: An example of an oral communication assessment project* (Hill & Stitt-Bergh) provides a case study of an assessment-for-improvement project that explicitly connected assessment with pedagogy, formed partnerships, honored instructor expertise, facilitated reflections, and prompted actions to increase the extent to which assessment findings were actionable. The final two articles in this section look more broadly at how we can maximize the extent to which assessment data are used for improvements. *Promising failure: Driving innovation by exposing imperfection* (Tucker & Stanny) explores the benefits of careful examination of failed efforts at improvement and offers two models for use by practitioners. Finally, *Integrated planning: The difference that makes a difference in institutional effectiveness over time* (Hoshaw, et al.) considers ways to ensure that assessments track changes over time and are used to direct long-range planning.

The second group of articles consider the intersection of equity and assessment. *Equity in assessment: The grand challenge and exploration of the current landscape* (Milligan et al.) provides a historical analysis of the ways in which the origins of assessment influence current practices and suggests ways in



which equity considerations should inform assessment practices. *Intentional stakeholder engagement that fosters innovation and equity* (Moreno & Song) discusses effective models for stakeholder engagement that allow for honest conversations about assessment findings and consider ways to create safe spaces for conversations about assessments that support equity and invite full participation from diverse groups of stakeholders. Finally, *Ethical reasoning and the five roles of the assessment practitioner* (Robinson, Hawk, Horst, & Prendergast) presents eight key questions that can guide assessment practitioners as they navigate the ethical questions that arise when institutions work to address educational equity gaps.

We would like to thank the authors in this edition. Their work continues to inform and inspire. We hope you will consider submitting an article for a future issue to contribute to scholarship in the assessment of student learning.

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Singer-Freeman, K. E. & Robinson, C. (2020a). Grand challenges in assessment: Collective issues in need of solutions. *NILOA Occasional Paper 47*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. 1-18.

<https://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GrandChallenges.pdf>

Singer-Freeman, K. E. & Robinson, C. (2020b). Grand challenges for assessment in higher education. *Journal of Research and Practice in Assessment*. 15(2), 1-20. <https://www.rpajournal.com/dev/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Grand-Challenges-for-Assessment-in-Higher-Education.pdf>