

## What is the Assessment Newsletter?

Montclair State University's Assessment Newsletter highlights administrator, faculty and staff efforts in assessment, as well as assessment events that take place inside and outside the University.

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# ASSESSMENT MATTERS

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AT MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY



## The Middle States Self-Study 2015-2016 Self-Study Design Document Approved

*By Dr. Joanne Coté-Bonanno*

**A**fter a successful visit on April 28, 2015 with our Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) liaison and vice president, Dr. Ellie Fogarty, the Montclair State Self-Study Design Document was approved on July 17, 2015.

Thank you to all members of the University community who

participated in the visit and preparation of the document.

The Self-Study is a multi-year process that involves discussion, critical inquiry and report preparation that carefully documents the institution's progress over time. While the Self-Study Design Document serves as a blueprint for the entire Self-Study process, it is now time



to move on to the critical step of completing the Self-Study!

*...Continued inside*



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# The Middle States Self-Study 2015-2016

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The Middle States Commission noted in their approval how very pleased they are that Montclair State agreed to participate in the Collaborative Implementation Project (CIP). They are appreciative of our ongoing feedback and they are using some of our strategies as “models of implementation.” The Montclair State Executive Leadership Team will be participating and presenting at the MSCHE Fall Meetings for Self-Study Development throughout the region.

MSCHE also commented on the following in their approval:

- It is ideal that Montclair State is leveraging existing committees such as CUE to serve as the Steering Committee.
- The Montclair Working Group charges are mission-centered – exactly what accreditation is all about.
- The MSCHE revised standards align very well with the five goals of Montclair State’s Strategic Plan.

- While the Commission endorses all of our intended outcomes, they strongly endorse our intended outcome to use the Self-Study process and the campus-wide involvement to study the University’s achievements as they relate to the standards.
- Share ideas for the development of the next strategic plan that will guide the future.

This year, the Self-Study Working Groups will continue

their work and gather data and reports, and conduct interviews and focus groups to examine the University’s compliance with accreditation standards. As we move into this critical phase of inquiry, analysis and preparation of the Self-Study, we will again look to you for your participation and support of these efforts.

## The Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

Joanne Coté-Bonanno  
Joan Besing  
Christine Lemesianou

## Assessment Liaison Highlights



### Yasemin Besen-Cassino, PhD

Associate Professor,  
Sociology

**Y**asemin Besen-Cassino is an associate professor of Sociology here at Montclair State University. She received her PhD in Sociology from SUNY Stony Brook in 2005. Dr. Besen-Cassino conducts

research that focuses on gender, work and sociology of youth. She also serves as the book review editor of *Gender & Society*.

Dr. Besen-Cassino states that assessment is a joint project in the Department of Sociology. Assessment is conducted in several different classes and involves the effort of the entire department. She emphasizes that “by assessing the learning goals, it gives the department a chance to improve a wide range of classes and update them constantly.”

Currently, the department is assessing three goals and each goal is assessed in three classes. For each goal, there are faculty teams assigned. Each faculty team is responsible for creating the tools, rubrics and collecting

the data. Dr. Besen-Cassino’s role is to facilitate the process.

Dr. Besen-Cassino also states that organization is key when dealing with assessment data. Her approach to assessment is similar to her approach to the big data sets that she deals with in her everyday

research. She also underlines how important coordination and communication is when collecting assessment data from many faculty members. Assessment is an essential part of their department and is addressed frequently in their departmental meetings.





# Assessment Liaison Highlights



**Dawn Marie Hayes, PhD**

**Associate Professor, History**

**D**awn Hayes is an associate professor of Medieval European History and she started working at Montclair State University in 2003. As an associate professor in the History Department, Dr. Hayes expresses how fortunate

she is to be working with a wonderful group of colleagues and having the pleasure of leading the department in the assessment process.

The History Department currently consists of 17 full-time and 11 adjunct faculty. The department's faculty covers a vast range of geographical regions as well as a broad spectrum of time. When asked of the role assessment plays in the History Department, Dr. Hayes answered, "Assessment helps us understand whether we are meeting the program learning goals that we value collectively – objectives that are discipline-specific, but are not bound by time or space. The process also enables us to track the goals over time, and determine whether our majors

are honing critical skills during the time they are with us." Dr. Hayes also emphasizes the importance of having clear and concise learning goals. She states that it is "especially valuable to make a short list of clearly worded goals on which the department's faculty agree, and once the goals have been created, an instrument needs to be developed to help faculty indicate the level of success with which their students have met those goals."

In explaining the process of collecting and completing the assessment of the History Department, Dr. Hayes explains that it is very valuable to come up with a method that allows for flexibility, but at the same time does not overwhelm instructors with too many options. She

contacts faculty members who will be providing assessment data at the very beginning of the semester and reminds them of the deadline again in the final weeks of the semester. The deadline given to faculty members is normally one week earlier than the one announced by the Provost's Office which gives adequate time to reach out to colleagues about the assessment process if needed. So far, Dr. Hayes states that her colleagues have completed the rubrics easily, and as a result, the collection of data has gone smoothly. She is pleased with how efficient the process has been and is grateful for the willing participation of her department, and the members of the Provost's Assessment Team.

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## Classics and General Humanities Holds Fourth Annual Workshop for Departmental Adjuncts

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**P**rogram coordinators Alison Beringer and Glen Gill for Humanities and Myth Studies in the Department of Classics and General Humanities held their fourth annual workshop for departmental adjuncts on August 20, 2015. The workshop serves as an opportunity to welcome new adjunct faculty as well as to see those who have been with the department for several years. It also provides an opportunity for staff and adjuncts to discuss key topics, programs and issues that they would like to raise. This year's workshop focused on assessment at the

University and the General Education Program. In attendance were Associate Provost Joanne Coté-Bonanno and Assessment Coordinator Irina Koroleva. They provided important information and explanation on assessment and assessment processes here at Montclair State University. Dr. Beringer's reason for focusing on assessment matters in this year's workshop was to give adjunct faculty a better understanding of what assessment is, why it is important to the University community, the important role they play in the process and how the data collected is utilized.

The assessment team in the Office of the Provost welcomes you back to a new academic year and looks forward to working together to achieve the assessment goals for academic year 2015-2016.

# What is the Difference Between Assessment and Evaluation?

Assessment and evaluation are often confused. Therefore, it is important to understand the difference between these two concepts, which have similar methods, but have different goals.

The main goal of assessment is to improve student learning. Assessment helps to ensure the following:

- Institutional and program-level goals are clear to the public, students, faculty and staff.
- Institutional programs and resources are organized and coordinated to achieve institutional and program-level goals.
- The institution is indeed achieving its mission and goals.
- The institution is using assessment results to improve student learning and otherwise advance the institution. (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2007, p.75).

While assessment focuses on how well student learning goals are achieved, evaluation addresses how well all the major goals of a program are achieved (Suskie, 2009).

Evaluation is using assessment information to:

- Make informed judgment on whether students have achieved the learning goals established for them.
- Investigate and judge the quality or worth of a program, project or other entity rather than student learning.

Thus, evaluation is “the analysis and use of data by faculty to make judgments about student performance. Evaluation includes the determination of a grade or a decision regarding pass/fail for an individual assignment or for a course.” (Goldman & Zakel, 2009)

## References

Goldman, G. K. & Zakel, L. E. (2009). Clarification of assessment and evaluation. *Assessment Update*. 21 (3), 8-9.

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Suskie, L. (2009). *Assessing Student learning: a common sense guide* (2nd Ed.). San-Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.



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