

# Funded Assessment Grant Proposals

## Bucknell University

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### Academic Year 2018-2019

#### Proposal Topic: Student-Led Focus Groups to Assess the Inclusivity of Counseling Services

Grant Recipients: Christopher Connacher, Staff Psychologist, Counseling & Student Development Center (CSDC); Jasmine Mena, Assistant Professor of Psychology

*Note: This grant proposal involves a collaboration between a staff member and a faculty member.*

Category: Performing Assessment

Description:

The funding will be used to recruit and train focus group facilitators, recruit focus group participants, and transcribe recordings made of focus groups. The transcripts will be analyzed and summarized using qualitative research methods, and the findings will be reported to both the campus community as well as the broader scientific community in the form of a conference presentation or a journal article.

Impact:

This project is well aligned with the CSDC's mission, and serves to further this mission. The information learned from the focus groups will be used to enhance the CSDC's approach to serving the needs of students who are members of populations that historically underutilize counseling services.

Plans to Share:

The information gathered from the focus groups will be shared with the entire CSDC staff in order to foster conversation about CSDC policy and practice, as well as with the Division of Student Affairs in the form of a presentation. In addition, the methodology and materials will be shared with any program or department interested in conducting a similar assessment project. Finally, with appropriate IRB approval, the findings will be presented at a conference and submitted for publication.

## Academic Year 2017-2018

### Proposal Topic: Juried Assessment of Student Writing in W1 and W2 Courses

Grant Recipient: Abe Feuerstein, Professor of Education, Director of the Writing Center, Chair of the Writing Across the Curriculum Council

Category: Performing Assessment

Description:

The juried assessment of student writing will focus on a random selection of both W1 and W2 courses. Instructors in those courses will assist their students in uploading one paper completed toward the end of the course (all students in the course should submit the same assignment) to an online database, while the instructors will be asked to upload a copy of the writing assignment used to generate the papers. Faculty participating in the assessment will first be trained on using a shared, previously developed rubric, and then be responsible for independently reading and assessing 20 student papers. Each paper will be evaluated by two different jurors. The jurors will then convene to discuss and calibrate the scores.

Impact:

"This process will help us to identify the strengths and weaknesses in our students' writing and will inform the professional development provided by the Writing Center for teachers participating in the

Writing Program. For example, if we find that students need more practice with particular aspects of writing such as awareness of audience, we will have a data-informed rationale for making changes to the program.”

Plans to Share:

“In addition to summarizing our methodology and findings in the Writing Program’s annual report, we will also be able to share our developing knowledge of jury-based assessment practices with other groups or divisions considering such a proposal.”

## Proposal Topic: Student-Led Focus Groups to Assess Civic Engagement

Grant Recipient: Coralynn Davis, Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies and of Anthropology, Faculty Director for Academic Civic Engagement

Category: Performing Assessment

Description:

The project involves student-led focus groups to collect qualitative data on student perceptions, beliefs, and experiences with regard to service-learning (SL) and community-based learning (CBL) courses, in order to improve civic education and engagement on Bucknell campus. These assessment results will also inform the work of the Civic Engagement Work Force charged with creating a Civic Action Plan for Bucknell.

Impact:

In the short term, the focus group data will provide useful insights regarding the learning outcomes and impacts of SL/CBL courses on Bucknell students. In the long run, this information may help to create high impact experiences for our students while partnering with broader community constituencies to serve community needs; as well as to improve professional development opportunities for faculty who are engaging or wish to engage in SL/CBL pedagogies. Overall, this assessment research will enhance Bucknell's capacity to meet its mission to "...educate our students to serve the common good and to promote justice in ways sensitive to the moral and ethical dimensions of life," and to "foster...an environment in which students develop intellectual maturity, personal conviction and strength of character, informed by a deep understanding of different cultures and diverse perspectives."

Plans to Share:

Following the completion of qualitative data analyses, the results from the focus groups will be summarized in a report and shared with faculty, staff, and administrators in both written and presentation form. “Furthermore, the faculty, staff and students involved in facilitating and/or analyzing the data from the focus groups will also be able to provide advice and support to others who would like to adopt similar strategies.”

## Proposal Topic: Attending the AACSB Seminar and Revising College-Wide Assessment Plan

Grant Recipient: Skip McGoun, Professor of Management, Chair of the College of Management Assessment Committee

Category: Learning about Assessment/ Performing Assessment

### Description:

The grant will support the attendance of two faculty members (and members of the College's Assessment Committee) at the AACSB Assurance of Learning seminar in Baltimore, MD, in preparation for an accreditation visit and in part motivated by the need to revise the current assessment processes in the College from group-based assessment to individual-student-based assessment. While at the seminar, the two faculty members will draft a revised comprehensive assessment plan, which will then be reviewed, elaborated and finalized in collaboration with the rest of the Assessment Committee and other faculty in the College. The implementation of the assessment will start immediately, to ensure that the required student learning data is on hand for the accreditation visit.

### Impact:

"Our goal is to acquire accurate and useful information about student learning and students' progress towards specific meaningful learning goals; therefore, the Committee's efforts will be successful if the assessment process actually yields valuable data used by the faculty in pedagogical and curricular decisions at all levels of the College to improve student learning in the College and help students be better prepared for their professional, civic, and personal lives in today's world."

### Plans to Share:

"We will necessarily be sharing the results with faculty across the College of Management to help them improve their courses and the educational experiences of their students. Beyond that, we would be pleased to present our approach in campus-wide events focused on teaching and pedagogy (such as the Friday Learning Series) or on assessment of student learning (such as an Assessment Lunch)."

## Proposal: Attending NASPA Persistence and Assessment Conference

Grant Recipient: Darren Jones, Associate Dean of Students for Living, Learning, and Leadership, Student Affairs

Category: Learning about Assessment

### Description:

The funding will allow one staff member to attend the NASPA Persistence and Assessment conference in Baltimore, MD, including a pre-conference workshop on implementing an assessment framework to support division planning. This conference is designed to promote student learning and success by strengthening assessment, improving educational quality, and developing intentional persistence programming. Specifically, the conference will help the staff member to enhance his expertise in:

institutional assessment of student learning and persistence practices, in the context of Student Affairs; building a culture of assessment in Student Affairs departments; and gaining a deeper understanding of best practices in assessment of student experience.

Impact:

“The benefit of attending the conference is to be better equipped to lead assessment efforts in the department. Guiding assessment for pillar will impact individual offices and programs to evaluate current operations and programs. The short-term benefit is launching an assessment strategy. There has not been a comprehensive assessment approach in the areas under Living, Learning, & Leadership. This will allow the areas to think strategically about priorities, resource allocation, and areas for improvement. The long-term benefit is establishing a culture of assessment that promotes continuous improvement and data-driven decision making.”

Plans to Share:

“I will create a draft assessment plan and present to the Student Affairs Leadership team. After feedback, I will consult with the Dean of Students to establish a timeline of implementation and develop a pilot training for my direct reports after office initiatives are created from strategic planning. I will guide offices to conduct a self-evaluation of assessment standards and create plans for improvement. I will also conduct ongoing trainings with the areas under my office connected with the performance plans.”

## Proposal Topic: ACTFL Assessment of Oral Language Proficiency in Spanish Majors

Grant Recipient: Elisabeth Guerrero, Professor of Spanish, Chair of Spanish Department

Category: Performing Assessment

Description:

The grant will support administration of ACTFL oral proficiency test (a paid interview) to 21 graduating Spanish majors, as part of the department's assessment of their majors' oral proficiency.

Impact:

“We can use this information to see where there may be gaps and to reshape our language classes and study abroad programs in order to further improve our students’ oral proficiency.”

“It will be useful in ascertaining how well we are achieving the goal of advanced oral proficiency. The students will also benefit from determining what areas of proficiency they can improve. Furthermore, they continue to be able to use this official assessment after graduation, whenever they apply for jobs that require bilingual skills.”

Plans to Share:

“We can share our experience working with ACTFL and our results with other departments, particularly the three other departments that teach language: East Asian Studies, Modern Languages, and Classics.”

## Proposal Topic: Assessment of Learning Outcomes in Education

Grant Recipient: Sue Ellen Henry, Professor of Education, former Director of the Teaching & Learning Center

Category: Performing Assessment

### Description:

Two faculty members will assess key learning outcomes in both BSED and BA programs, including assessment of course content that fulfills the outcomes (syllabi and assignments) as well as assessment of student artifacts that demonstrate these outcomes (student eportfolios). In addition, the fit between the program experiences (coursework, fieldwork, and assignments) and program competencies will also be assessed. This comprehensive assessment is in part motivated by the upcoming accreditation review by the PA Department of Education.

### Impact:

“It is a high priority for our department that our programs meet expected outcome competencies associated with these experiences. Our teacher education candidates are preparing to step into challenging assignments as classroom teachers; our BA candidates are preparing for graduate work and careers influencing educational policy and practice both here and abroad. This summer work will prepare our faculty to revise assignments to more strongly support the important professional and intellectual expectations of thinkers of education. Additionally, our summary report will make recommendations about adjustment to the scope and sequence of program courses and experiences to better capitalize on their potential. In the most long-term view, remaining a viable department and program offering for professional and intellectual service to education remains a key outcome for our department. We have been offering professional certification for teachers for 102 years at Bucknell. We wish to remain a strong contributor to teachers in the state and to thinkers of education throughout the nation.”

### Plans to Share:

“Because we are a unique department with both professional and liberal arts preparation, we would be happy to work with other departments in Engineering and Management to discuss the particular challenges of meeting both internal expectations and external accreditation outcomes. Our e-portfolio assignment is well positioned to make this sort of assessment in other departments easier. We would be happy to be part of a panel discussion or offer lunches with department chairs exploring the organization and execution of such an internal examination that prepares a department for external review and internal monitoring.”

## Proposal Topic: Advance Training in Data Dashboard Creation Using Tableau

Grant Recipient: Rita Liu, Assistant Director of Institutional Research, Office of Institutional Research & Planning (OIRP)

Category: Learning about Assessment

### Description:

The funding will allow one staff member to participate in 2-day advanced training in Tableau, a platform used for creating and sharing interactive data dashboards. The training is delivered via an online class, and covers a range of practical topics and skills of relevance to Bucknell community and their data needs.

### Impact:

“Continued professional development with respect to developing effective data dashboards to satisfy the needs and interests of different stakeholders is one of my annual work goals. After attending the online class, I should be well prepared to visualize our survey results when we do survey assessment and fulfil this goal. At the OIR&P office level, this will add important new expertise, enhancing our team’s ability to assist and guide our faculty and staff colleagues in using assessment data in their decision making. At the institutional level, I will be able to share this expertise by providing consultations to any faculty or staff who are interested in employing Tableau as a tool in visualizing data in their assessment work.

The OIR&P plays a crucial role with respect to supporting, coordinating, and empowering assessment of student learning and educational effectiveness across all the academic and non-academic units. We are collecting rich assessment data, but we are facing the challenge of how to effectively share these assessment results with various stakeholders across campus, and how to encourage the use of assessment data for improvement. Tableau data visualizations are a very powerful approach to data sharing, and it should lead to more Bucknell faculty, staff, and other stakeholders using assessment data on a more regular basis.”

### Plans to Share:

“The learning materials that I receive from the online class will be shared with our OIR&P colleagues. I am also planning to offer consultations to OIR&P colleagues, faculty, and staff who have survey data visualization questions. Finally, depending on colleagues’ needs and interests, I plan to offer short presentations on data visualization in Tableau at assessment-related events such as the Assessment Lunch in 2018-2019, to further share my knowledge of this powerful tool with Bucknell faculty and staff.”

## Academic Year 2016-2017

### Proposal Topic: Development and Pilot Testing of New Assessment Rubric in Literary Studies

Grant Recipient: Jean Peterson, Associate Professor, English Department, Chair of Assessment Committee in Literary Studies

Category: Performing Assessment

Description:

The funding will support the development and pilot testing of a new mode of direct assessment of student learning in Literary Studies, following the structural reorganization of the English Department into three programs (Literary Studies, Creative Writing, and Film & Media Studies). The program faculty will generate a new rubric, which will then be used by independent reviewers (adjunct faculty hired for that purpose) to assess a sample of student essays in lights of specific learning outcomes. The results will be discussed and the rubric normed for future use in assessing student writing artifacts in the program.

Impact:

“The rubric will allow us to gather knowledge about our majors' progress as scholars and writers, from a specifically literary studies viewpoint. This pilot will give the committee a baseline to gauge future student progress in the 199 survey; it will also ground the development of future direct assessments at the program level. We will use the results to plan and execute appropriate changes to our courses to improve student learning outcomes. This ensures the sustainability of this assessment, since it facilitates the overarching goals of the program to train its majors in the critical aptitude and thoughtful written communication that are crucial to our humanistic mission.”

Plans to Share:

“The program committee will present the results of our assessment to the department as a whole; we will also invite other units on campus to our presentation via the Message Board. We will gladly share the materials, process, and results with other programs and departments interested in developing similar direct assessments of student writing.”

### Proposal Topic: Student-Led Focus Groups to Assess Student Writing Development

Grant Recipient: Abe Feuerstein, Professor of Education, Director of the Writing Center, Chair of the Writing Across the Curriculum Council

Category: Performing Assessment

Description:

“One element of our assessment plan that we have not yet been able to implement is the collection of qualitative data aimed at helping the WAC Council to better understand students’ subjective assessment



of their writing instruction at Bucknell and their development as writers. To develop a better understanding of students' experiences with respect to writing instruction and their development as writers, we are proposing a focus group based assessment with students in the class of 2017. A more nuanced understanding of students' experiences will help the Writing Program adjust expectations for WI courses and may also inform efforts to provide professional development to faculty involved in teaching WI courses. While a limitation of focus groups is their small size, we believe that the detailed insights made possible through conversation with students cannot be collected in other ways."

Impact:

"This assessment process will be successful if we are able to better understand students' on-the-ground experience of learning to write at Bucknell, which will help us to understand the strengths and weaknesses of our writing program. For example, if we find that students need more support or additional direct instruction from their WI instructors, we will have a data-informed rationale for making changes to the program."

Plans to Share:

"In addition to summarizing our methodology and findings in the Writing Program's annual report, the faculty and students involved in both training focus group leaders and carrying out the focus groups will be able to provide advice and support to others who would like to adopt similar strategies. We anticipate that the students trained in running focus groups for the Writing Program might also be able to facilitate focus groups in other areas."

## Proposal Topic: Qualitative Research Training for Assessment

Grant Recipient: Agnes Jasinska, Assessment Coordinator, Office of Institutional Research & Planning

Category: Learning about Assessment

Description:

The funding will allow one staff member to attend the 14th Annual Qualitative Research Summer Intensive, a 5-day training workshop on qualitative research, including focus group methodology, qualitative data coding and analysis, and using qualitative research for institutional improvement.

Impact:

Qualitative research can provide uniquely rich information about topics that we care about in assessment, and as such, it could enhance the quality of assessment efforts at Bucknell.

Plans to Share:

"After attending the workshop, I should be well prepared to assist faculty and staff interested in employing qualitative research methodology in their assessment work. In this way, I will add another area of expertise to our collective expertise at the Office of Institutional Research & Planning. And this new expertise will in turn benefit everyone at Bucknell when I use it to help faculty and staff conduct better assessment and use the results for continued improvement. (...) In addition, I will put together a

workshop to train others (including faculty, staff, and students) in how to conduct such research, focusing on practical consideration and on the use of the results for program improvement (as opposed to academic research aimed at peer-reviewed publication)."

## Appendix 1. Assessment Grant Proposal Form 2018-19

### BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT GRANT PROPOSAL FORM

#### Academic Year 2018-19 and Summer 2019

The Provost's Office, the Committee on Assessment, and the Office of Institutional Research & Planning recognize the value to our campus that derives from encouraging and supporting assessment of student learning outcomes and institutional/unit effectiveness. Therefore, the Office of the Provost has allocated financial resources to foster the culture of assessment at Bucknell.

Funding is available for two categories of activity: 1) *Performing Assessment* (open to faculty and staff, but staff may be ineligible to use funds for stipend, depending on their contract), and 2) *Learning about Assessment* (open to both). Proposals that emphasize performing assessment will be given funding priority. All faculty and staff under the Provost's Office are eligible to apply.

Please fill out the information below and email a complete application to Agnes Jasinska, Assessment Coordinator, at [ajj006@bucknell.edu](mailto:ajj006@bucknell.edu). Applications are open and accepted on a rolling basis.

Name:	
Department/ Program:	
Role: ( ) Full Professor ( ) Associate Professor ( ) Assistant Professor ( ) Visiting/ Adjunct ( ) Staff (who teach) ( ) Staff (administration) ( ) Other <i>If Other, please explain:</i>	
Grant Category (select one): ( ) Performing Assessment ( ) Learning about Assessment	
Expected Start Date:	Expected End Date:
<b>Project was discussed with, and approved by the Department Chair, Program Director, Unit Supervisor, or (if assessing Core Curriculum) the Dean of Arts &amp; Sciences.</b> ( ) Yes      Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____	

Your funding proposal should address the following points. Please attach additional pages as necessary.

1. Briefly comment on past experience and current involvement in assessment, if any.
2. Describe the assessment-related activities that this funding will support. Please be specific. Include a timeline and a budget (with an explanation of how the funds will be used, when, and in what amount); as well as the learning goals or strategic/operational outcome/s that the project will assess. *Note that the primary intent of the grant is to support **new or innovative** assessment projects, or substantial **revisions or updates** to the existing assessment processes, procedures, or measures, at Bucknell.*
3. What tangible benefits to you, your students and/or to your department or program do you anticipate from these activities? Consider both short- and long-term benefits. *Please note that the Assessment Grant should not duplicate funding already in place (e.g., summer funding with expectations of assessment work).*
4. How will you evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed activities? How do you define success?
5. As an Assessment Grant Recipient, how will you share the products, results, or knowledge obtained in the course of the proposed activities with other faculty and staff on Bucknell campus? Outline a plan. *Note that this commitment can be fulfilled by giving one or more presentations, organizing a workshop, or providing action-based assistance to other faculty/departments, with the goal of advancing the assessment culture.*

### GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT GRANT PROPOSALS

Examples of assessment-related activities in the Performing Assessment grant category:

- Development and pilot testing of new assessment methods (interactive simulations or apps, portfolios of student work, rubrics, pre- and post-test such as concept inventories, focus groups, surveys, etc.) to assess departmental student learning outcomes or operational outcomes
- Adapting of existing assessment methods, such as the AAC&U VALUE rubrics for assessing general education learning outcomes ([www.aacu.org/value](http://www.aacu.org/value)), to your department's needs
- Assessing the effects of High-Impact Practices (undergraduate research, service learning, study abroad, residential colleges, student ePortfolia, etc.) on student learning outcomes
- Effective use of assessment data to drive changes in the curriculum ("closing the loop"), in order to better align them with the departmental student learning outcomes or Bucknell's educational goals
- Transforming an assessment project or assessment work into publishable research

Examples of assessment-related activities in the Learning about Assessment grant category:

- Attending an off-campus assessment workshop/conference (such as those hosted by AAC&U)
- Hiring a disciplinary-specific consultant to provide training or guidance to the department
- Hosting a faculty/ staff discussion within your discipline/ department that focuses on assessment
- Participating in on-line learning module on assessment

Expectations of Assessment Grant Recipients:

- All Assessment Grant Recipients are expected to provide a brief progress report (max. 500 words), detailing the results and benefits of the completed grant project. The report will be due at the beginning of the semester following the time period during which the proposed activity will take place (typically August for work taking place during the spring or summer, and January for work taking place during the fall semester).
- All Assessment Grant Recipients are expected to publicly share the products, results, and/or knowledge obtained in the course of the grant project via a presentation, workshop, or another suitable venue, scheduled for the following year.

Grant Amount, Budget, and Work Plan:

- Grants range from \$500 to \$2500, but larger requests will be considered if appropriately justified.
- All requests should include a brief budget indicating the total requested, the duration of the proposed activity, the number of people that will be involved, and how the funds will be allocated. It is anticipated that these funds will be distributed as a stipend, but some or all of the funding can be disbursed through an accountable plan to cover expenses incurred.
- All requests should include a work plan for assessment-related activities during the proposed timeframe. Please include a description of all other professional commitments during the proposed timeframe, and an explanation of how time will be allocated to this development project.
- Grant proposals will be reviewed, and funding decisions made, by the Committee on Assessment.