

Assessment Network of New York Holds Regional Conference at Lehman College

By Don Sutherland

On Friday, October 21, 2016, the [Assessment Network of New York](#) (ANNY) held a regional conference in the East Dining Room on the Lehman College campus. The conference theme was “Shifting Cultures: From Assessment to Improvement.” With the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) increasingly emphasizing the use of assessment to promote institutional improvement, the workshop was particularly relevant to the audience.

Some 70 participants were welcomed to Lehman College by Acting Provost Dr. Harriet Fayne. In her remarks, Dr. Fayne recounted some of her own early assessment-related experience. ANNY President Karen Moronski-Chapman followed, describing ANNY and the role it plays in helping New York State’s colleges and universities enhance their own assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness.

The conference workshop was led by Dr. Keston Fulcher, Executive Director of the Center for Assessment and Research Studies at James Madison University, and Dr. Megan Good, Director of Academic Assessment at Auburn University. The workshop was centered around a paper Drs. Fulcher and Good co-wrote with two additional authors for the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. During the course of the workshop, the participants worked on a number of interactive exercises.

Some major themes covered in the workshop included, the distinction between change and improvement, evidence revealing that a lack of coordinated faculty intervention or misapplied intervention results in a lack of student learning improvement, and the impact of unrealistic timeframes for improvement. The speakers also provided a model for improvement comprised of: (1) assessing students prior to any changes/interventions; (2) developing intentional interventions focused on pedagogy and curriculum; (3) implementation of the interventions with high fidelity; (4) Allowing the students to receive the full intervention; and, (5) Re-assessing the students who completed the intervention. They also discussed a pilot program in learning improvement that was pursued at James Madison University.

At the end of the workshop, the speakers encouraged attendees to differentiate between change and improvement at their own institutions, to increase awareness among their campus community/teach others what they learned, and to launch an improvement initiative at their own institution. Such initiatives should, over time, yield improvements.



Left: Dr. Megan Good; Right: Dr. Keston Fulcher