

# Establishing A Culture of Assessment Within the College of Pharmacy



Mr. Michael Marcus served as Director of Assessment from 2016 until 2019 and helped to centralize data collection and initiated survey instruments to gather input from multiple stakeholders including faculty, staff, and students.

## Major Assessment Accomplishments During Tenure of Michael Marcus

Implemented 2018 to 2022 strategic plan

Utilized PCOA as high stakes examination.

Initiated joint Assessment/Curriculum meetings

Showcased work at national conferences focusing on assessment of NAPLEX, PCOA, and critical thinking skills.

Demonstrated correlation between NAPLEX and pre NAPLEX.

A culture of assessment is reflective of a state where assessment touches every program and aspect of the College.

## A Historical Perspective on Assessment at the Howard University College of Pharmacy

*Michael A. Marcus Jr., MA, MPA, MBA  
Director of Assessment 2016-2019*

Establishing a functioning and influential culture of assessment within the College of Pharmacy took a college-wide commitment to three procedurally complex concepts:

1. Establishing a reference inventory of current data analysis and housing capabilities within and outside the college,
2. Understanding current data inputs and information organization practices, and
3. Maintaining a commitment to consistent and transparent communication regarding assessment efforts.

To embrace these concepts, the college had to undergo the very uncomfortable process of identifying and scrutinizing its current assessment posture. Trying to understand what steps had occurred to bolster what needed to happen was more of a social-political undertaking than enacting sweeping administrative policy measures and leveraging available assets. Ultimately, through the unified effort of all of the college's stakeholders' commitment to establishing a culture of assessment, the overall step of generating a thriving assessment-driven environment was successful.

Building a reference inventory of data types and capabilities in an environment that did not previously utilize one, meant that college leadership had to individually engage each data and information custodian to understand what was currently employed. Establishing a nodal analysis of data custodians based upon the college's data outputs and products helped frame the specific points that vital information emanated from and where they were stored. This effort led to the understanding that data and information were being held and housed by major and minor stakeholders within the college, including administrators, faculty, staff, student organizations, and alumni. Each group had to be engaged individually to understand the college's data and information terrain. Due to the number of stakeholders, each meeting also clarified the intent of current and future assessment activities. Individuals understood their future responsibility of serving as a primary point of contact for all information related to specific areas. Building this rapport helped the assessment office to understand current capabilities as follow-up inquiries by either party seldom required the same level of effort as the initial contact.

Once an authoritative map of the data and information terrain began to take shape within the college, the question arose about the information and how it was collected. This more administrative heavy step required consistent college leadership meetings to determine the meaning and intent of even the most minor concepts. As discovered through many interactions, generally understood terms and ideas were not explicitly defined, which led to varied interpretations throughout college leadership. In understanding the college's information and data, further discussion regarding how information/data organization is understood began to occur.

Visit us at:

<https://pharmacy.howard.edu/departments/office-assessment>

Some previously used methods had to be revamped or discarded because they were no longer appropriate for the newly understood information categories and requirements according to academy best practices. By involving leadership at every step, all leadership decisions were understood by stakeholders as they each had a hand in defining those classifications. Ultimately a central database from which data could be mined was created and launched in 2018.

As the college grew in the culture of assessment, stakeholders increased the desire to assess several aspects of the program and instruction. This growth resulted in over 70 assessments which included AACP surveys (already established prior to 2016), HUCOP surveys, stakeholder surveys and college designed student performance evaluation, IPE and satisfaction surveys. At this point, it became increasingly clear that some stakeholders were unaware of other stakeholders' assessment efforts. The administration served as the primary nodes for disseminating requests and assigning assessment-related tasks, leaving all others relatively in the dark regarding the college's overall effort. Various methods, including college-wide email blasts, newsletters, general surveys, etc., are consistently utilized to bring awareness to those efforts to remedy this emerging reality. Consequently, a cross-pollination effect began to take hold as similar actions occurring within the college were identified and pushed forward by other interested parties. By establishing this environment, stakeholders moved from being told how to contribute to the assessment culture to being confident enough to discuss their suggestions and lead efforts to help move the college's developing culture of assessment forward.

A solid bedrock has been established within the College of Pharmacy regarding a culture of assessment where all stakeholders are active participants in it. The process of refining and redefining requirements continues. Ultimately, the data and information conversation has moved from being solely anecdotal to experimental and actionable, allowing the college to engage in previously unrealized conversation and efforts.

# Reflections on the Office of Assessment: A Review of Progress Made and Current Achievements

*La'Marcus T. Wingate, Pharm.D., Ph.D.*

*Director of Assessment*

*2020 to present*



**Dr. La'Marcus Wingate has served as Director of Assessment since 2020 and spearheaded efforts such as tagging of ExamSoft questions to PCOA and HUCOP outcomes and development of dashboards to measure progress on the strategic plan**

The Assessment Committee has made commendable progress towards the ultimate goal of establishing a culture of assessment within the past few years. A culture of assessment is reflective of a state where assessment touches every program and aspect of the College. The Assessment Committee began in 2005 .

In December 2016, Mr. Michael Marcus began his tenure as the Director of Assessment and helped the College to implement several noteworthy initiatives. Some of these initiatives included the Appointy system for students scheduling of advising appointments, a course evaluation instrument facilitating evaluation of multiple instructors, and implementation of annual surveys to students, staff and faculty to gauge their overall satisfaction with the program. Furthermore, the Assessment Committee was able to

oversee the implementation of a new Strategic Plan during 2018. Due to the foresight of Dean Toyin Tofade, the progress on the strategic plan is now presented regularly to the Executive Committee and the Board of Visitors. This is an important step in making sure that important stakeholders are kept apprised of the progress that is being made on assessment efforts within the College. In addition, Dean Tofade highlights assessment data at faculty meetings as well as Town Hall meetings and State of the College addresses that include students, staff and faculty.

The year of 2020 marked the beginning of a new era within assessment in the college. As of 2020, for the first time ever, there is now a Director of Assessment (Dr. La'Marcus Wingate) as well as an Assistant Director of Assessment (Dr. Bani Roy). The Assessment Committee is currently chaired by Dr. Simon Wang and continues to include experienced members such as Dr. Yolonda McKoy-Beach who once served as chair. Collectively, they have worked together to oversee several initiatives which help to strengthen a culture of assessment within the college.

The Office of Assessment is now putting more of an emphasis on the scholarship of teaching. The Assessment work done by the College regarding the PCOA has been accepted for publication in a peer reviewed journal. This is noteworthy, because the authors are key figures in the assessment committee, highlights the collaboration of key personnel from Assessment, CIRC, Admissions, and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Accordingly, this work helps to showcase the collaborative nature of Assessment within the College. Additional publications are likely to come forth soon regarding assessment of the Pharmacy Biomedical Preview Program, critical thinking skills and cultural competency.

## Recent Achievements and Progress

- Continued assessment of interprofessional education activities for students across all four years of the curriculum.
- Establishment of an Assessment Newsletter which is led by the student members of the committee and edited by Ms. Stephanie Reid, a third-year professional pharmacy student.
- Development of a page on the College website devoted to assessment activities.
- Development of dashboards to map progress on the strategic plan.
- Tagging of ExamSoft questions to PCOA and HU Outcomes categories to facilitate assessment of student progress in these areas.
- Continued joint meetings with the Curriculum committee and regular interface with the Admissions and Progressions Committee.
- Initiation of joint meetings between the Assessment Committee and Experiential department.
- Course evaluations for the NTDP program and implementation of additional assessment to facilitate evaluations of the comparability of the traditional and NTDP programs.
- More deliberate assessment of professional development within co-curricular activities.
- Development of a survey request form to help maintain a catalog of the dynamic assessment activities taking place at the College.
- Centralized administration and capture of assessments administered as a part of interviews.