

In the Loop

Biannual Newsletter from the University Assessment Committee



Dear Colleagues,

To each student who chooses USF, we make a promise to provide an education that prepares them for their future by delivering desired learning outcomes. Assessment is our opportunity to gauge how well we are meeting that promise and to evaluate how students of diverse backgrounds are experiencing our education. It allows us to make data-informed decisions about where we need to evolve our programs or redouble our efforts to support students. It is the backbone of our efforts to improve, grow, and support student success.

As part of the bold vision outlined in the **USF 2027 Strategic Plan**, we are embarking on the process of reimagining our core curriculum and undergraduate degree requirements. Our Jesuit values and social justice vision are at the center of this work, including the development of new academic programs in areas of high demand and high community impact.

As we reimagine a Jesuit education, we must also evolve our assessment practices to make them more just, equitable, and culturally responsive. I am grateful to the University Assessment Committee (UAC) and the Office of Assessment and Accreditation Support for keeping our assessment and evaluation efforts front and center and raising awareness of how assessment practices can foster anti-racism and inclusive excellence at institutions of higher education and at USF.

I am looking forward to **the virtual series the UAC is hosting**, Addressing Bias and Racism in Assessment, with funding from the 6+YOU initiative and the Jesuit Foundation. These compelling sessions are designed to help faculty and staff identify and address both implicit and explicit bias. The topics range from recognizing how personal and social biases can distort the expression of our values, to utilizing quantitative assessment data in support of marginalized students, to drawing on indigenous protocols for building trust, to using mindfulness to sustain the work of equitable assessment.

I encourage you all to attend these valuable sessions, and I am grateful for the work that each of you does to support student learning outcomes, make our world more equitable, and humanize education.

Warmly,

Chinyere Oparah
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Announcements

Assessment-Related Events & Upcoming Conferences

Series on Addressing Bias and Racism in Assessment

A virtual series funded by the 6+YOU Initiative and the Jesuit Foundation. The UAC established this series to help faculty and staff identify both implicit and explicit bias in assessment. Please note that each session will be offered twice. Come to one or join us for all!

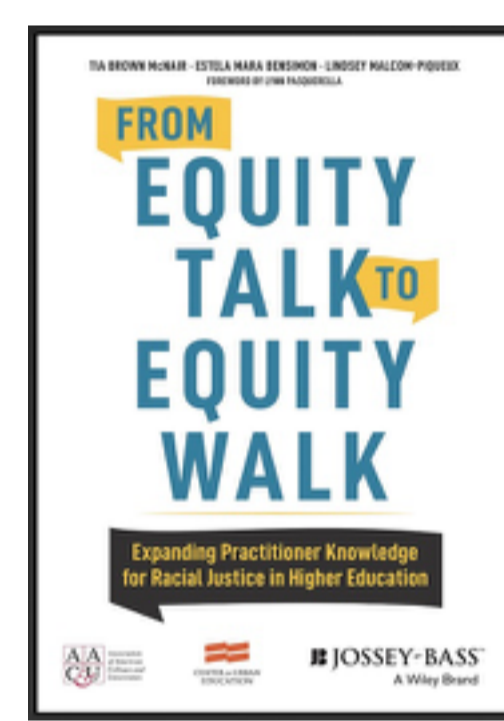
- **Jane Bleasdale** - Assistant Professor, School of Education
Social Conscience and Responsibility: Teaching the Common Good
Monday, Oct. 24, 12–1 p.m. & Thursday, Oct. 27, 1–2 p.m.
- **Desiree Zerquera** - Associate Professor, School of Education
Engaging Critical Quantitative Research in our Assessment Practice
Thursday, Nov. 3, 12–1 p.m. & Friday, Nov. 4, 1–2 p.m.
- **Kahanu Salavea** - Program Assistant, Office of Community Living
Hawaiian Protocols: the Assessment Process at the USF Food Pantry
Wednesday, Nov. 9, 2–3 p.m. & Thursday, Nov. 10, 2–3 p.m.
- **Rhonda V Magee** - Professor, School of Law
Joining the Inner and Outer Work of Addressing Bias and Racism in Assessment
Monday, Nov. 14, 12–1 p.m. & Thursday, Nov. 17, 12–1 p.m.

[RSVP for the Series »](#)

Upcoming Conferences

- Feb. 9–11, 2023 | New Orleans, LA | **Conference on General Education, Pedagogy, and Assessment**
- March 8–11, 2023 | Henderson, NV | **Conference on Diversity, Equity, and Student Success**
- March 24–28, 2023 | Chicago, IL | **Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference**
- April 19–20, 2023 | Orange County, CA | **WSCUC Accreditation Resource Conference (ARC)**
- June 5–8, 2023 | New Orleans, LA | **AALHE Annual Assessment Conference**

Magis Methods



Book Review: *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk*
By Ella Aviananda Frazer, Associate Director of Assessment, College of Arts and Sciences

I recently finished the book *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk: Expanding Practitioner Knowledge for Racial Justice in Higher Education* by McNair, Bensimon, and Malcom-Piqueux, on recommendation from the University Assessment Committee. This text reminds us that, just like our larger society, institutions of higher education are shaped by the racialized oppression on which this country was founded, and perpetuate that violence through our structures, policies, and curriculum. To achieve equitable

education, we must transform “the dialogue on inclusion from general acceptance and tolerance of difference to active institutional transformation, based on the belief that the richness of our culture is because of our diversity and a recognition of our common humanity” (p. 4).

Some highlights from the book include:

- **The notion that equity-mindedness is just as important in the approach and process as it is in the end result of any initiative.** This begins with the compassion and kindness that we offer to ourselves and to our community every day. “Educators with an equity talk and equity walk critically examine institutional policies, practices, and structures through a lens that questions why inequities exist to change the educational environment to support the success of students - especially students who have been historically and continuously marginalized in our educational systems” (p. 2).
- **Strategies to assist in understanding student learning and the student experience**, such as data disaggregation (p. 55), case study exercises aimed at applying concepts in the text to our unique institutional setting, and resources for deepening our understanding of equitable education beyond this book.
- **A reminder that recognizing the humanity of our students, and faculty and staff, is of paramount importance.** The “deficit perspectives that practitioners draw on to explain racial inequity in educational outcomes” (p. 102) dehumanizes our students and ourselves in turn. An equity-minded approach values the diversity of experience that students bring into the classroom and recognizes students as experts in their own learning.

I recommend this book to anyone at USF looking to deepen their commitment to equity in education and identify ways to put equity into practice.

Notes from the Field

Utilizing Data to Implement Change With the New Student Success Survey
By Sara Solloway, Assistant Dean for Student Academic Success

Each year USF surveys our incoming first-year and transfer students to gain data on their academic behaviors, student engagement and connection, and barriers to success. The data collected allow Student Life staff to assess how our students are doing and provide timely, meaningful resources and interventions early in the first semester. We can also use the data collected over multiple years to identify trends, develop and implement strategies to address any concerns, and assess whether or not the strategies were successful.

The 2022 New Student Success Survey launched the third week of classes (Sept. 13) to all new first-year and transfer students, with a response rate of 87 percent (it was completed by 90 percent of first-year students and 71 percent of transfer students). The survey remained open for three weeks and assessed how students were transitioning to USF and college life.

Our survey committee created an algorithm to help prioritize which students may need resources and assistance by placing students in first, second, and third priority levels. Academic success coaches from the Center for Academic and Student Achievement (CASA) and staff from the Office of Community Living conduct outreach to students using the priority system. In addition to one-on-one interventions with students, other USF departments also utilize the data to advertise resources to students such as campus involvement, financial aid, exploring majors, counseling, and other basic needs.

The Center for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (CIPE) utilizes the survey data to look at retention trends and build retention dashboards with Tableau to filter out how different student populations responded to questions. Having this type of filtering can tell us what programming may be needed on specific residence hall floors and buildings; for example, a homesickness program for students or other outreach by topic area. The Office of Assessment and Accreditation Support (OAAS) provides an analysis of the data and a subsequent report that includes key takeaways as well as comparisons to previous years. OAAS also utilizes the survey data in conjunction with retention data to create reports with the objective of detailing profiles of first-year and transfer students who enrolled, but did not persist to the following fall. These reports contain a summary of findings and information specific to: demographics, financials, academics, fit, social connectivity, health, and wellness. This survey is a collaboration between CASA, OAAS, CIPE, ITS, and the Office of Community Living.

The New Student Success Survey Reports are available on **the OAAS website**. If you are interested in conducting your own survey, please email surveys@usfca.edu or Associate Director of Research and Assessment **Melissa Thompson** for guidance and support.

Submit to *In the Loop!*

We want to feature your assessment experiences in the next edition of *In the Loop!* Please email your ideas to **Katie Hoffman**.

If you are looking for support with academic and co-curricular program reviews, the Office of Assessment and Accreditation Support (OAAS) can help. Please email **Deborah Panter**, call **(415) 422-4588**, or visit the **OAAS website** for more information.

Join the conversation **#USFCA**



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Office of Assessment and Accreditation Support

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