



Assess Arizona

Assess Arizona Regional Assessment Conference Schedule

April 10, 2026

Paradise Valley Community College, Q Building

Conference Schedule		
8:30 - 9:00am	Check- in	Q Lobby
9:00 - 9:15	Welcome-Opening Comments • <i>Felicia Ramirez, Assess Arizona Chair (Paradise Valley Community College)</i> • <i>Eddie Lamperez, Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs (Paradise Valley Community College)</i>	Q 120
9:15 - 9:45	Kick Start your Assess AZ Network	Q 120
10:00 -10:50	Keynote Address The Power of YOU and the Urgency of NOW: Assessment for Student Success What can each of us do to advance institutional effectiveness, growth, and improvement for student success? Speaker Bio: Divya Bheda, Ph.D., has two decades of experience as a leader in Assessment and Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement. She currently serves as the Director of Educational Assessment at Santa Clara University where she oversees academic and co-curricular continuous quality improvement efforts that center student success. She has served in similar assessment leadership roles at UT Austin and National University Online. She has supported student success and access at the University of Oregon and through Educational and Data Use consulting in Ed Tech. With a Ph.D. in Critical and Socio-Cultural Studies in Education, she teaches, writes, consults, and coaches interinstitutional teams and colleagues on best practices in assessment, strategic planning, and curriculum design. She is a Senior Fellow in the Office of Curricular and Pedagogical Innovation for AAC&U and serves on the Boards for ACPA's Commission for Assessment and Evaluation as well as on the Board for AALHE-- The Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education. She has multiple book-chapters and articles on Assessment and is one of the authors of the newly revised ACCELERATE Assessment Principles of Best Practice.	Q 120



11:00 - 11:50	Breakout 1 • The Quest to the Summit of Mt. Assessment: An Implementation Process (Program Track) • Clue Me In: Gamified Strategies for Assessing Student Learning • The People Side of Assessment: Frameworks and Roles that Turn Insight Into Action	
Breakout 1-A	The Quest to the Summit of Mt. Assessment: An Implementation Process (Program Track) • <i>Jared Aragona, English Faculty and Assessment Committee Co-Chair</i> (Scottsdale Community College) • <i>Mary Pasco, Education Faculty and Assessment Committee Co-Chair</i> (Scottsdale Community College) This session covers the process Scottsdale Community College has been using to implement its new Heliocampus assessment management platform; however, the steps can be applied beyond the integration of Heliocampus. Participants will walk away with a strategy for engaging the campus in the project of aligning Program Learning Outcomes to Institutional Outcomes, understanding a program sequence, mapping Course Learning Outcomes to Program and General Education Learning Outcomes, and linking assignments to outcomes. Participants will be able to: 1. Learn a strategy to engage faculty in aligning Program and Institutional Learning Outcomes. 2. Learn a strategy to engage faculty in curriculum mapping. 3. Learn a strategy to engage faculty in linking assignments to outcomes for assessment.	
Breakout 1-B	Clue Me In: Gamified Strategies for Assessing Student Learning • <i>Ashley Burkart, Life Sciences Residential Faculty</i> (Estrella Mountain Community College) This interactive session invites participants to experience firsthand how game-based learning can transform engagement, assessment, and conceptual understanding across disciplines. Attendees will step into the role of students in a gamified experience that sparks critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration in a low-stakes, high-impact environment. This approach encourages participation, deepens processing of content, and moves beyond memorization or jargon. Through guided participation and metacognitive reflection, participants will experience how the activity strengthens confidence, communication, and problem-solving skills. Attendees will leave with an adaptable, easy-to-implement activity for assessing student learning through collaboration, active engagement, and metacognitive reflection. Participants will be able to: 1. Engage in the gamified activity as students to observe how comprehension and understanding are assessed in real time. 2. Collaborate in pairs to explore how peer interaction provides insight into student understanding and informs assessment strategies. 3. Complete guided metacognitive reflections to analyze how self-assessment can reveal learning gaps. 4. Create a plan to adapt the activity to assess student learning in their own courses or programs.	



Breakout 1-C	The People Side of Assessment: Frameworks and Roles that Turn Insight Into Action • <i>Dr. Alisa Fleming, Director, Institutional Assessment, (University of Phoenix)</i> This session will share lessons learned from engaging diverse stakeholders in the review of data. Participants will learn how to apply the RACI model to clarify roles and responsibilities in data review and action phases and explore a stakeholder engagement framework designed to promote visibility, dialogue, and accountability. Attendees will leave with strategies to encourage stakeholders to review and act on assessment data. Participants will be able to: 1. Discuss strategies that encourage stakeholders to review and act on assessment data. 2. Review an engagement framework to promote discussion and accountability. 3. Apply the RACI model to define roles in data-driven decision-making.	
12:00-12:50	Lunch & Networking	Q 120
1:00 - 1:50	Breakout 2 • Mapping for Success: Designing Aligned Pathways for Student Learning and Well-Being (<i>Program Track</i>) • From Policing to Pedagogy: Rethinking Assessment in the Age of AI • Academic Success Coaching: Assessing Student Learning of Soft Skill Development • From Experience to Evidence: Assessing Service-Learning	
Breakout 2-A	Mapping for Success: Designing Aligned Pathways for Student Learning and Well-Being (<i>Program Track</i>) <i>*Featured Workshop*</i> • Divya Bheda (<i>Santa Clara University</i>) Most programs and educational pathways engage in curriculum mapping for accreditation purposes. However, mapping exercises can also help students successfully transition from community college to four-year institutions while they build their own meta-cognitive learning for lifelong growth and well-being. In this session, you will learn new mapping techniques and key curriculum design ideas from competency-based education and curriculum design best practices that you can use regardless of your institutional role: as faculty members designing courses, as assessment professionals evaluating the efficacy of student learning, as student affairs professionals ensuring student learning and well-being, or as administrators engaging in policy and planning work in all of these afore-mentioned areas. Attend this session if you want to gain a fresh perspective on mapping and learn related strategies and tools to engage in the same. Participants will be able to: 1. Explain best practices in curriculum design to support student learning 2. Apply novel mapping strategies for powerful student learning 3. Evaluate the quality of existing program pathways and courses 4. Cultivate meaningful student reflection and scaffolded learning	



Breakout 2-B	From Policing to Pedagogy: Rethinking Assessment in the Age of AI • <i>Bootsie Martinez, Administration of Justice Studies Program Director, (Paradise Valley Community College)</i> • <i>Christine Leavitt, Legal Studies Program Director (Bryan University)</i> As generative AI becomes commonplace, efforts to “police” its use are ineffective and misaligned with faculty goals. Educators can shift from enforcement to pedagogy by rethinking how material is taught and assessed. Rather than focusing on detection tools, this session explores assessment design strategies for evaluating learning when written work may be AI-generated, especially in program learning outcome assessment. Participants will examine how detailed rubrics support consistency and fairness; how requiring engagement with course materials helps distinguish student learning from AI output; and why AI-detection tools are unreliable. Responsible, transparent AI use, student awareness of AI limitations, and writing as a recursive process are emphasized. Attendees will learn practical assessment approaches that prioritize growth, authenticity, and learning over perfection. Participants will be able to: 1. Articulate concrete, adaptable strategies for assessing student learning that are effective across in-person, hybrid, and online teaching modalities. 2. Build practical assessment design approaches that remain valid in the presence of generative AI and do not require reliance on detection or enforcement tools. 3. Analyze their existing assignments and rubrics to identify where AI use obscures evidence of student learning, leaving with tools to better redesign prompts, instructions, or criteria to more clearly capture student understanding and growth.	
Breakout 2-C	Academic Success Coaching: Assessing Student Learning of Soft Skill Development • <i>Isamar Navarro, Instructional Services Coordinator (STEM) (Paradise Valley Community College)</i> • <i>Wayne Benenson, Academic Success Coach (Paradise Valley Community College)</i> The transition to college challenges a student’s social-emotional learning as well as cognitive expectations. This expectation is compounded by social isolation issues carried over from the pandemic. Academic Success Coaches have provided opportunities for students to learn and apply people skills necessary for academic success. These soft skills, including communication and interpersonal skills, problem-solving, time management, are often developed through intentional, practice-based learning. This session will provide participants with specific activities and events that have helped students gain the necessary confidence and competence that ensures academic success. Through various assessment feedback culled from students and faculty, session presenters will identify what supportive environments and affective skills provided the most benefit to students to manage “first year” anxieties. Participants will be able to: 1. Identify specific soft skills that are most useful to first year college students for learning success.	



	2. Evaluate specific approaches that help develop critical thinking skills.	
Breakout 2-D	From Experience to Evidence: Assessing Service-Learning • <i>Crystal M. Morehouse, Interim Director of Institutional Research & Planning (Scottsdale Community College)</i> • <i>Nathan Smith, Senior Planning and Research Analyst (Glendale Community College)</i> • <i>Kanisha Saunders, Student Service Analyst (Scottsdale Community College)</i> • <i>Robert Martin III, Exercise Science & Nutrition Faculty (Scottsdale Community College)</i> • <i>Ashley Bouknight, Service-Learning & Civic Engagement Program Coordinator (Chandler-Gilbert Community College)</i> The American Association of Colleges & Universities describes Service-Learning (SL) as a “high impact learning practice” because of its significant educational benefits. SL centers on real-world problems where students learn course content and skills while understanding community needs and impacts. Through these experiences, students develop soft skills, civic awareness, and a professional identity that support success, completion, and sense of belonging. In this session, participants will learn how to utilize a survey to assess the connection between embedded SL events and student mastery of course competencies, and the application to institutional learning outcomes. Additionally, participants will learn about examples of SL projects that can be applied and assessed inside and outside the classroom at their institution. Participants will be able to: 1. Operationalize moving from practice to data collection to course, program, and institutional learning outcomes assessment. 2. Understand how Service-learning is defined with examples as well as how it operates as a curricular and co-curricular activity. 3. Provide a framework for an implementation of a similar high-impact strategy at other institutions, including: Logistical challenges to be aware of, the key stakeholders and professionals to be included in the framework formulation, and best practices for deployment of an assessment framework.	
2:00 - 2:50	Breakout 3 • Less Scramble, More Strategy: Using Assessment to Calm Your HLC Nerves • Breaking Up With Points: Specifications of Grading in STEM • Lightening the Load: Using Humor to Connect Purpose and Practice in Assessment	



Breakout 3-A	Less Scramble, More Strategy: Using Assessment to Calm Your HLC Nerves • <i>Stephnie Hopple, District Director, Compliance Reporting and Accreditation Support (Maricopa Community Colleges)</i> Have you ever received an email or text at 4:30 on the Friday before your institution's Higher Learning Commission report is due? This presentation provides recommendations for what you can do years before a site visit or accreditation report is submitted to help keep organized, reduce stress, develop a culture of assessment, and align with accreditation criteria. Participants will walk away with real-world ideas to incorporate accreditation requirements in established (or new) assessment processes. Participants will be able to: 1. Articulate how HLC Criterion translate into sustainable, meaningful assessment practices that serve institutional improvement rather than just accreditation compliance 2. Design assessment documentation processes that include structured reflection on results and explicit connections to budgetary implications 3. Create clear linkages between assessment activities, institutional mission, and strategic planning to demonstrate integrated institutional effectiveness 4. Implement relationship-centered approaches to assessment leadership that build engagement and ownership	
Breakout 3-B	Breaking Up With Points: Specifications of Grading in STEM • <i>Fiona Morrice, Faculty Chair, Physical Sciences (Estrella Mountain Community College)</i> • <i>Allen Reyes, Chemistry Faculty, SAC Co-coordinator (Estrella Mountain Community College)</i> • <i>Melanie Newell (Estrella Mountain Community College)</i> This session explores how shifting assessment toward mastery of learning outcomes can fundamentally change how both students and instructors talk about success in a course. Rather than focusing on points, averages, or one-time performance, mastery-based assessment centers learning, revision, and demonstrated growth. Participants will examine how this shift affects classroom culture, student motivation, and instructor feedback, with particular attention to the language we use when discussing progress, failure, and improvement. Participants will be able to: 1. Contrast point-based and mastery-based grading to understand how each communicates learning and supports improvement. 2. Examine mastery-based tools, including learning outcomes, rubrics, progress trackers, and feedback cycles, to see how learning can be documented without points. 3. Identify one feedback practice to implement in their own courses. 4. Evaluate how mastery-based assessment promotes student ownership through reflection, revision, and goal setting aligned with clear learning outcomes.	



Breakout 3-C	Lightening the Load: Using Humor to Connect Purpose and Practice in Assessment • Julie Bauer Morrison, Assessment Director & Psychology Faculty Chair (Glendale Community College) • Roxan Alexander-Arntson, Assistant Assessment Director & Communication Faculty (Glendale Community College) • Genea Stephens, Program Assessment Coach & Administration of Justice Faculty (Glendale Community College) Assessment work is serious, but we do not have to be serious all the time to do it well. Drawing on ideas from Humor, Seriously and experiences in higher education assessment, this interactive in-person session explores how humor and levity can make assessment work more effective and sustainable for everyone involved. A trio of assessment practitioners will share research, brief stories, and concrete examples of using humor to build trust with colleagues, increase engagement in assessment activities, and communicate results in ways people remember and act on. Participants—whether they design assessments, collect and analyze data, facilitate conversations, or implement changes—will identify small, realistic ways to use humor to reconnect people with the “why” behind their efforts. No stand-up skills required. Participants will be able to: 1. Discuss strategies that encourage stakeholders to review and act on assessment data. 2. Review an engagement framework to promote discussion and accountability. 3. Apply the RACI model to define roles in data-driven decision-making.	
3:00 - 3:30	Conference Wrap up & Send Off	Q 120
3:30 - 4:00 pm	Planning Team Debrief <i>This work meeting is for those who helped plan the conference this year and any who like to join the team or be involved in planning the next Assess Arizona Conference.</i>	Q Conf