VALUE: Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education

(From the AAC&U Website: http://www.aacu.org/value/index.cfm)

Overview
As part of AAC&U’s Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative, the VALUE project seeks to contribute to the national dialogue on assessment of college student learning. With support from the State Farm Companies Foundation and the Fund for the Improvement of PostSecondary Education (FIPSE), the VALUE project builds on a philosophy of learning assessment that privileges authentic assessment of student work and shared understanding of student learning outcomes on campuses over reliance on standardized tests administered to samples of students outside of their required courses. The result of this philosophy has been the collaborative development of 15 rubrics by teams of faculty and academic professionals on campuses from across the country. VALUE assumes that:

• to achieve a high-quality education for all students, valid assessment data are needed to guide planning, teaching, and improvement;
• colleges and universities seek to foster and assess numerous essential learning outcomes beyond those addressed by currently available standardized tests;
• learning develops over time and should become more complex and sophisticated as students move through their curricular and co-curricular educational pathways toward a degree;
• good practice in assessment requires multiple assessments, over time; well-planned electronic portfolios provide opportunities to collect data from multiple assessments across a broad range of learning outcomes while guiding student learning and building self-assessment capabilities;
• e-portfolios and assessment of work in them can inform programs and institutions on progress in achieving expected goals.

Project Description
As institutions are asked to document the quality of student learning and to raise retention and graduation rates, the VALUE project will begin to define, document, assess, and strengthen student achievement of the essential learning outcomes in undergraduate education. Recognizing that there are no standardized tests for many of the essential outcomes of an undergraduate education, the VALUE project will develop ways for students and institutions to collect convincing evidence of student learning

• drawn primarily from the work students complete through their required curriculum,
• assessed by well-developed campus rubrics and judgments of selected experts, and
• organized in electronic portfolios (e-portfolios) that can be organized and presented in ways appropriate for different audiences.

The e-portfolio is an ideal format for collecting evidence of student learning, especially for those outcomes not amenable nor appropriate for standardized measurement. Additionally, e-portfolios can facilitate student reflection upon and engagement with their own learning across multi-year degree programs, across different institutions, and across diverse learning styles while helping students to set and achieve personal learning goals.

AAC&U staff, the advisory board and selected teams of faculty and other academic professionals are assembling a collection of rubrics for ascending levels of accomplishment. Investigating the range of outcomes and the criteria considered critical for assessing student achievement of each outcome will uncover the extent to which there are similarities among campuses. By identifying outcomes in terms of expectations for demonstrated student learning among disparate campuses, a valuable basis for comparing levels of learning through the curriculum is emerging. This will be especially useful as students, parents, employers and policy makers seek valid representations of student academic accomplishment. E-portfolios provide both a transparent and portable medium for showcasing the broad range of complex ways students are asked to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities for purposes such as graduate school and job applications as well as to benchmark achievement among peer institutions.
About the VALUE rubrics

Learning outcomes for the development of VALUE Rubrics:

**Intellectual and Practical Skills**
- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Written communication
- Oral communication
- Reading
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork
- Problem solving

**Personal and Social Responsibility**
- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

**Integrative and Applied Learning**
- Integrative and applied learning