Because of its distinctive mission to create and disseminate knowledge, higher/tertiary education enjoys a unique position in the 21st century global economy. However, this places universities in a position of extraordinarily high public expectation to prepare a different kind of educated workforce and conduct ground-breaking research, each at world-class levels designed to propel national economies into the future. Indeed, the institution has entered a new era with an emerging schema centered on the market and public accountability. A world-class global university must now demonstrate measurable, tangible outcomes rooted in the traditions of the university and the academic disciplines, but situated in a modern, global, knowledge-based economy.

Quality assurance and accreditation (the principal mechanisms used to gather evidence about what universities do and how well they do it) in the Americas, Europe, and indeed around the globe are largely tied to financial pressures and growing public demand for evidence of efficiency and effectiveness inside and outside the classroom. Long formalized in the United States through a system of regional accreditation, the idea of quality assurance has more recently developed in Europe through the Bologna Process, notably documented in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

Equally important, world-class universities are shifting focus from teaching to learning. The movement to student-centered education and student learning outcomes has reoriented educational practices. Nowhere is this clearer than the Bologna Process. As students at all levels—undergraduate and graduate—seek new learning pathways through multiple universities and countries, it is incumbent upon universities to demonstrate academic quality.

While no one system of quality assurance and accountability is perfect, global universities have much to learn from one another. The focus of this institute, therefore, is to explore one critical aspect of this initiative—outcomes assessment—through the lenses of university leaders in this area with the expectation that engaging in such a dialog will enable participants to learn from one another and metaphorically meet over the Atlantic Ocean.

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Riva Institute for Assessment in Higher Education (RIAHE) will focus on creating new knowledge on assessment policy and practices designed to improve the teaching and learning environment while satisfying accountability and accreditation standards demanded of the contemporary global university. The institute is grounded in the firm philosophical belief that teaching, learning, and assessment are inextricably linked and that assessment is much more than accountability—it is how we make meaning of the learning process for the improvement of the curriculum and for the benefit of students. The institute’s serene environment fosters collegial interactions through shared meals and informal presentations of work.

The primary goal of this first-of-its-kind collaboration is to develop a network of knowledgeable practitioners, policymakers, and scholars to increase effective assessment and evaluation across higher education. The institute provides space and time for individuals and university teams to exchange ideas that lead to innovation in quality assurance. Impact-oriented solutions will be documented and presented through scholarship, conference presentations, and practices on participant university campuses.

**PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

- Create a global learning community around assessment and evaluation.
- Produce thought-leaders in quality assurance.
- Develop a scholarship of assessment that spans international boundaries.
- Understand the central mechanisms of assessment in higher education germane to student learning outcomes, administrative outcomes, and measures of quality.
- Consider the internal and external implications of assessment.
- Establish the tools necessary to define what students should know and be able to do at each degree level.
WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- Academic staff responsible for developing student learning outcomes.
- University leaders who direct assessment programs and practices.
- Administrators designated with oversight of quality assurance.
- Policy leaders involved in the field of assessment and quality assurance.

University teams and individuals are encouraged to apply. Attendance numbers will be capped to assure meaningful discussion and responsive attention to participant needs. Participants can expect preparatory activities prior to and on-going conversation following the institute.

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Pre-arrival: Distribution, review, and discussion of related materials
Day 1: Arrive and evening reception
Day 2: Full day of organized learning and discussion sessions on national and university policy issues.
Day 3: Full day of organized learning and discussion sessions on university assessment practices.
Day 4: Morning sessions on future actions and depart following lunch.

Session topics may include and will be customized based on attendee interest identified during application:

- Quality, accreditation, and the public trust
- Degree Qualifications Profile and Tuning
- Evaluating institutional assessment: Where is your university?
- Aligning student learning outcomes with academic mission
- Writing measurable student learning outcomes
- Choosing appropriate assessment techniques
- Building assessment capacity
- Assessing administrative functions
- Organizing and reporting assessment data
- Leveraging “learner-centered assessment” to achieve change

FACULTY

The RIAHE will be facilitated by faculty experts and leading practitioners in assessment and higher education carefully chosen from Virginia Tech (U.S.A.), Lund University (Sweden) and select partner institutions.

COST

Travel, food, and lodging costs will be the responsibility of each participant. All meals will be in residence. Lodging options and additional details will be available on the institute website.

CONTACT

For more information or to apply to be a 2013 RIAHE Fellow, please contact:

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