FOREWORD

Staff members in Ball State University's Office of Institutional Effectiveness work cooperatively with academic and student affairs departments and other campus units to facilitate numerous types of assessment projects. Among the services we provide are helping to create unit assessment plans; conducting assessment workshops, focus groups, and interviews; developing survey instruments; managing and analyzing data; providing institutional data; and providing extracts from university surveys.

Although our office conducts many university-wide assessment projects, this workbook is designed to facilitate the multiple assessment activities that are discipline-specific and carried out by individual departments, schools, and colleges. The workbook attempts to illustrate the uses and advantages of different assessment techniques and respond to frequently asked questions. It also includes lists of references that can be consulted for additional information on specific topics.

This latest edition of the Ball State University Assessment Workbook represents a substantial update of the 2008 and earlier editions, with additional topics and references provided. It represents current best practices across numerous institutions. Chapters 1 and 2 provide a general overview of assessment and list the basic steps in the assessment process. Chapter 3 discusses the development of program goals and objectives for learning, the basis of all assessment initiatives. The next nine chapters concentrate on specific assessment activities—choosing assessment tools; using surveys, tests, and performance-based measures; utilizing focus groups, available resources, and other assessment techniques; and reporting and using assessment results. The final two chapters discuss how to make the assessment process more manageable and how to motivate colleagues to participate in the assessment process. In keeping with the theme of a workbook, the narrative in each chapter is intended to be informative but succinct.

We hope this workbook is useful to faculty, professional staff, and administrators who are responsible for assessment activities. We welcome your comments and suggestions to increase its usefulness.

As a final point, the staff members in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness are always available to work with departments, schools, and colleges on their various assessment projects. Please call on us when you need assistance.

William E. Knight Executive Director Office of Institutional Effectiveness August 2012