CREATING A CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PROCESS
WHAT IS A CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT?

An organizational environment in which decisions are based on facts, research and analysis, where services are planned and delivered in ways that maximize positive outcomes and impacts for customers and stakeholders (Lakos 2002, Conference Proceedings on Performance Measurement).

A culture of assessment exists in an organization/institution where faculty staff, and administrators care to know what assessment results they produce and how these results relate to desired institutional outcomes and learning outcomes for students, their parents, and other stakeholders. Equally important, is use of the results for continuous improvement in the effectiveness of the organization and of student learning.
GOAL OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness

Assessment of Student Learning
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Defined as

The capacity to produce a desired result.
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Systematic, on-going process of collecting and analyzing data pertaining to the performance on the institution/unit

Use of the results from the analyses to improve the performance of the unit or institution.

Based on Institutional mission, goals, vision, and values

Requires a clear presentation of expected outcomes

Evidence-based and directed toward improvement

Drives decision-making and priority setting

Integrated with planning and budgeting
DEVELOPMENT OF A CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT

From the top in terms of

- Institutional expectations
- Leadership
- Resources

From the bottom in terms of

- Through department and program level adoption
- Shared understanding and commitment
WHAT IS ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING?

ONGOING PROCESS OF

ESTABLISHING CLEAR, MEASURABLE EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF STUDENT LEARNING

ENSURING THAT STUDENTS HAVE SUFFICIENT OPPORTUNITIES TO ACHIEVE THOSE OUTCOMES

SYSTEMATICALLY GATHERING, ANALYZING, AND INTERPRETING EVIDENCE TO DETERMINE HOW STUDENT LEARNING MATCHES EXPECTATIONS

USING THE RESULTING INFORMATION TO UNDERSTAND AND IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING (Suskie, Linda (2009))
# Contemporary and Traditional Ways of Thinking About Assessment of Student Learning (Linda Suskie 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contemporary Approaches to Assessment</th>
<th>Traditional Approaches to Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carefully aligned with learning outcomes/goals, the most important things we want students to learn</td>
<td>Planned and implemented without consideration of learning outcomes/goals</td>
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<td>Focused on thinking and performance skills</td>
<td>Only focused on memorized knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developed from research and best practices on teaching and assessment methodologies</td>
<td>Often poor quality because faculty and staff have had few formal opportunities to learn how to design and use effective assessment strategies and tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Used to improve teaching and learning as well as to evaluate and assign grades to individual students</td>
<td>Used only to evaluate and grade individual students, with decisions about changes to curricula and pedagogies often based on hunch and anecdotes rather than solid evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Used to tell our story: what makes our institution or program distinctive and how successful we are in meeting students’ and societal needs</td>
<td>Not used to tell that story; stories are told through anecdotes rather than broader evidence from representative students</td>
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STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PROCESS (SLOAP)
SIX COMPONENTS OF SLOAP

Program Mission and Goals

Expected Student Learning Outcomes

Instruction

Method, Criteria of Assessment, and Analysis

Summary of Results and Recommendations

Use of Analysis and Results
PROGRAM MISSION AND GOALS

Clear articulation of mission, goals, values and philosophy of the program

Vision of what the program does and for whom

Goals are broadly stated but meaningful (i.e., what should the ideal graduate from this program be)

Program mission needs to be aligned with institutional mission
EXPECTED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Specific learning outcomes for students at program level or institutional/competency level if General Education

Students completing program must demonstrate observable changes in behavior

Only critical outcomes that effectively define what students know (cognitive), think (affective) or do (behavioral) are included
INSTRUCTION

Learning Resources (courses, textbooks, curriculum, advising, tutoring, mentoring, etc.,) – opportunities to enhance student learning

Integrative learning experiences (internship, practice teaching, clinical experiences, service learning, etc.,)

Resources, experiences to be mapped to specific critical learning outcomes at end of program or appropriate time of program
METHOD, CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT/ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Selection/design of valid/meaningful assessment tools for specified program outcomes

Multiple measures (direct and indirect measures) to offset insufficiencies of single assessment approaches

Qualitative (portfolios, public performance, survey, or juried competition) or quantitative (test, paper, or project scores) measures can be used

Analytical scoring approaches used (rubrics and/or subtest scores) to facilitate identification of areas of weakness and strength

Specified criteria to determine acceptable levels of performance for individual students and specific program below which improvements are needed
SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summarize and report results in a clear usable format so that meaningful conclusions and recommendations can be made concerning the performance of students in the program as a group.

Identify areas of strong performance and areas in need of improvement.

Departments take primary responsibility for the assessment process (Respective program faculty in departments are key – open communication supported by specific evidence is needed).
ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Board of Regent

Chancellor

President

Board of Visitors

President Cabinet

Strategic Planning Committee Workgroup

Deans’ Council

Assessment Council

Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment

Academic Departments-
School of Agric. & Natural Sciences

Academic Departments-
School of Arts & Professions

Academic Departments-
School of Business & Technology

Academic Departments-
School of Pharm. & Health Professions
CHALLENGES FOR CREATING A CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT

Limited leadership support in providing direction and resources

Program assessment plans that cannot be implemented

Resistance to Change

Faculty who are already carrying heavy responsibilities see assessment as somebody’s responsibility (e.g., administrators’ responsibility)

Looking at Assessment as an accountability process only and not as a central component of the teaching and learning enterprise

Good teaching is not rewarded as well as scholarship and research

The ever increasing demand by students, their parents, government agencies at both state and federal levels, and the professional and regional accreditors, and employers that learning is taking place
Drone of complaints about grade inflation nationally concerning students who graduate without basic skills almost created a situation where outside intervention was going to force postsecondary institutions to use externally mandated assessment protocols.

Dressel’s definition of grades for assessing student learning cited by the Chair of Middle States Commission on Higher Education defines a grade as:

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based variable 
undefined level 
material”
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“an inadequate report of an inaccurate judgment by a judge of the extent to which a student has attained an of mastery of an unknown proportion of an indefinite

Contributes energy to such forces.
PARTICIPANTS’ SUGGESTIONS ABOUT OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO CREATING AND SUSTAINING A CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT
SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATING AND SUSTAINING A CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT

Support assessment with time, infrastructure and resources

Keep things simple. Use some of the assessment data already being collected

Be proactive and intentional about collecting, analyzing and reporting assessment data for student learning and include an action item on assessment in departmental meetings

Provide faculty with professional development opportunities

Build on past and current successes

Honor and/or reward efforts to improve teaching

Understand root causes of resistance and do something to create an environment that embraces assessment as part of faculty’s daily lives
END OF PRESENTATION