What is Assessment?

Definition: Assessment is an on-going process designed to monitor and improve student learning and/or program effectiveness.

Components:
- Making expectations explicit and clear
- Setting criteria and benchmarks
- Includes identifying, gathering, analyzing, and interpreting EVIDENCE
- Guides Good Practice

What is NOT Assessment?
- Individual Performance Reviews
- Intuition/Reflection
- Feedback and Opinions
- Educational Research (some overlap)
Assessment at Oxy

We ALL are assessing and improving…

- Assessment just provides the documentation, context, and framework for understanding our work and impact
- Explicitly links our ideas to action
- Provides legitimate justifications for changes, enhancement, decision-making
- Encourages innovation and thoughtful experimentation
- Develops better appreciation for data-driven decision making
- Creates a space for safe and collaborative dialogue
Assessing Program Effectiveness

1. Preparation
2. Design
3. Alignment
4. Collect Evidence
5. Review and Analyze
6. Close the Loop
Why Conduct Assessments in Student Affairs?

- Accountability
- Improvement
- Survival
- Quality
- Affordability
- Planning
- Decision making
- Policy Development
- Politics
- Accreditation
Reflection Exercise: 3 Questions

1. What decision did you make about your program last year?
2. What evidence did you use to inform that decision?
3. What was it that you were trying to influence about your program when making that decision with the stated evidence?

Why?

- ARTICULATE intended end result (outcome) and share with all constituents
- Documents decision-making process and decisions based on results and data
- Allows for reflection and follow through to see if decisions achieved intended improvement

Source: Bresciani, M.J.
The Assessment Cycle (Bresciani, 2006)

• The key questions…
  • What are we trying to do and why? or
  • What is my program supposed to accomplish? or
  • What do I want students to be able to do and/or know as a result of my course/workshop/orientation/program?
  • How well are we doing it?
  • How do we know?
  • How do we use the information to improve or celebrate successes?
  • Do the improvements we make contribute to our intended end results?
A Comprehensive Model of Assessment Includes...

- Tracking Who Uses Services, Programs, Facilities
- Assessing Student (Client) Needs
- Assessing Satisfaction with Services, Programs, Etc
- Assessing Campus Climate, Student Culture...
- Assessing Program and Service Outcomes
- Benchmarking: Comparisons w Other Institutions
- Assessing Effectiveness Against Standards
- Assessing Cost Effectiveness
WASC/WSCUC

What is it?
WSCUC is the WASC is the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, one of six regional organizations that the federal government has authorized to accredit institutions of higher learning.
2013 Core Commitments and Standards of Accreditation

• Three Core Commitments

Student Learning and Success: “Institutions have clear educational goals and student learning outcomes….Institutions support the success of all students and seek to understand and improve student success.”

Quality and Improvement: “Institutions are committed to high standards of quality in all of their educational activities…. Institutions demonstrate the capacity to fulfill their current commitments and future needs and opportunities.”

Institutional Integrity, Sustainability, and Accountability: “… Institutions engage in sound business practices, demonstrate institutional integrity, operate in a transparent manner, and adapt to changing conditions.”
Good Assessment: What WSCUC wants to see

- Links to Mission, Goals, Objectives
- Involvement of All Segments of Campus
- Multiple Measures; Assessment of Cognitive, Behavioral, Affective Domains of Learning
- Evidence of Use in Improving Programs
- Ongoing Assessment & Re-Evaluation of Assessment Program
- Linkages Between Assessment and Planning/Budgeting Process
Guidelines for Good Practice

Some Final Words of Wisdom

- Tie assessment to a few key objectives
  - intended learning outcomes, key problems, OR primary strengths
- Choose assessment methods wisely
- Pilot test if possible
- Assess what you intend to use
- Assess at key decision points
- Make appropriate use of existing resources
- Keep it simple
RESOURCES

- https://oxypedia.oxy.edu/display/ir/Student+Affairs+Division
- http://www.oxy.edu/irap/assessment/assessment-resources

- INDIRECT Evidence Student Surveys:
  - https://oxypedia.oxy.edu/display/ir/Surveys
Basic Steps in Assessment
(What to do and when to do it)

1. Identify your program goals and objectives
2. Define the problem; identify information necessary to help solve it
3. Determine where to get the necessary information
4. Determine whom to study and when to study them
5. Determine the best assessment methods, what instruments will be used, how the data will be collected and who will collect it
6. Determine how the data will be coded and analyzed; analyze the data
7. Report the results effectively
8. Revise assessment objectives, criteria, and methods, etc., as appropriate