

**Academic Program Planning Workshop**  
**Assessment of Student Learning**

Lisa Beckstrand & La Vonne Cornell-Swanson, Academic  
 Planners, Academic & Faculty Programs, UW System  
 June 19, 2009

## Overview

- ▶ What is assessment?
- ▶ What are the benefits of assessment?
- ▶ How is assessment done?
- ▶ What constitutes data?
- ▶ What is the process for collecting/analyzing data?
- ▶ Examples of strong assessment plans.
- ▶ Resources.

## What is assessment?

- ▶ "...the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise and resources available in order to inform decisions about how to improve learning." (Walvoord, 2004)
- ▶ Assessment means basing decisions about curriculum, pedagogy, staffing, advising and student support upon the data about student learning.

## What are the benefits of assessment?

- ▶ Assessment can provide a basis for wiser planning, budgeting, decisions about curriculum, staffing, programming and student support.
- ▶ Assessment can provide a basis for changes in curriculum and pedagogy.
- ▶ Assessment done well creates a climate of engagement that supports student's own commitment to learning and it empowers faculty and instructional academic staff to better understand student learning.

## Classroom Assessment

- ▶ Classroom assessment occurs when:
  - faculty teaching a specific course evaluate student's projects, assign grades, and use the information for their own improvement;
  - faculty engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL).

## Program Assessment

- ▶ Program assessment occurs when:
  - faculty use data to report annually to the department or program, outlining strengths and weaknesses of the student's work in relation to departmental or program learning goals;
  - the department or program uses data from direct and indirect measures designed to assess program goals.

## Three Steps of Program Assessment

1. Articulating program goals.
2. Gather evidence directly related to your goals.
3. Use the information for improvement.

## Direct measures include:

- ▶ Student work that is directly evaluated:
  - Exams
  - Papers
  - Projects
  - Computer Programs
  - Interaction with a Client
  - Musical Performances
  - Portfolios
  - Pre-test and post-test assessment tools

### Indirect Measures include:

- ▶ Asking students or alumni how well they thought they learned, and tracking placements rates etc.
- Exit Interviews
- Focus Interviews
- Alumni Surveys
- Senior Surveys

### Process for Collecting/Evaluating data

- ▶ Department or program faculty choose 4-5 methods of data collections (e.g. capstone project, pre/post-test tool, student exit interviews, alumni surveys).
- ▶ Department or program faculty decide how often to collect data.
- ▶ Program assessment committee meets annually or bi-annually to look at data in relation to learning goals.
- ▶ Program assessment committee shares evaluation with full department.
- ▶ Department faculty update the curriculum & other aspects of the program accordingly.

### UW System Examples

UW-Oshkosh: BA/BS in Women's Studies  
 UW-Madison: BS in Community & Nonprofit Leadership

### Resources

- ▶ Walvoord, B.E. (2004). *Assessment clear and simple: A practical guide for institutions, departments, and general education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- ▶ Websites:
  - Academic Affairs Website for Academic Program Planning and Review: <http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/planning/>
  - UW-Madison Assessment website: <http://www.provost.wisc.edu/assessment/manual/>
  - Winona State U: <http://www.winona.edu/air/resources.htm>

**Questions?...**