



OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT AT A MASTER'S FOCUSED INSTITUTION

**Robert M. Augustine, Dean of the Graduate School
Eastern Illinois University**

<http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/cgspresentation.php>



Good Practices for Assessment of Learning, AAHE 2004

Driving Forces

1. **Mission Driven**
2. **Use Driven**
3. **Faculty Driven**
4. **Integrated**

Guiding Principles

5. **Clear Goals**
6. **Clear Conditions**
7. **Accurate Data**
8. **Used and Shared**



Best Practice 1 Mission Driven Assessment

- *“Where questions about educational mission and values are skipped over, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what’s easy, rather than a process for improving what we really care about.”*
- **Banta, 1996**

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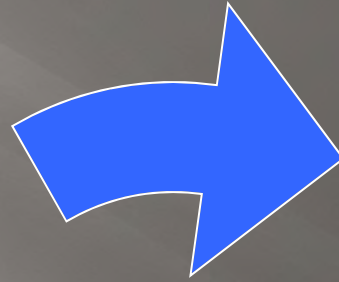


Mission Concepts

- **Mission drives assessment**
- **Assessment integrated with program review**
- **Program achievements linked to resources**
- **Resources enhance mission**

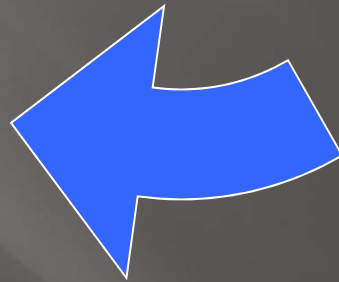
Resources

Mission

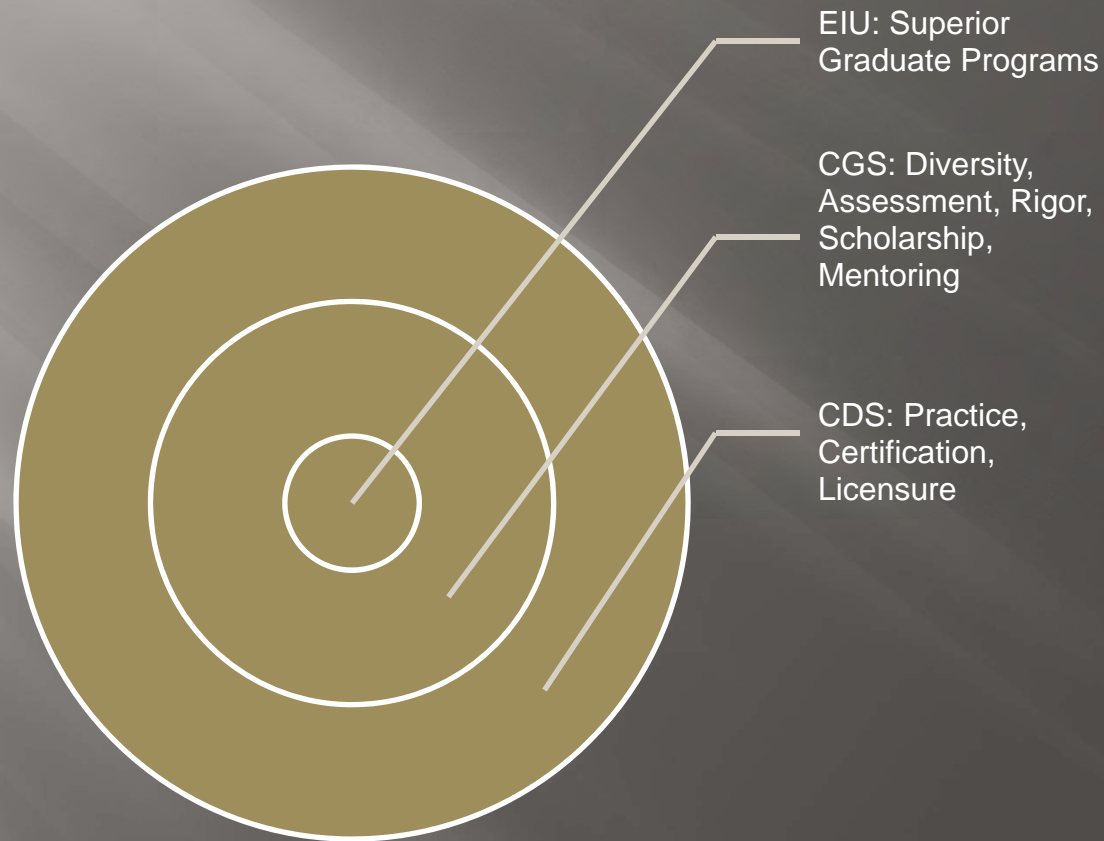


Program
Review

Assessment



3 Levels of mission at EIU Verified by Assessment Outcomes





Assessment Starting Point: The Mission Statement

- **Program Mission Statement**
 - **Focus, Strengths, Uniqueness**
- **Graduate Mission Statement**
 - **Diversity, Assessment, Rigor, Scholarship, Mentoring**
- **University Mission Statement**
 - **Superior Graduate Study**



The Program Mission Statement

- **CDS**
- **Focus: Clinical practice, certification, licensure**
- **Strengths: Autism**
- **Uniqueness: Medical and educational settings**
- **CHM**
- **Focus: General areas, PHD/teaching, industry**
- **Strengths: Unclear**
- **Uniqueness: None identified**



Assessment of CHM Mission Statements

- **12 CHM MS Programs Illinois Public Institutions**
 - Focus: physical, organic, etc.
 - Strengths: Materials science, Community College Teaching
 - Uniqueness: PSM
- **Other CHM MS Private and Beyond Illinois**
 - Clear missions
 - Identified strengths
 - Uniqueness: PSM emerging as a unique area for many



Assessment Advancement Mission Focus

- **Mission statements**
 - **Guide program assessment**
 - **Lead to mission-focused improvements**
 - **Verify graduate expectations**
 - **Verify university expectations**



Best Practice 2 Use Driven Assessment

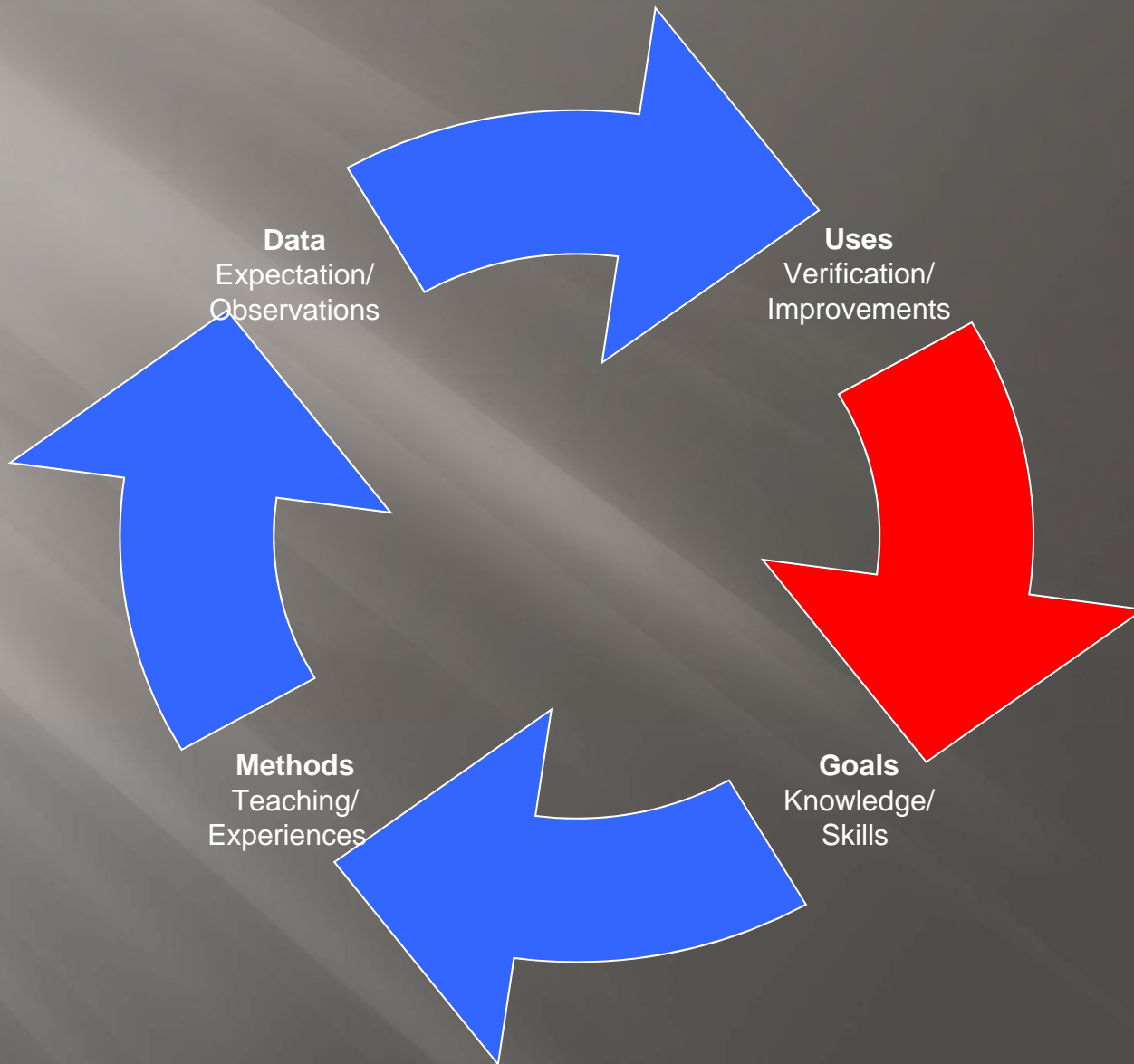
- “If an assessment doesn’t help improve teaching and learning activities, why bother with it?”
- In order to be useful *assessment must correspond to your key learning goals and your curriculum.*”
- Suskie, 2004

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Use Concepts

1. Uses = validate & track changes in critical knowledge
2. Goals = desired critical knowledge
3. Methods = means of acquiring critical knowledge
4. Data = evidence =, >, < expectations





Continuum of Assessment Use

Initial →

- Verifies achievements
- Verifies strengths
- Identifies weaknesses
- Identifies ways to improve

Advanced

- Verifies mission achieved
- Implements new goals, methods, data, uses
- Integrates assessment into program review



Judging Effectiveness Use

- Outcomes verify achievement of mission
- Outcomes validate teaching methods
- Outcomes track effectiveness of program changes
- Outcomes secure resources/program needs



Continuum of Assessment Goals

Initial →

- **Clear mission focused**
- **Small number**
- **Direct measures**
- **Summative measures**

Advanced

- **Clear mission focused**
- **Expanded number**
- **Direct measures**
- **Indirect measures**
- **Summative measures**
- **Formative measures**



Judging Effectiveness Goals

- **Reflect mission and values**
- **Essential to the program**
- **Desire to achieve these goals**
- **Achievement shared/celebrated and used to secure support**



Continuum of Assessment Methods

Initial

- Courses necessary
- Applied experiences necessary

—————→ **Advanced**

- Courses necessary and sufficient
- Applied experiences necessary and sufficient
- Innovative experiences necessary and sufficient



Judging Effectiveness Methods

- Desired learning is clearly stated and taught
- Desired learning opportunities are necessary
- Desired learning opportunities are sufficient and/or achieve specialized strengths or uniqueness



Continuum of Assessment Data & Measurement

Initial



Advanced

- **Valid, reliable direct, summative measures**
 - Thesis
 - Comp exams
 - Certification/licensure tests
- **Valid, reliable direct summative and formative measures**
 - Thesis, exams, tests
 - Rubrics, specific points
- **Valid, reliable, indirect measures**
 - Employer, alumni surveys



Judging Effectiveness Data & Measurement

- Measurement is valid
- Measurement is reliable
- Multiple measures
- Systematic (consistent, at same point)
- Time to collect the data is affordable
- Money/resources to collect the data is affordable
- Time to cost ratio = most valuable data



Assessment Advancement Use Focus

- Explain/define what a program wants to do before any other actions are taken
- Link assessment with action to verify/improve the program
- Retain the focus on taking action vs. completing a task



Best Practice 3 Faculty Driven Assessment

"Assessment of student learning for program improvement is really transformational. We went into this process convinced that we were doing good work in preparing ESL/Bilingual educators and after two full rounds of assessment work we are even more committed and enthusiastic about our work as educators."

Chris Cartwright, Portland State University





Faculty Principles

- **Administrative Commitment**
- **Faculty Leadership for Assessment**
- **Graduate Faculty Leadership for Graduate Assessment**



Administrative Commitment

- **Administrative culture of assessment**
- **Collaborative culture among deans**
- **Faculty integration into the culture**
- **Assessment integrated into administrative decision making**
- **Resources to engage in effective assessment**
- **Recognition when advancements are made**



Faculty Leadership

- **Committee and council structure**
- **Defining documents to guide faculty**
- **Development programs to advance faculty**
- **Ease of participation**



Graduate Faculty Leadership

- Define assessment for graduate programs
- Determine how assessment is integrated with program review
- Process for communicating and recognizing achievements



Assessment achievements are valued by Faculty

- Public acknowledgement & recognition of program quality
- Public acknowledgement & recognition for meeting the mission of the institution and Graduate School
- Acquisition of resources that reflect quality and further advance the program



Best Practice 4 Integration with Program Review

- **Assessment leads to improvement under these conditions:**
 - **Integrated with a larger set of conditions that promote change (Program Review)**
 - **Integrated part of decision making**
- **Banta, 2004**

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Program Review Criteria Reflect Graduate Mission

- Diversity
- Assessment
 - Depth of knowledge, thinking, communication, research
- Rigor
- Student Scholarship
- Faculty Mentoring



Criterion 1 Diversity

- Enrollment/Diversity Plan
- Assistantship/Scholarship Plan
- Matriculation Management
- Graduate Placement



Criterion 2 Assessment

- **Assessment Results Center for Academic Support & Achievement**
 - Written & Oral Communication
 - Depth of Knowledge (Technology & Ethics)
 - Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
 - Research & Scholarship
- **Assessment Results Graduate School**



Criterion 3 Rigor

- Mission Planning
- Curricular Leadership
- External Review Contributions to Quality
- Capstone Contributions to Quality
- Student Contributions to Quality
- Alumni Contributions to Quality
- External Partnership Contributions To Quality



Criterion 4 Scholarship

- **Sustained Student Research**
- **Commitment to Research & Travel Grants**
- **Showcasing Scholarship**
- **Award Participation**



Criterion 5 Mentoring

- **Coordinator Leadership**
- **Faculty Scholarship**



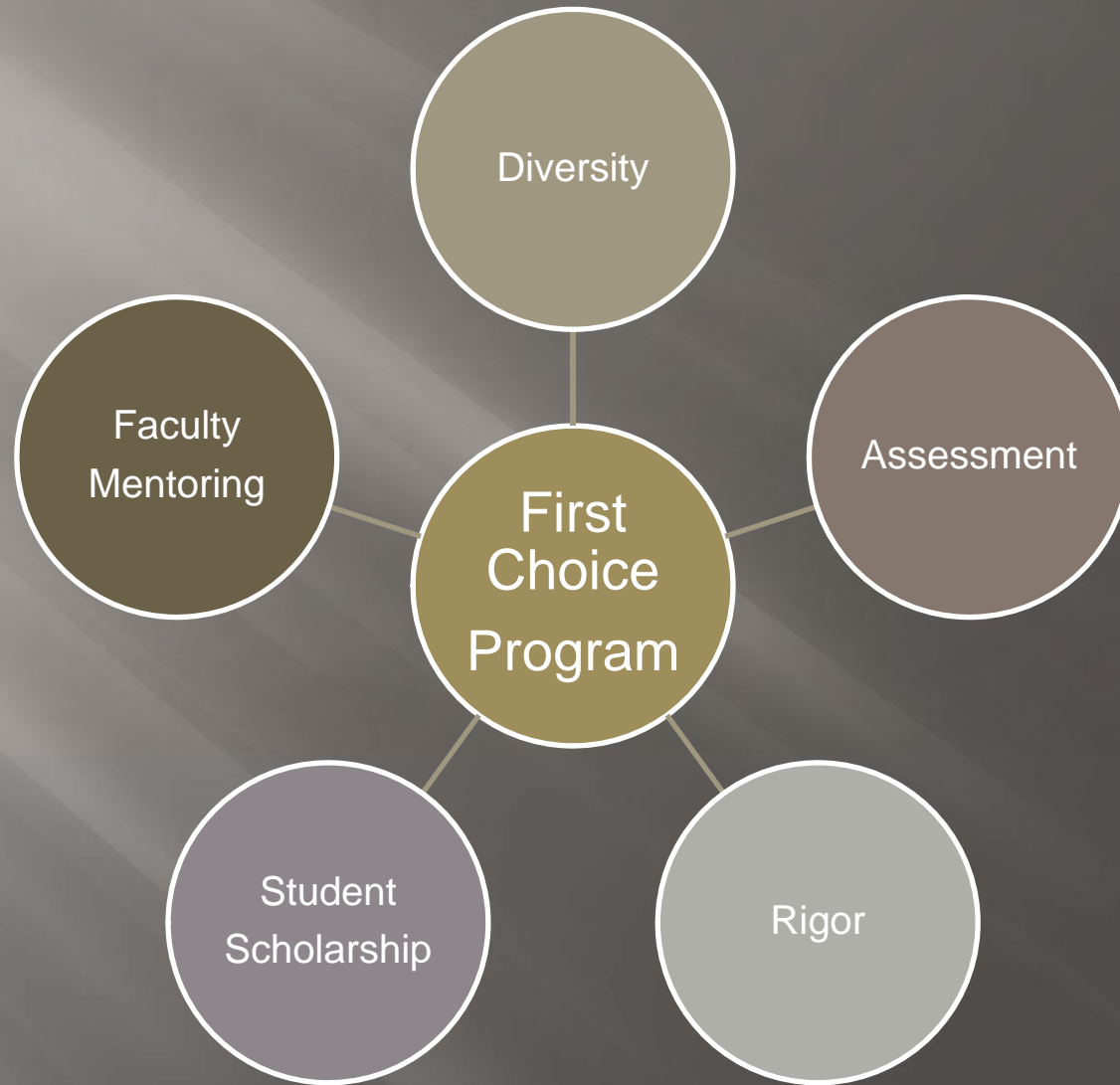
Program Review Achievements Access Resources

- Review criteria are mission driven
- Assessment integrated into criteria
- Review achievements validate quality
- Quality achievement “First Choice” yields funding



New Resources Focus on Advancing Mission

- Higher stipends
- More assistantships
- Travel awards
- Entrepreneurial Awards
- College and Provost investments



Horizontal and Vertical Analysis

Enrollment....Assistantships....**DIVERSITY**...Matriculation....Placement

University Assessment....**ASSESSMENT**....Graduate School Assessment

Mission...Curriculum...Capstone...**RIGOR**...Students...Alumni...Partners

Research....Grants...**STUDENT RESEARCH**...Showcase...Awards

Coordinator Leadership...**FACULTY MENTORING**...Faculty Mentoring





Meaningfulness Failures

- **Mission disconnected from assessment**
- **Assessment an isolated process**
- **Program review an isolated process**
- **Assessment data, program review data shelved**
- **Resource acquisition disconnected from learning outcomes and program quality**
- **No consistent criteria for allocating resources**



Characteristics Stage 1

- **Mission: Stated but not driving assessment**
- **Use : Marginalized not linked to advancement**
- **Faculty : Commitment not evident**
- **Integration: Comprehensive program quality issues**



Master of Arts in Mathematics Stage 1

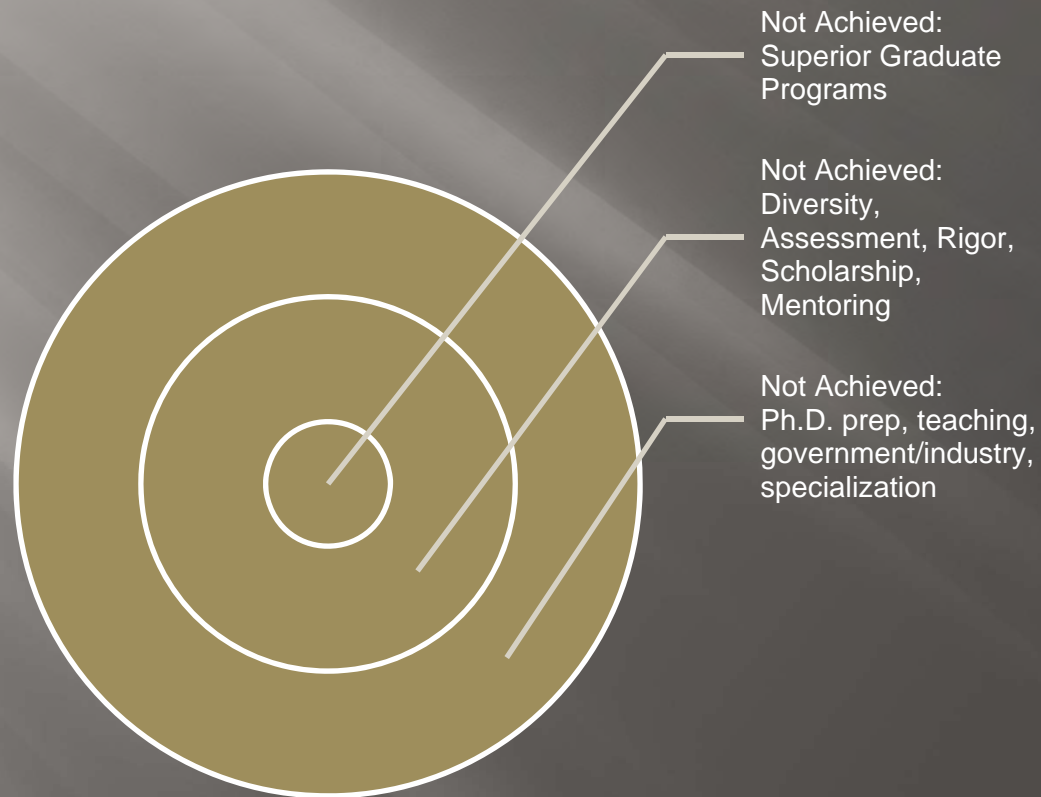
Program

- Ph.D. preparation
- Post secondary teaching
- Work in industry or government
- Specialization pure or applied math, computer science

Graduate School

- Depth of content
- Critical Thinking/
Problem Solving
- Communication
- Research

Elementary Education EIU, Graduate School, Program Mission Assessment not Achieved





MA in Mathematics Assessment Outcomes

- **Uses:** No evidence of meeting mission
- **Goals:** Not clear or mission focused
- **Methods:** Not clear where learning is to occur
- **Data:** Use of grades that do not identify program strengths or weaknesses



MA in Mathematics Assessment *One* Symptom of Numerous Program Weaknesses

- ❑ **Diversity: Falling enrollments**
- ❑ **Assessment: Not meeting EIU, Graduate School, Program mission**
- ❑ **Rigor: Significant curriculum weaknesses**
- ❑ **Scholarship: No scholarly works, disengaged**
- ❑ **Mentoring: Limited mentoring/lack of commitment to superior graduate education**

MAT: Horizontal & Vertical Issues

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MA in Mathematics Assessment Actions

- **Step 1 Refocus mission**
- **Step 2 Identify valid assessment uses**
 - Identify evidence the mission areas are assessed
 - Identify learning methods
 - Develop appropriate expectations
 - Compare outcomes to expectations
- **Step 3 Secure coordinator commitment**
- **Step 4 Plan to address other program areas**
- **Holding resources until actions taken**



Characteristics Stage 2

- **Mission: Driving assessment**
- **Use: Assessment used and linked to advancements**
- **Faculty: Coordinator leading/faculty engaged**
- **Integration: Working toward First Choice designation**
- **Resources: Considered for additional resources**



Example MSE in Elementary Education Stage 2

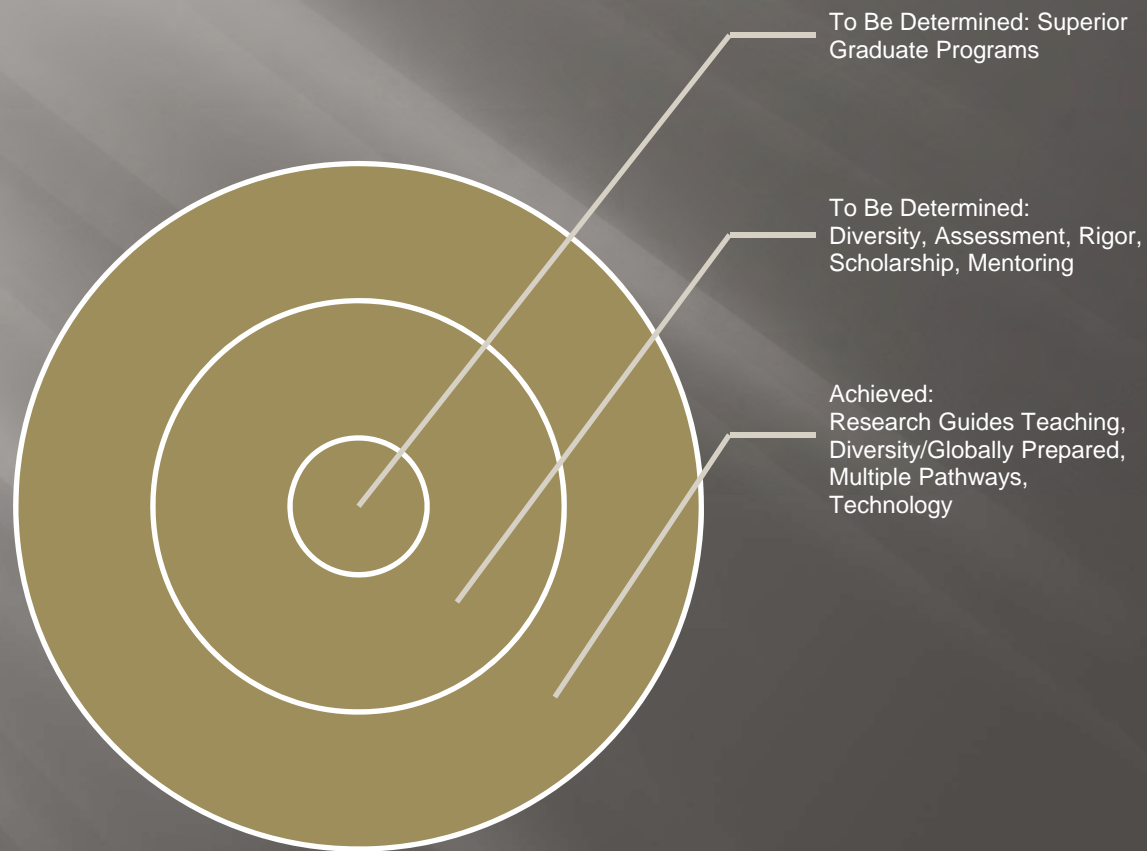
Program

- Research to inform teaching
- Teach in diverse/global environments
- Use multiple pathways to learn
- Use advanced technologies to learn

Graduate School

- Depth of content
- Critical Thinking/
Problem Solving
- Communication
- Research

Political Science Graduate School & Program Assessment: Mission Met





ELE Program Review Assessment *One Level of Achievement*

- Diversity
 - Steady enrollments with growing diversity
 - Do matriculation & diversity rates meet criteria?
- Assessment
 - Used to verify and advance mission
- Rigor
 - Achievements in all areas & external validation of quality
- Scholarship
 - Exemplary student scholarship/program strength
- Mentoring
 - Exemplary faculty mentoring/program strength

ELE Horizontal & Vertical Achievements

Remaining Question: Diversity

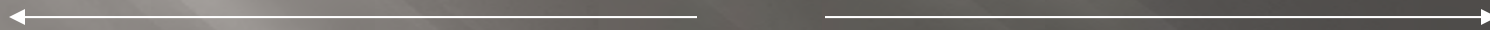
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Characteristics Stage 3

- **Mission**
 - Exemplary/Recognized with awards
- **Use**
 - Assessment verifies and advances mission; data communicates excellence to public
- **Faculty**
 - Coordinator leadership/strong culture of assessment
- **Integration**
 - Named a First Choice Program
- **Resources**
 - Obtaining additional resources to support program



Example Communication Disorders & Sciences Stage 3

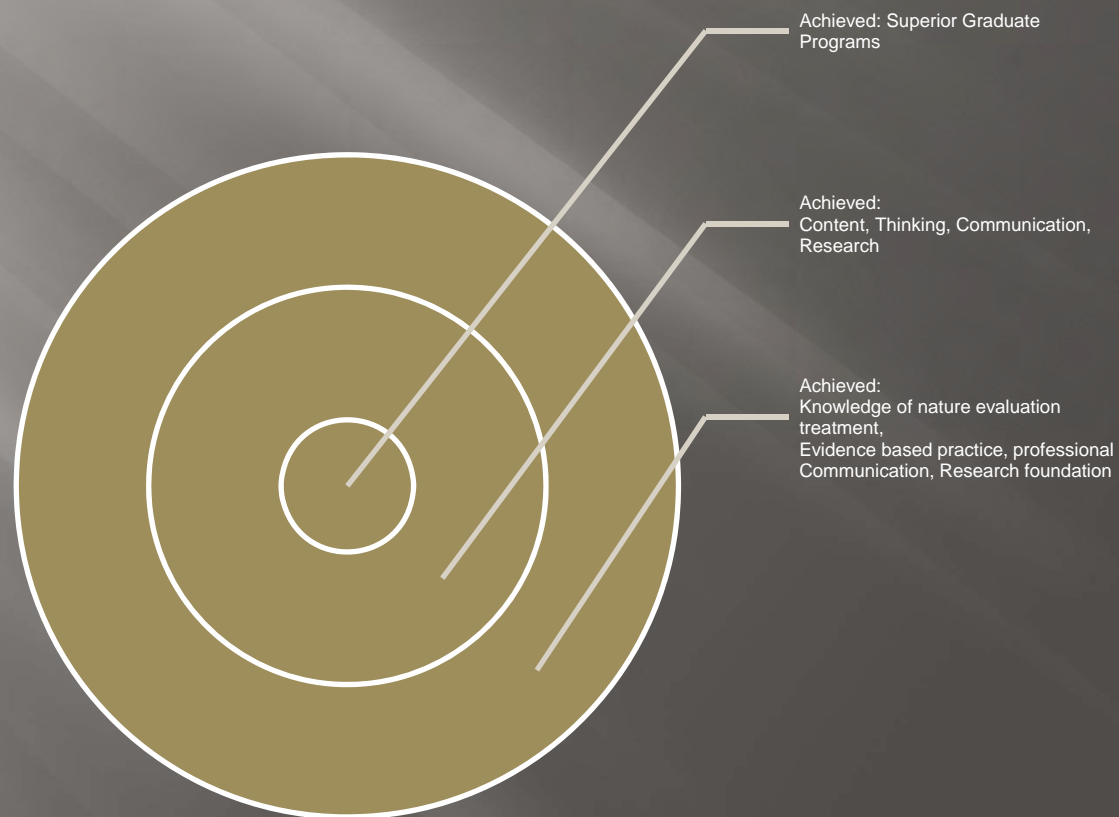
Program

- Knowledge nature, evaluation & treatment
- Evidenced based practice
- Professional oral/written
- Research as foundation for the discipline

Graduate School

- Depth of content
- Critical Thinking/
Problem Solving
- Communication
- Research

Communication Disorders & Sciences EIU, Graduate School, Program Assessment: Mission Met





CDS Program Review Assessment Integrated with Broad Conditions

- **Diversity**
 - **Exemplary: Highly selective and diverse**
- **Assessment**
 - **Exemplary: Earned awards**
- **Rigor**
 - **Exemplary: accreditation, awards, and partnerships**
- **Scholarship**
 - **Student scholarship a program strength**
- **Mentoring**
 - **Exemplary faculty mentoring/Faculty win awards**

CDS Horizontal & Vertical Achievements

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Integration Outcomes

- 28 Degree Programs
- 10 Programs Named FCPs
- 5 Programs with Progressive Agendas
- 5 Programs Initiating Consultations
- 3 Programs Unlikely to Survive



Integration Additional Benefits

- **Consistent Expectations of Quality**
- **Value of Assessment**
- **Sharing of Best Practices**
- **Consistent Process for Addressing Weaknesses**
- **Resources Tied to Outcomes**



University Infrastructure

- **Center for Academic Support and Achievement**
- **Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning**
- **Scholarly resources on assessment**
- **Newsletters and Workshops**
- **Annual Assessment Plans & Progress Reports**
- **Provost's Award for Assessment**



Streamlined Process

- **Summary Forms (web site)**
- **Annual Review by Director**
- **Annual Review by Dean**
- **Council on Graduate Studies**