Program Quality Assessment

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Council of Graduate Schools
New Deans Institute

Format of the Session

- Three Presenters for 15 minutes each
  - Bill Wiener, Marquette University
    - Assessment, Overview of Program Review, Linkage of Assessment and Program Review
  - Bob Augustine, Eastern Illinois University
    - Overview of Concepts of Assessment, Overview of Program Review, Case Studies, and Connecting Program Review to Resources
  - Janet Weiss, University of Michigan
    - Overview of Program Review, Difficulty of Measuring Quality in Program Review, the Strengths and Weaknesses of Measuring Quality
- 30 Minutes for Comments, Questions and Answers

Marquette University

- Medium Sized Private Catholic University
  - 11,500 students
- 3549 Graduate and Professional Students
  - 39 Master's Programs
  - 16 Ph.D. Programs
  - 4 Professional Doctoral Programs
  - 31 Certificate Programs
- Marquette is classified as a doctoral research institution with high research

Two Components of Evaluation

- ## Assessment
  - The purpose of assessment is to improve student learning

- ## Program Review
  - The purpose of program review is the improvement of graduate programs

Assessment and Program Review go Hand-in-Hand

Both can be linked to improve program quality

The Political Climate of Assessment

- Disciplinary Accrediting Bodies
- Regional Accrediting Bodies
- The U.S. News and World Report Rankings
- The National Research Council
- Reauthorized Higher Education Act

Disciplinary Accrediting Bodies

- Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
- Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication,
- Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association
- Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
- American Bar Association and Association of American Law Schools
- Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Instruction
- American Psychological Association
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
- National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences
- Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant
- American Physical Therapy Association
- American Society of Exercise Physiology
- National Athletic Training Association Board of Credentialing

Regional Accrediting Agencies
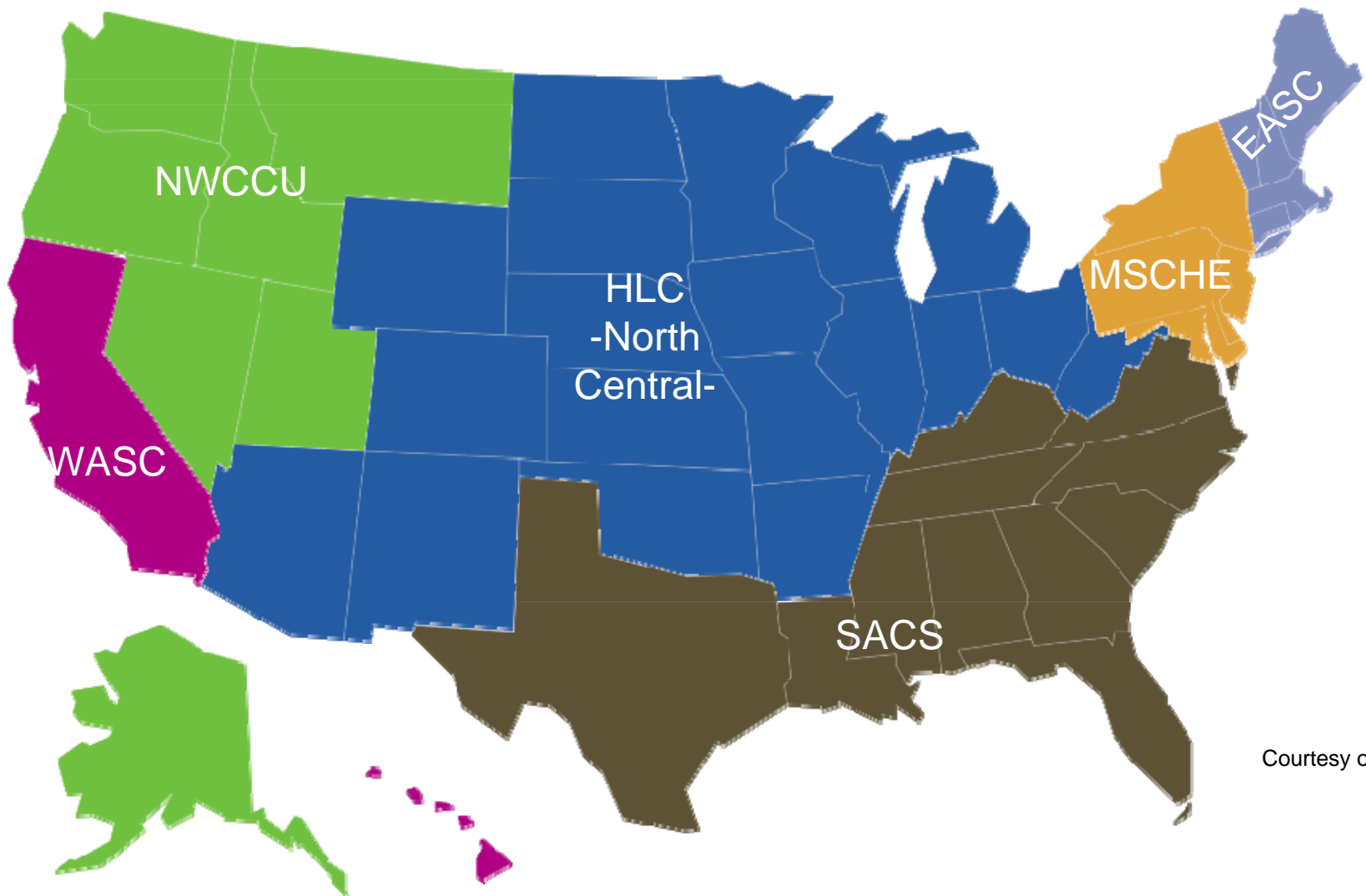
Courtesy of HLC

Assessment

Assessment

- **Definition:** the systematic collection of information about student learning in order to inform decisions about how to improve learning

- It is a type of "**action research**" used to inform local action.

- It does not necessarily require standardized tests or "objective measures."   One can assess critical thinking, scientific reasoning, or other qualities by making informed professional judgments

Five Basic Steps in Assessment

Step One

- **Document departmental goals for student learning**

Step One Example: Departmental Goals

- Acquire advanced knowledge and a deeper understanding of the skills and knowledge in the discipline

- Develop a sense of responsibility towards, as well as an understanding of the ethical dimensions of the discipline

- Develop the competence, knowledge, and independence for the realization of leadership potential

- Other goals specific to the discipline

Step Two

- Document departmental goals for student learning

- **Articulate the student learning outcome statements (what the student will be able to do upon completion)**

Step Two: Student Learning Outcomes

- The goals must be operationalized into learning outcome statements within the context of the discipline

- The statements should describe the attitudes, behaviors, skills, and ways of thinking

Example: Learning Outcomes

- **At the completion of the degree in communication, the graduate will be able to:**
  - 1. Communicate effectively in both oral and written format during capstone experience.
  - 2. Articulate the historical, theoretical and methodological foundations of the discipline of communication.
  - 3. Apply research-based, theory-informed knowledge of the field to solve real-life problems in a variety of work or community settings.
  - 4. Apply ethical decision making skills in a variety of communication situations.
  - 5. Integrate knowledge from theory, methods, and ethics from the discipline of communication to a particular specialization
  - 6. Design and execute an original thesis research project.

Step Three

- Document departmental goals for student learning
- Articulate the student learning outcome statements (what the student will be able to do upon completion)
- **Gather evidence on performance**
  - **Direct measures**
  - **Indirect measures**

Step Three: Gather Evidence

Direct Measures

- Courses – papers, projects, original work
- Comprehensive examinations
- Certification examinations
- Licensure examinations
- Locally developed pretest and/or posttest
- Portfolios with evidence of learning
- Audio or videotapings
- Thesis/dissertations
- Peer-reviewed publications
- Disciplinary presentations
- Funded grants and fellowships

Indirect Measures

- Benchmarking with peer institutions
- Career Placements
- Employer Surveys
- Advisory groups on curriculum development
- Student Graduation/retention rates
- Exit interviews
- Student satisfaction surveys
- Focus Groups
- Alumni surveys
- Alumni honors
- Analysis of grade distributions
- Peer review of courses and programs

Step Four

- Document departmental goals for student learning
- Articulate the student learning outcome statements (what the student will be able to do upon completion)
- Gather evidence on performance
  - Direct measures
  - Indirect measures
- **Use a rubric to evaluate how well goals are being met**

Step Four: Use a Rubric

- Provides in writing various clear and explicit criteria for evaluation of student work

- Changes professional judgment into numerical ratings on a scale

- Allows comparison among various faculty across courses

Example Communication Rubric

	1	2	3	4	Total
Organization	Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because student jumps around	Student presents information in logical sequence which audience can follow.	Student presents information in logical, interesting sequence which audience can follow.	
Subject Knowldedge	Student does not have grasp of information; student cannot answer questions about subject.	Student is uncomfortable with information and is able to answer only rudimentary questions.	Student is at ease with expected answers to all questions but fails to elaborate.	Student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required) by answering all class questions with explanations and elaborations.	
Graphics	Student uses superfluous graphics or no graphics	Student occasionally uses graphics that rarely support text and presentation.	Student's graphics relate to text and presentation.	Student's graphics explain and reinforce screen text and presentation.	
Mechanics	Student's presentation has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	
Eye Contact	Student reads all of the report with no eye contact.	Student occasionally uses eye contact, but still reads most of report.	Student maintains eye contact most of the time but frequently returns to notes.	Student maintains eye contact with audience, seldom returning to notes.	
Elocution	Student mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms, and speaks too quietly for students in back of the class to hear.	Student's voice is low. Student incorrectly pronounces terms. Audience members	Student's voice is clear. Student pronounces most words correctly. Most audience members can hear presentation.	Student uses a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms audience members can hear presentation.	

Created by Lee Bash, Higher Learning Commission Presentation

Step Five

- Document departmental goals for student learning
- Articulate the student learning outcome statements (what the student will be able to do upon completion)
- Gather evidence on performance
  - Direct measures
  - Indirect measures
- Use a rubric to evaluate how well goals are being met
- **Use the information for improvement**

Step Five: Closing the Feedback Loop (Spiral)

- Assessment is only helpful if it is used to strengthen student learning
  - How/what did the program change as a result of assessment?
  - How did or will the changes improve student learning
  - Include report on assessment in program evaluation

Example:

- Student lack of quantitative skills in understanding graphs, charts, and numerical concepts
  - Embedding Math Across the Curriculum

Procedural Items to be Addressed in Assessment Planning

- Who will be responsible for administration of the assessment plan

- What are the resources and structures for assessment

- Who are the targeted students (population vs. sample)

- When will the student assessments be conducted and repeated

- How is assessment data to be used for improvement of learning

- What are the recommended changes to improve the assessment mechanism

Graduate Core Competencies

- Graduate education doesn't have general education courses or a core curriculum

    – Therefore is it possible to have GRADUATE CORE LEARNING OUTCOMES?
    – Are there outcomes that are common across all graduate programs?

Possible Graduate CORE Learning Outcomes

- Communicate the history of the discipline
- Demonstrate a mastery of the theory that underlies the foundation of the discipline
- Demonstrate a mastery of the methodology and techniques specific to the discipline
- Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication within the field of study
- Demonstrate a mastery of research, scholarship, and critical evaluation within the field of study
- Demonstrate creative or innovative activity within the field of study
- Function as a professional and a steward of the discipline
- Demonstrate a mastery of professional ethics and/or research ethics

Program Reviews

Purpose of Program Reviews

- Formative evaluation rather than summative
- Continuous program improvement
- Data driven and outcome based
- Evaluative and not simply descriptive
- Meeting need for accountability
  - Disciplinary accrediting bodies
  - Regional accrediting bodies

Methods of Program Review

- At Marquette:
  - The Graduate Dean coordinates each program review
  - All reviews must involve the college or school administration
  - Program reviews should occur every six years
  - Data provided to the program each year for trends
  - Departments must complete a self study guide
  - Faculty from other universities serve as reviewers
  - Programs that have outside accreditation may have program reviews prior to accreditation
  - An approved action plan must be a required outcome of the review
  - Annual progress toward action plan must be reported
- Contains section on student assessment

Annual Report Data

1. Enrollments
   a. Student headcount by undergraduate major, masters, doctoral degree and certificate program ("freeze day" headcounts in fall term)
   b. Student credit hours generated by the unit (total, by academic year)
   c. Student credit hours generated per full-time faculty member
2. Number of graduates
   a. By degree type and program (undergraduate and graduate, including certificates)
   b. Rates of completion and attrition
3. Departmental personnel
   a. Number of faculty (regular, participating, and part-time FTE)
   b. Number of TAs/RAs/GAs allotted by the University and by grants
   c. Number of postdoctoral fellows and visiting professors
4. Grants
   a. External research grants
   b. External total grants (research, instrumentation, instruction, etc.)
   c. Research grant dollars generated as percentage of University total
   d. Total grant dollars generated as percentage of University total
   e. Internal research and other grants (e.g., SFF, RRG, and Manresa awards)
5. MOCES results (Marquette Online Course Evaluation System)
   a. Unit median for selected items

Self Study Guide

1. Progress toward the mission, goals, and strategic plans of the unit since the last comprehensive review
2. Discussion of the progress in advancing the quality and effectiveness of the academic unit's programs
3. Identification and analysis of the unit's:
    a. Strengths
    b. Weaknesses
    c. Opportunities
    d. Threats
4. If applicable, discussion of any issues identified by the Provost when charging the unit to conduct an early comprehensive review
5. Plans and actions to address weaknesses, opportunities, or challenges identified above
6. Any adjustments, if indicated, to the unit's mission, goals, and strategic plan in light of the above items.
7. Appendices:
    Appendix I: The unit's strategic plan
    Appendix II: Copies of the *Academic Unit Annual Reports* since the last comprehensive review
    Appendix III: Copies of the unit's most recent *Annual Program Assessment Report* (i.e., student learning outcome data)

Reviewers' Report

- To what extent are the mission and goals of the program being achieved?
- How well do the stated program goals reflect national and international trends in similar programs?
- Does the curriculum reflect current regional and national needs and standards?
- Are the instructional strategies appropriate for the program and discipline?
- What revisions or adjustments to the curriculum would be useful for the faculty to consider?
- Given the mission of the program and the number of students, are the numbers and expertise of the faculty comparable to those in similar programs at other universities?
- For a program of its size and with its stated goals, do faculty members meet the usual expectations for scholarly activity (e.g., publications, grants, involvement in professional organizations)
- What do you view as the program's strengths?
- Do you see any significant weaknesses and challenges that should be addressed? If so, what actions could be taken to address those weaknesses and challenges?
- Any other observations that you think are important for the success of the unit?

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