Definition of Assessment

According to Tom Angelo (1995), assessment is “an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves:

- Making our expectations explicit and public;
- Setting appropriate criteria and high expectations for learning quality;
- Systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards;
- And using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance.

Simply put, assessment (often called outcomes assessment) should be useful, and used to:

- Evaluate your curriculum
- Plan improvements when necessary, and
- Evaluate the effects of the changes.

Assessment helps departments affirm those things in their curricula and courses that are going well. Assessment also helps identify what is not going well, and often points to the specific changes that might be needed. Assessment is not static; rather, it is an ongoing and continuous effort to improve the quality of instruction, student learning, and overall effectiveness of a department or unit.”

While the primary focus of any assessment activity is student learning, Indiana University Purdue University-Fort Wayne (IPFW) has expanded the definition to encompass the concept of assessing institutional effectiveness. The focus will be on the continual improvement of all the university does in order to prove a quality learning environment and to integrate assessment with strategic planning. All aspects of the university are involved in planning and assessment. They must demonstrate how they serve the mission of the university and demonstrate how they have made changes based upon the results of assessment.

Guiding Principles

In the development of the institutional assessment plan, the “AAHE 9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning” (http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/PrinciplesofAssessment.html) serve as the guiding framework.
1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values. Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. Its effective practice, then, begins with and enacts a vision of the kinds of learning we most value for students and strive to help them achieve. Educational values should drive not only what we choose to assess but also how we do so. 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 of improving what we really care about.

2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time. Learning is a complex process. It entails not only what students know but what they can do with what they know; it involves not only knowledge and abilities but values, attitudes, and habits of mind that affect both academic success and performance beyond the classroom. Assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods, including those that call for actual performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration. Such an approach aims for a more complete and accurate picture of learning, and therefore firmer bases for improving our students' educational experience.

3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes. Assessment is a goal-oriented process. It entails comparing educational performance with educational purposes and expectations -- those derived from the institution's mission, from faculty intentions in program and course design, and from knowledge of students' own goals. Where program purposes lack specificity or agreement, assessment as a process pushes a campus toward clarity about where to aim and what standards to apply; assessment also prompts attention to where and how program goals will be taught and learned. Clear, shared, implementable goals are the cornerstone for assessment that is focused and useful.

4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes. Information about outcomes is of high importance; where students "end up" matters greatly. But to improve outcomes, we need to know about student experience along the way -- about the curricula, teaching, and kind of student effort that lead to particular outcomes. Assessment can help us understand which students learn best under what conditions; with such knowledge comes the capacity to improve the whole of their learning.

5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing not episodic. Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. Though isolated, "one-shot" assessment can be better than none, improvement is best fostered when assessment entails a linked series of activities undertaken over time. This may mean tracking the process of individual students, or of cohorts of students; it may mean collecting the same
examples of student performance or using the same instrument semester after semester. The point is to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement. Along the way, the assessment process itself should be evaluated and refined in light of emerging insights.

6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved. Student learning is a campus-wide responsibility, and assessment is a way of enacting that responsibility. Thus, while assessment efforts may start small, the aim over time is to involve people from across the educational community. Faculty play an especially important role, but assessment's questions can't be fully addressed without participation by student-affairs educators, librarians, administrators, and students. Assessment may also involve individuals from beyond the campus (alumni/ae, trustees, employers) whose experience can enrich the sense of appropriate aims and standards for learning. Thus understood, assessment is not a task for small groups of experts but a collaborative activity; its aim is wider, better-informed attention to student learning by all parties with a stake in its improvement.

7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about. Assessment recognizes the value of information in the process of improvement. But to be useful, information must be connected to issues or questions that people really care about. This implies assessment approaches that produce evidence that relevant parties will find credible, suggestive, and applicable to decisions that need to be made. It means thinking in advance about how the information will be used, and by whom. The point of assessment is not to gather data and return "results"; it is a process that starts with the questions of decision-makers, that involves them in the gathering and interpreting of data, and that informs and helps guide continuous improvement.

8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change. Assessment alone changes little. Its greatest contribution comes on campuses where the quality of teaching and learning is visibly valued and worked at. On such campuses, the push to improve educational performance is a visible and primary goal of leadership; improving the quality of undergraduate education is central to the institution's planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions. On such campuses, information about learning outcomes is seen as an integral part of decision making, and avidly sought.

9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public. There is a compelling public stake in education. As educators, we have a responsibility to the publics that support or depend on us to provide information about the ways in which our students meet goals and expectations. But that responsibility goes beyond the reporting of such information; our deeper obligation -- to ourselves, our students, and society -- is to improve. Those to
whom educators are accountable have a corresponding obligation to support such attempts at improvement.

**Assessment and Effectiveness Taxonomy**

The following assessment and effectiveness taxonomy served as a guide in the development of the assessment and effectiveness plan.

1. General Knowledge Assessment (Common to all Undergraduates)
   a. Assessment of Baccalaureate Framework
   b. Assessment of General Education and Alignment to Baccalaureate Framework

2. Academic Program Based Baccalaureate Degree Outcomes Assessment
   a. Assessment of the Major – at the degree program level.
   b. Co-curricular program based assessment (e.g. internships, service learning, undergraduate research experiences, etc.)

3. Graduate Program Outcomes Assessment
   a. Assessment of Graduate Programs

4. Off-Campus/On-line Program Outcomes Assessment
   a. Assessment of Off-Campus/On-Line Programs

5. Student Involvement with the Institution
   a. Student Engagement with the Learning Process
   b. Student Satisfaction

6. Alumni (Occupational Outcomes)
   a. Alumni Employment
   b. Alumni Attitudes about the Educational Experience
   c. Alumni Continuing Education Experiences
   d. Alumni Success

7. Assessment of Non-Academic Units
   a. Assessment of Student Learning in Non-Academic Areas
   b. Administrative Effectiveness
   c. Alignment to Institutional Mission

8. Campus Culture of Assessment
   a. Campus-wide Assessment Committee
   b. Assessment Development Activities
   c. Participation with External Agencies/Organizations
   d. Campus Integration of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness
   e. Direct Alignment and Integration of Assessment, Planning and Program Review Processes
GOAL 1  Programmatic and Institutional Assessment

Objective 1  General Education Programmatic Assessment
Responsible:  Director of Assessment and General Education Subcommittee
Date:  Assessment Academy Timeline
Progress:  The general education subcommittee collected course level assessment data for a majority of general education courses in 2014-15. The subcommittee evaluated the assessment reports and will provide a summary report. The HLC Assessment Academy Team is collecting two years of assessment data for general education courses meeting the Written Communication, Oral Communication, and Quantitative Reasoning requirements. Deb, Jim, Kevin and Kent will review the reports guided by Appendix D in the Proposed Restatement of SD 98-22 beginning in December to pilot the new assessment plan.

Objective 2a  Academic Program Assessment (Undergraduate)
Responsible:  Director of Assessment, College Level Assessment Committee, and Academic Departments
Date:  Assessment Academy Timeline
Progress:  Kent is meeting with all Academic Chairs to review the proposed changes to SD 98-22, review prior assessment reports including programmatic SLO’s, and discussing the reporting requirements for programmatic assessment of academic departments. The HLC Academy Team recommended all departments submit their programmatic SLO’s, curricular maps (to course level and to Baccalaureate Framework), and assessment of one to two programmatic outcomes to their College Level Committees for review and College’s submit their evaluation of those reviews, to Assessment Council for the 2015-16 Academic Year. Kent is presently meeting with all Chairs and Assessment Academy will discuss reporting requirements recommendations to the Assessment Council for 15-16 on July 30th, 2015 meeting.

Objective 2b  Academic Program Assessment (Graduate)
Responsible:  Director of Assessment, College Level Assessment Committee, and Academic Departments
Date: Phased – SLO’s Fall 2015, Develop Assessment Plan for Graduate Program Spring 2016, First full assessment (2016-17 Academic Year)

Progress: While meeting with Academic Chairs (Summer 2015) who have graduate programs, open discussion of how they are presently assessing graduate level education to see if any formal assessment is done.

Objective 3 Baccalaureate Framework Assessment

Responsible: Director of Assessment

Date: Assessment Academy Timeline

Progress: The assessment of Baccalaureate Framework is integrated in programmatic assessment in the revision to SD 98-22. Reporting requirements are specified in SD 98-22 Revision, Appendix D, Table B. Departments will be required to map their SLO’s to the Baccalaureate Framework and provide Curricular Maps to the Assessment Council beginning in Fall 2015 for review. In July through August 2015, Kent is meeting all Department Chairs to discuss (see Objective 1).

SD 98-22 will be considered by Faculty Senate at 2nd Fall 2015 Senate Meeting.

GOAL 2 Assessment of Off-Campus/On-Line Academic Programs

Objective 1 Develop a methodology for the assessment of off-campus programs

Strategy 1 The assessment committee will meet with all academic departments, and the Dean of Continuing Studies, to review the department’s off-campus/on-line assessment model, reports and the utilization of results. Annual report due in May

Responsible Director of Assessment

Date: Spring 2016

Progress
Objective 2  Develop a reporting scheme for campus distribution

Strategy  Develop and implement a reporting methodology for off-campus and on-line assessment results. Reports disseminated every May 30.

Accomplished and on-going

Responsible  Director of Assessment

Progress

Objective 3  Include Continuing Studies in the program review process

Strategy  Commission a taskforce to redesign the institutions program review process. Annual report due in May.

Responsible  Vice President for Academic Affairs

Progress  Recommendation has been submitted to VCAA

Goal 3  Assessment of Student Involvement

Objective 1  Develop a methodology and survey instrument to assess student satisfaction

Strategy  Develop and implement a methodology to collect information on how satisfied students are with academic and related support services. Annual report due in May first survey should occur in 2015/16 if not sooner.

Responsible  Director of Assessment

Progress

Objective 2  Develop a methodology and survey instrument to assess student engagement.
**Strategy**

Utilize the National Survey of Student Engagement – NSSE – on a three year cycle with 2014-15 being the next survey year.

**Responsible**

Director of Assessment

**Progress**

Presently SA is implementing new Co-Curricular transcript software and working with academic departments to get support for implementing. Will use that system to collect evidence of engagement. Will continue to use NSSE.

**Objective 3**

Develop a reporting scheme for campus distribution

**Strategy**

Develop and implement a reporting methodology for survey results. Reports issued in May of survey year.

**Responsible**

Director of Assessment

**Goal 4**

**Assessment of Non Academic Units**

**Objective 1**

See the forthcoming University Strategic Alignment Process plan and reporting cycle.

**Strategy**

Continue the current work of the University Strategic Alignment Process and follow the timelines as outlined in the USAP planning document.

**Responsible**

USAP Leadership Team

**Progress**

**Objective 2**

Assess student learning in the non-academic areas,
Strategy  The assessment committee will meet with all non-academic departments with student learning components and review the department’s assessment model, reports and the utilization of results. Annual report due in May.

Responsible  Director of Assessment

Date:  Fall 2016

Progress  In Summer 2015 have been developing an Assessment Plan with CASA. Developing a “point of delivery” survey and will be collecting data beginning in Fall 2015.

Goal 5  Alumni Assessment

Objective 1  Implement an annual placement survey

Strategy 1  Work with academic departments to develop an instrument and/or process to track graduates. Report Due May 2016

Strategy 2  Develop and conduct an annual data collection process on the placement of recent graduates. Survey conducted and report issued each May with data back to each academic department.

Responsible  Director of Assessment

Date:  Fall 2015 (Strategy 2, Spring 2016 (Strategy 1)

Progress  In July 2015 began working with Ashley Caldron and Carol Lawton on a project to consolidate the assessment of recent graduates. In July beginning design of a new survey to be administered one year after graduation. Will discuss the draft survey the Academic Departments this Fall to ensure we have their support and get the information they need. Analyzing 2015 data report to be completed by September 6th 2015.
Goal 6  
Grow a Culture of Assessment

Objective 1  
Establish a campus-wide assessment calendar

Strategy  
Develop and continually publicize a detailed calendar of all assessment related activities

Responsible  
Director of Assessment

Date:  
Fall 2015

Progress

Objective 2  
Redesign the Current Assessment Website to better support assessment.

Strategy 1  
Work with HLC Assessment Academy Team and Assessment Council to define the web resources most valuable to academic departments. Also develop online assessment library with ability to “reserve” physical assessment books and manuals as they are acquired by the Assessment unit.

Strategy 2  
Work with areas outside of Academic Affairs to identify needs for assessment support appropriate for web delivery.

Responsible  
Director of Assessment

Date:  
End of Fall 2015 (Academic Affairs portion of site). End of Spring 2016 (other areas).
Progress  Completing analysis of 2015 graduate survey. Report will be provided on September 4, 2015.

Objective 3  Establish a quarterly assessment newsletter.

Strategy  Publish a quarterly assessment newsletter highlighting assessment activity on campus, publishing assessment results and notifying the campus of upcoming assessment activities. First newsletter to be publish September 2015

Responsible  Director of Assessment

Date:  Fall 2015

Progress  Reviewing rough draft of first Fall 2015 newsletter. Will send to Bob for review the first week of September

Objective 4  Develop a continuing series of assessment workshops and training sessions

Strategy  Provide at least 4 workshops, per academic year, focusing on different aspects of assessment. First series of workshop to start Fall 2015

Responsible  Director of Assessment

Date:  Fall 2015

Progress  Presently designing 3 part workshop series to be delivered through the Assessment Academy in 2015-16 academic year. Two workshops are complete and ready to deliver. The third is still in development. Working with Chairs to design departmental workshops for Fall 2015 based on needs related to implementation
of revision to SD 98-22. Meeting with all Academic Chairs to be completed by August 15, 2015.

Update: Have modified structure of workshop series. Six workshops are now designed (as of 9/2/2015) that feature a 5 minute presentation followed by a 45 minute guided inquiry workshop where participants develop specific artifacts. Workshops follow the components of the Assessment Report. Presently scheduling rooms.

**Objective 5**

Launch the IPFW Assessment Academy in Fall 2015 to share assessment expertise and provide peer to peer mentoring for academic and non-academic departments.

**Strategy**

Involve the entire campus in assessment through the IPFW Assessment Academy.

**Responsible**

The Chancellor, VCAA, HLC Academy Team and Director of Assessment

**Progress**

The HLC Assessment Academy Team has completed the first training session in Chicago and met three additional times in Summer 2015. They will launch the Assessment Academy in Fall 2015. First meeting of Fall scheduled for September 9, 2015.

**Objective 6**

Create an annual reporting process to summarize all assessment activities and results.

**Strategy**

Develop a reporting process to disseminate all assessment results campus-wide. First report to be issued May 2016.

**Responsible**

Director of Assessment and Assessment Council

**Date:**

Fall 2015 report structure developed.

**Progress**

The summary report template will be developed by Assessment Council in Fall 2015.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective 7</th>
<th>Create an IPFW Assessment Handbook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Develop a practical assessment handbook tailored to IPFW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress</td>
<td>As of 07/22/2015 - Manual is outlined and Chapters Defined. Introduction and Chapter 1 complete. Chapter 2 in progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As of 09/02/2015 – Working on Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>