Session Handouts

What’s That Diploma For, Anyway?
Assessing Student Skills & Learning

September 23, 2014 Trustees Conference
1. What’s That Diploma For, Anyway? Assessing What Students Know and are Able to Do
   *(Lane Glenn’s and Bonnie Orcutt’s PowerPoint presentation)*
What’s that diploma for, anyway?
Assessing what students know and are able to do.

Lane Glenn, President, Northern Essex Community College
Bonnie Orcutt, Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment, DHE

I taught my dog to whistle....
What’s that diploma for, anyway?
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I taught my dog to whistle….

….I did not say he learned.
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Three Central Problems

1. The setting up of generally accepted standards of achievement; 
   (STANDARDS)
2. The devising of methods of measuring this achievement and holding pupils to performance; 
   (MEASUREMENT)
3. The introduction of such flexibility in educational offerings that each individual may receive the education from which s/he is able to derive the greatest benefit. 
   (TEACHING AND LEARNING)

Historical Overview: Four Eras

1. The origin of standardized tests of learning
   1900 - 1933
2. The assessment of learning for general & graduate education:
   1933-1947
3. The rise of test providers:
   1948-1978
4. The era of external accountability:
   1979-present
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Assessment Lingo: Goals, Objectives, Outcomes

COURSE GOAL
Acquaint students with the fundamental economic principles and frameworks which will provide a basis for understanding how the economic world works.

TEACHING OBJECTIVE
Familiarize students with the workings of supply and demand analysis.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME
Students will analyze changes in market price and market quantity using supply and demand analysis.

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GRADING
- Composite
- Based upon more than one learning outcome
- Based upon factors other than learning outcomes such as attendance and participation

ASSESSMENT
- Based upon one learning outcome at a time such as written communication
- Specific assessment tool – rubric assessment
- Apply rubric to a student paper
- Different assessment rubrics for different outcomes
### Improving Student Learning and Assessment of Student Learning

Assignment Design – prompts in assignment instructions that call for students to demonstrate components of a learning outcome.

Example: Be sure to take into account assumptions you or others have made in presenting your position.

- Scaffolding within a course
- Scaffolding within a program of study and across programs of study

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- Program Outcomes
  Four to Six Program Outcomes

- Program Level Assessments
  Assess at different points in a student's academic path
  Course Level Assessments
  First-Year Seminars
  Capstones: Culminating student work

- Course Outcomes
  - Courses where program outcomes are introduced, reinforced, mastered

- Course Level Assessments
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- Results of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment
- Use of outcomes for intentional change designed to improve student learning.
  - Assignment Design
  - Pedagogical Change
  - Curricula Changes

Why is Assessment Important
Improvement Accountability
Why is Assessment Important

- Identify Goals
- Identify Objectives
- Specify Approaches
- Specify Measures
- Share Results
- Make Changes

Six Steps to Continuous Improvement of Student Learning

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Why is Assessment Important

Improvement
- Learning Outcomes
- Teaching
- Measuring
- Making Changes
- Improving Learning

Accountability
- Students
- Families
- Legislators
- Employers
- Public/taxpayers
- Accreditors
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Initiatives

Learning Outcomes Assessment
Advancing a Massachusetts Culture of Assessment

All public undergrad campuses

AMCOA TEAM
Four regional co-chairs
Advancing assessment of student learning on public campuses; strengthening campus assessment capabilities

DHE: Carlos Santiago, Senior Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs; and Bonnie Orcutt, Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment
Massachusetts LEAP State Initiative

Massachusetts Task Force on Statewide Assessment

Providing broad oversight for Massachusetts

State Level

Massachusetts Team
Bonnie Orcutt, Chair
Developing a statewide assessment model of student learning for MA public campuses

State Partner Team
Pat Crosson, Chair
Representing MA in the Multistate Collaborative to develop a multistate program of assessment

DHE: Commissioner Freeland; Pat Crosson, Senior Advisor for Academic Policy; and Bonnie Orcutt, Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment

Multi-State Collaborative to Advance Learning Outcomes Assessment
9 states + SHEEO + AAC&U

Multi-State Collaborative (MSC)
State Partners:
CT, IN, KY, MA, MO, MN, OR, RI, and UT

Steering Committee:
Made up of state leads

69 institutions participating in a pilot test of a multi-state model of outcomes assessment
Assessment and the Role of Trustees

1. Mission

1.1 The mission of the institution defines its distinctive character, addresses the needs of society and identifies the students the institution seeks to serve, and reflects both the institution's traditions and its vision for the future. The institution's mission provides the basis upon which the institution identifies its priorities, plans its future and evaluates its endeavors; it provides a basis for the evaluation of the institution against the Commission's Standards.

Assessment and the Role of Trustees

2. Resources

2.1 The institution preserves and enhances available financial resources sufficient to support its mission. It manages its financial resources and allocates them in a way that reflects its mission and purposes. It demonstrates the ability to respond to financial emergencies and unforeseen circumstances.
Assessment and the Role of Trustees

3. Accountability

Some Questions to Ask:

- What institution-wide learning outcomes have been articulated as important to our institutions mission?
- How is evidence of student learning being collected?
- How is the evidence being evaluated and by whom?
- How is that evidence reported and to whom?
- How is evidence used to improve the curriculum, co-curriculum, or other aspects of students’ experiences?

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Discussion