

The Work of Assessment Remains Critical to Creating Important & Equitable Learning Experiences



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Let's Start with Some Wins!

Advancing a Massachusetts Culture of Assessment (AMCOA)

- **Maturing assessment practice**
- **Assessment is more people's business**
- **Assessment is an integrated activity**
- **Co-curricular learning assessment growing**
- **Practical, sustainable plans**
- **Ongoing Professional Development**
- **Less compliance-driven**

**What advances
have you
observed about
your culture of
assessment?**





**Assessment Remains Critical to Valued
& Equitable Learning Experiences**



21st Century Student Learning & Success Goal

More students completing the degree they start, in an equitable, high quality educational experience that prepares them for 21st century workforce.

We must do better by our students



- **Transparent about learning outcomes**
- **Sequencing learning to introduce, reinforce and produce mastery**
- **Designing quality learning experiences that enhance outcomes**
- **Assuring essential, career relevant learning outcomes**



Student Success and College Outcomes

Assess to demonstrate and improve educational quality and showcase that all students have attained expected learning outcomes.

Assess what is worth assessing.

**We assess to improve our work
– our teaching, our curriculum
and co-curriculum, student
learning and to promote
equitable student success**





Yet, Higher Education is Facing Stiff Headwinds

Higher Education is Facing Stiff Headwinds

Colleges & universities lost 1.3M students in the pandemic

Enrollment cliff promises a smaller pool of prospective students

Fewer students, less tuition, rising costs of operations = fiscal instability

Doubt that an affordable, high-quality education is widely available

Political intrusion

Assault on DEI

Students disengaged

Mental health concerns

Faculty, administrators and staff exhausted

Employee turnover



AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Trends Report 2024: Higher education is struggling.



Higher education is struggling. Psychologists are navigating its uncertain future

Many of the dramatic changes in society are fueling faculty burnout, high turnover, and political attacks on academic freedom.



[Exploring faculty burnout through the 2022-23 HMS faculty/staff survey](#)



Academic independence under fire

***Inside Higher Education* – Survey of College Presidents 2023**

72%

What % Agree (Strongly + Somewhat)?

“I believe my institution needs to make fundamental changes in its business model, programming and other operations”



Recognition of need to change

Inside Higher Education – Survey of College Presidents 2023

As the pandemic recedes, which of the following statements best represents your view of your institution's current situation and positioning for the near future? (n=411)

Transforming the institution: My institution has used this period to make difficult but transformative changes in its core structure and operations to better position itself for long-term sustainability.

40%

Resetting for growth: My institution has used this period to focus more on what it does best, and we're positioned to invest and grow in those areas.

38%

Back to normal: My institution has largely regained its footing and can continue to operate largely as it has in the past.

10%

Shrinking the institution: My institution has used this period to tighten its focus and is positioned to be smaller but better.

6%

Missed the opportunity: My institution did not make needed changes during the height of the pandemic and is facing pre-pandemic challenges as emergency federal funding diminishes.

6%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Press for More Evidence of Outcomes

- Affordability
- Return on Investment
- Public data on graduates' employment rates & earnings
- New social & economic mobility outcomes
- Career relevant skills
- Elimination of outcome gaps by social identity, income, zip code
- Measures of post-college success...civic leadership, long-term earnings potential and career trajectories of certain majors

The logo for the Postsecondary Commission (PSC) is displayed within a blue-bordered box. It features the letters 'PSC' in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The 'P' and 'C' are dark blue, while the 'S' is yellow. Below this, the words 'Postsecondary' and 'Commission' are stacked in a smaller, dark blue, sans-serif font.

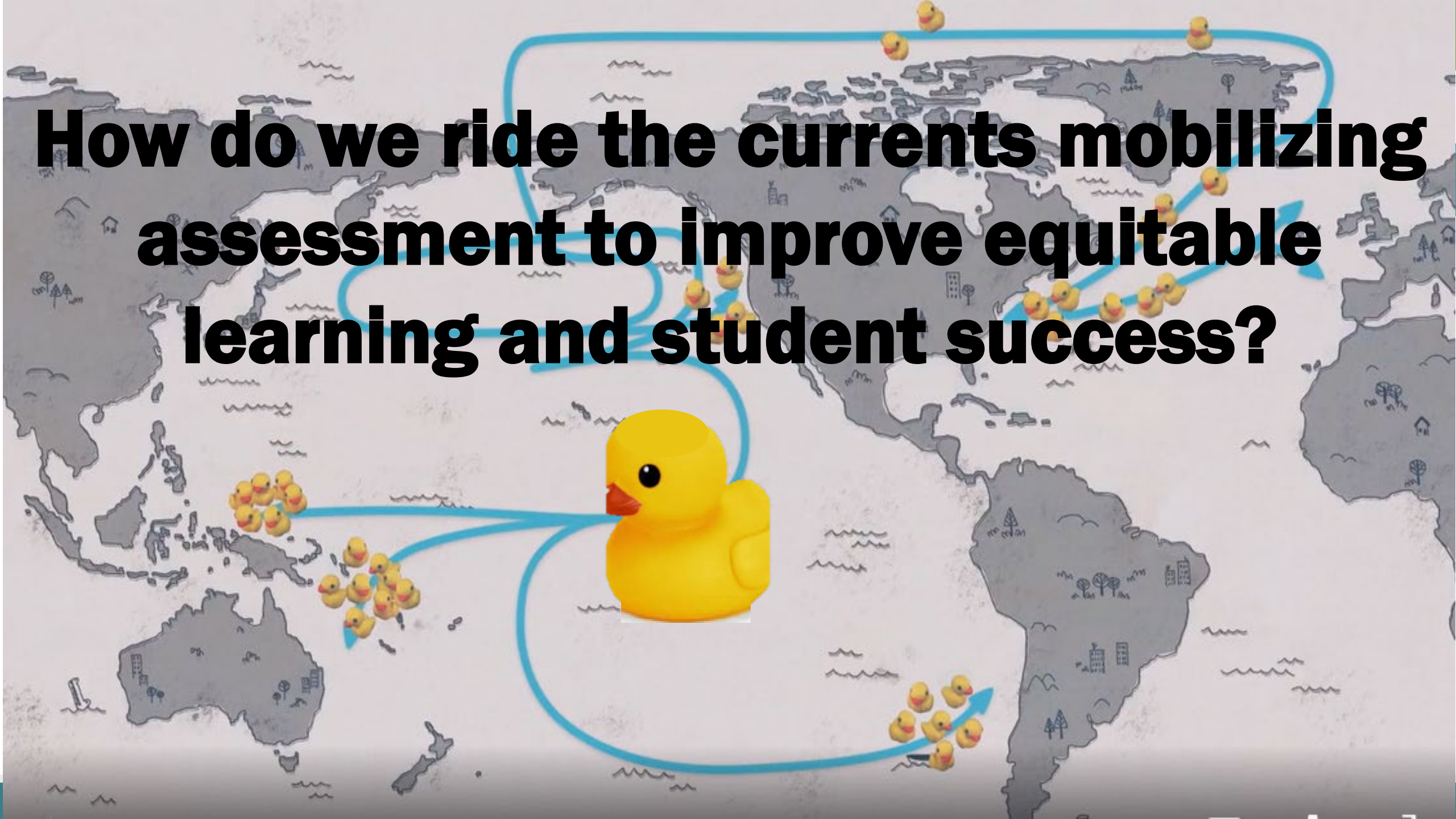
PSC
Postsecondary
Commission

New accreditor for outcomes-focused institutions, requires institutions to generate wage gains for graduating and nongraduating students “that exceed the costs they charge those students.”



What assessment concerns are currently occupying your attention?

**How do we ride the currents mobilizing
assessment to improve equitable
learning and student success?**





Currents Mobilizing Assessment for Equitable Learning & Student Success

- 1. Moving from compliance to improvement**
- 2. Intentional integration of diversity, equity & inclusion**
- 3. Valuing more types of evidence**
- 4. Elevating student partnership & voice**
- 5. Seeing & supporting the whole student - *assessment for student success***
- 6. Connecting curricular & co-curricular assessment**
- 7. Focusing on learning processes & experiences and outcomes**
- 8. Collaborating among units and making time to discuss and act**



Shift from assessment for compliance to assessment for student success and institutional improvement

Focus on improvement to close the gap between assessment findings and improvement actions

“Focus on Improvement and you get compliance for free!” – Peter Ewell



Assessment Reporting as a Call to Action



Prompt for Assessment Reporting:

“Based on your results, what decisions will you make? What action will you take?”

Example of Tracking Action on Results

Try It; Track It: Documenting Action Projects

Try It; Track It Planning Form

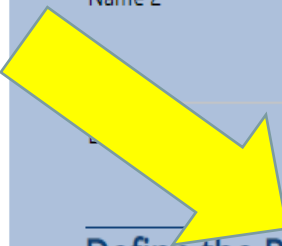
*Name:
First Last

E-mail:

Name 2
First Last

Define the Problem or Question

What problem or question does this project/intervention address?



DACC Assessment of Student Learning



UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE™

Academic Assessment Plans and Reports

[OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS](#) / [ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT](#) / ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT PLANS AND REPORTS

The focus of Academic Assessment at UAA is on improving student learning and student achievement. Programs develop an Academic

The two-year cycle is designed so that programs assess student learning one year, and the next year programs report, reflect, and implement improvements

Learning Improvement Approach to Assessment



The assessment loop is not closed until we look at the data collected, analyze it, recommend changes based on our analyses, make the changes, assess again, and ultimately, realize improvements in student learning.



Intentional integration of diversity, equity and inclusion

More inclusive,
equity-oriented
assessment goals
& approaches

Disaggregation by
student
populations

Accreditors sharpen focus on equity in student outcomes

Education Dive. Jan. 8, 2020

Disaggregate data to identify performance gaps and implement strategies to mitigate those gaps.



NECHE Standards for Accreditation made more explicit about diversity, equity and inclusion in standards for Students (5), Teaching, Learning & Scholarship (6), and Institutional Resources (7)

- Effective January 2021

Standard 7: ...addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity, equity, and inclusion among its faculty...and assesses the effectiveness of its efforts to achieve those goals

Equity-Centered SLO Assessment Practice

Practices include:

- Re-evaluating student learning outcomes for bias and inclusion;
- Engaging multiple stakeholders (including students) in the assessment process;
- Examining biases in survey instruments and demographic items;
- Using multiple methods (assignments, storytelling circles, rubrics, narratives, video blogs, etc.);
- Disaggregating data by race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status;
- Engaging in multiple types of data analysis;
- Using results of assessment to make systemic change.

Institutions determine, track, report on, and are transparent about key equity indicators for student learning outcomes and institutional performance to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Equity Data Displays: Greater Transparency and Access to Data -- Course Outcome Dashboard for Education (CODE) to explore and act on outcomes, and grade differences by race-ethnicity, Pell status and gender.

Dashboards helped deans, chairs and faculty make revisions to instructional techniques and modify grading policies.

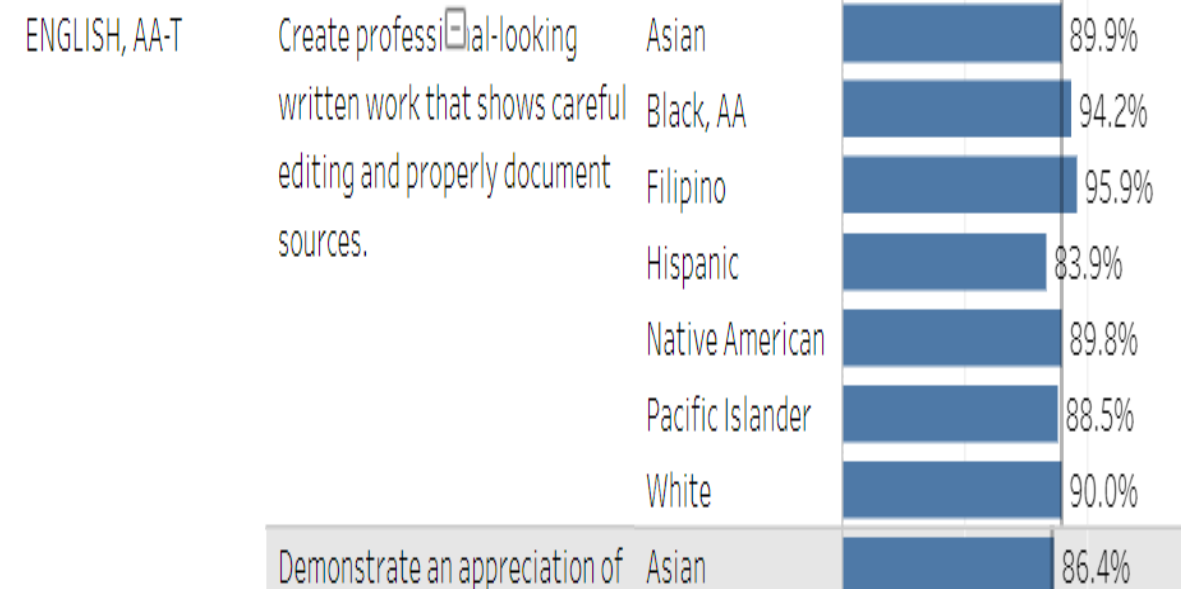
“When I saw the dashboard results I was floored. I was then committed to making a change.”

--Biochem faculty member

Program Learning Outcomes,

by Ethnicity for MLLA division, All department, All program

To Collapse to SLO or Program, hover over item and click +/- that will appear





Valuing more types of evidence of learning and authentic, student-centered assessments

Good authentic measures offer actionable insights into how and why students learn, in addition to what they learn

Performances,
Simulations,
Project-
Based/Cases,
ePortfolios, Rubrics,
Capstones,
Transparent
Assignments,
Student-Generated
Creations

Involving Students in Learning Outcomes Assessment

- **Transparent outcomes** – raises student awareness of the connection between what they're doing and their gains
- Expanding the range of possible demonstrations of students' knowledge, skills and abilities



Transparency in Assignments



Purpose

- Skills you'll practice by doing this assignment
- Content knowledge you'll gain from doing this assignment
- How you can use these in your life beyond the context of this course, in and beyond college

Task

- What to do
- How to do it (Are there recommended steps? What roadblocks/mistakes should you avoid?)

Criteria

- (Are you on the right track? How to know you're doing what's expected?)



Elevating student voice and involving students as partners in assessment and decision-making

- **Surveys work - Timing, Transparency, Taking Action & Teaming Up – can help**
- **Short pulse, text questions, social media, focus groups, poll in LMS**



Involve students more in assessment

**Assessment is both
for and about students
- make the processes
and the results
relevant and pertinent
to students as an
audience.**

In What Ways?

- Critiquing learning outcomes
- Planning what should be assessed
- Promoting assessment
- Collaborating with instructors
- Conducting peer interviews
- Drafting & testing survey items
- Interpreting results
- Communicating findings
- Creating data viz, infographics
- Consulting with faculty, programs, committees about results
- Devising action plans
- Taking action on results
- Reassessing, closing the loop

[Institutional Effectiveness](#)[Office of Institutional Effectiveness](#)[Directory](#)[Student Complaints Form](#)[Strategic Plan](#)[Office of Academic Assessment](#)[University Learning Outcomes](#)[Program Learning Outcomes](#)[BGP Learning Outcomes Assessment](#)[Student Achievement Assessment
Committee \(SAAC\)](#)[SAAC Reports](#)[Student Learning Analysts](#)[BGSU Graduation Survey](#)[Evaluation of Teaching & Learning](#)[Co-Curricular Assessment](#)[National Survey of Student Engagement](#)

Student Learning Analysts

[Bowling Green State University](#) / [Institutional Effectiveness](#) / [Office of Academic Assessment](#) / [Student Learning Analysts](#)

The Office of Academic Assessment coordinates a program in which undergraduate students will take an active role in gathering information on student learning experiences.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students who serve as a student learning analyst will:

- Design assessment projects to investigate topics identified by administration
- Create reports analyzing and summarizing assessment findings
- Present findings from assessment project(s) to the BGSU community in a variety of formats

Primary Duties:

- Investigate (i.e., design, conduct, and analyze) projects related to student learning experiences
- Create written and verbal summaries of assessment data
- Collaborate with peers and supervisor on assessment projects
- Participate in biweekly Student Learning Analyst team trainings

[Click here to view the 2022 - 2023 Student Learning Analysts Projects.](#)

Student Involvement in Assessment

“The key to effectively involving students in assessment is to intentionally match faculty need with student interest. Students can serve as statisticians, interns, and researchers.”

–Josie Welch, Director of Assessment, Missouri Southern State University

Examples:

- Student-conducted focus groups in recitation sections of General Chem helped department understand students’ struggles with content and how and from whom they sought help
- Students invited to interpret survey data showing racial-ethnic disparities in perceptions of support, inspired collaborative effort in dept. for inclusion



Student Voice is important to equity

Racial equity necessitates recognizing that students of color are experts on their own experiences. Ask them which experiences have the highest impact on their successes and failures.

-- Shaun Harper, Professor & USC Race and Equity Center Founder and Executive Director





Seeing and supporting the whole student – *assessment for student success*

Include outcomes associated with students' personal, academic, and professional development

Assess holistic supports – housing, food, finances, well-being, transportation...

A holistic approach to assessment

**includes data about
students lived experience,
housing, wellness &
mental health needs,
campus life experiences,
institutional culture,
classroom experiences,
and learning outcomes**





Connecting curricular, co-curricular & extra-curricular assessment

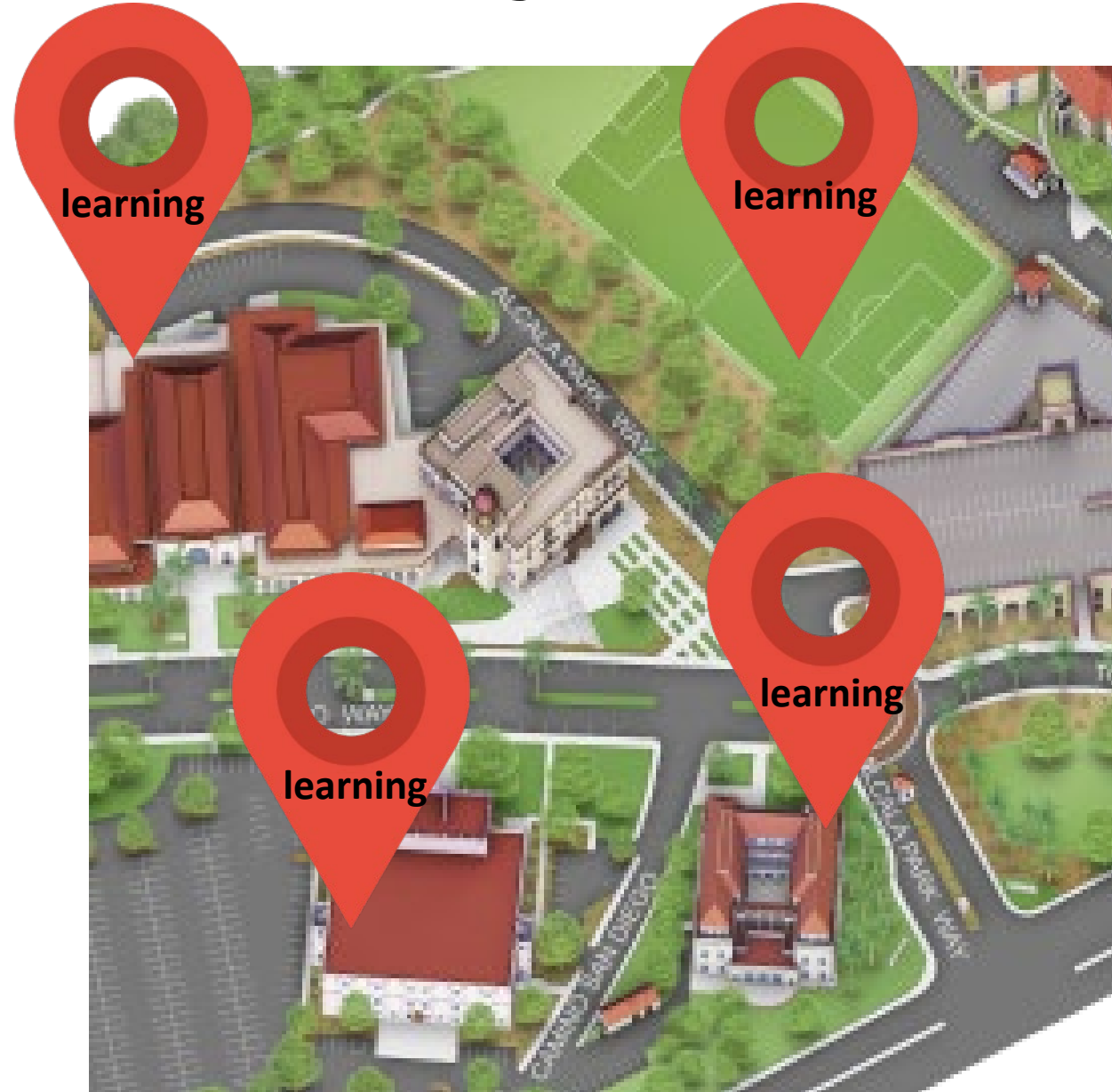
The interrelations between curricular and co-curricular experiences are important and learning outcomes associated with both must be assessed.

For assessment of co-curricular learning to succeed, there should be intentional collaborations across campus.



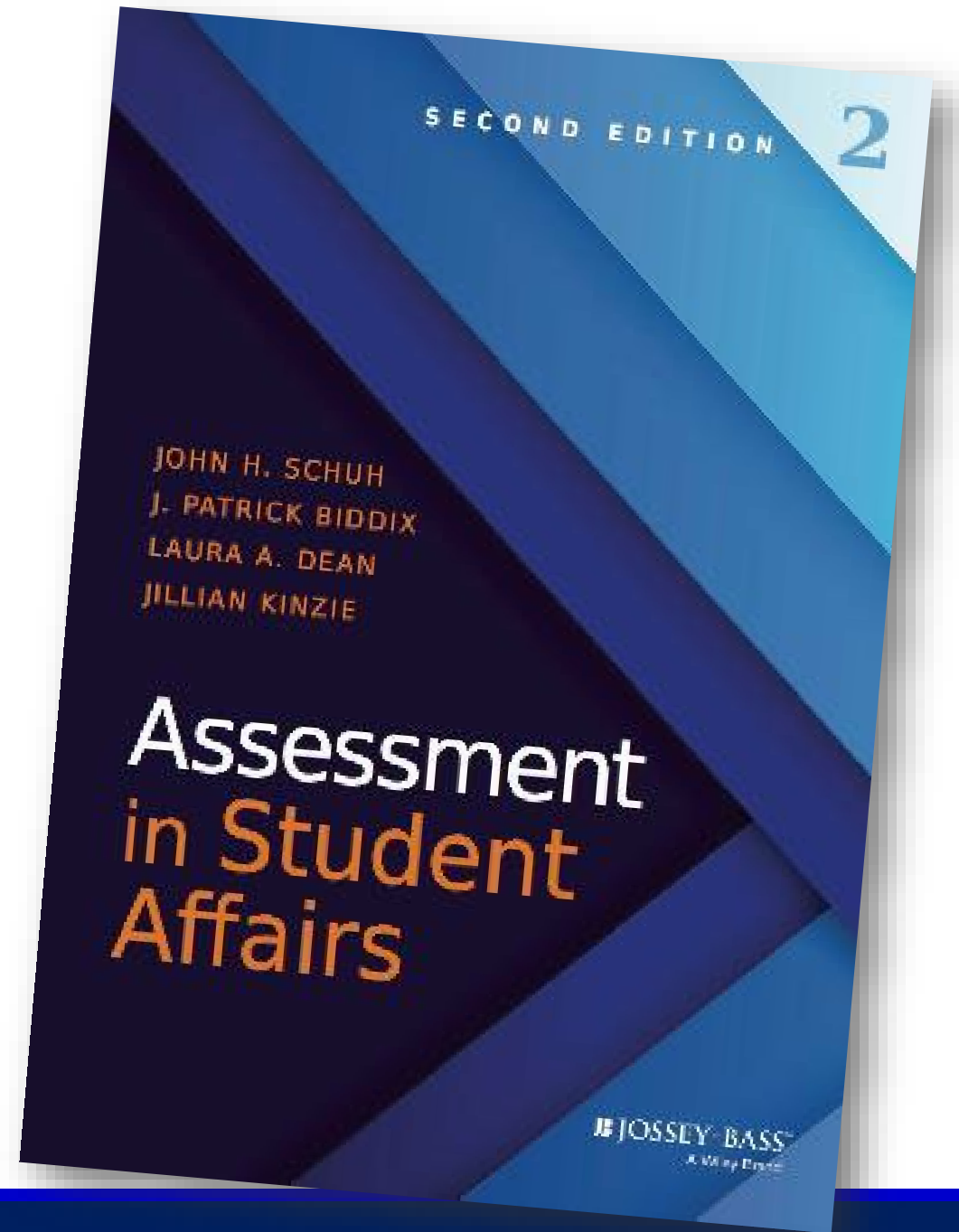
Student Learning Takes Place Everywhere...

- **Courses**
- **Academic programs (undergrad, grad, certificate, non-credited)**
- **General Education**
- **Co-curricular programs**
- **Residence halls**
- **Athletics**
- **Tutoring, learning support, counseling,**
- **Campus employment**
- **Experiential learning**



In the last decade, assessment in student affairs has...

- **Increased, Expanded and Evolved**
- **Become more fully invested in accreditation processes**





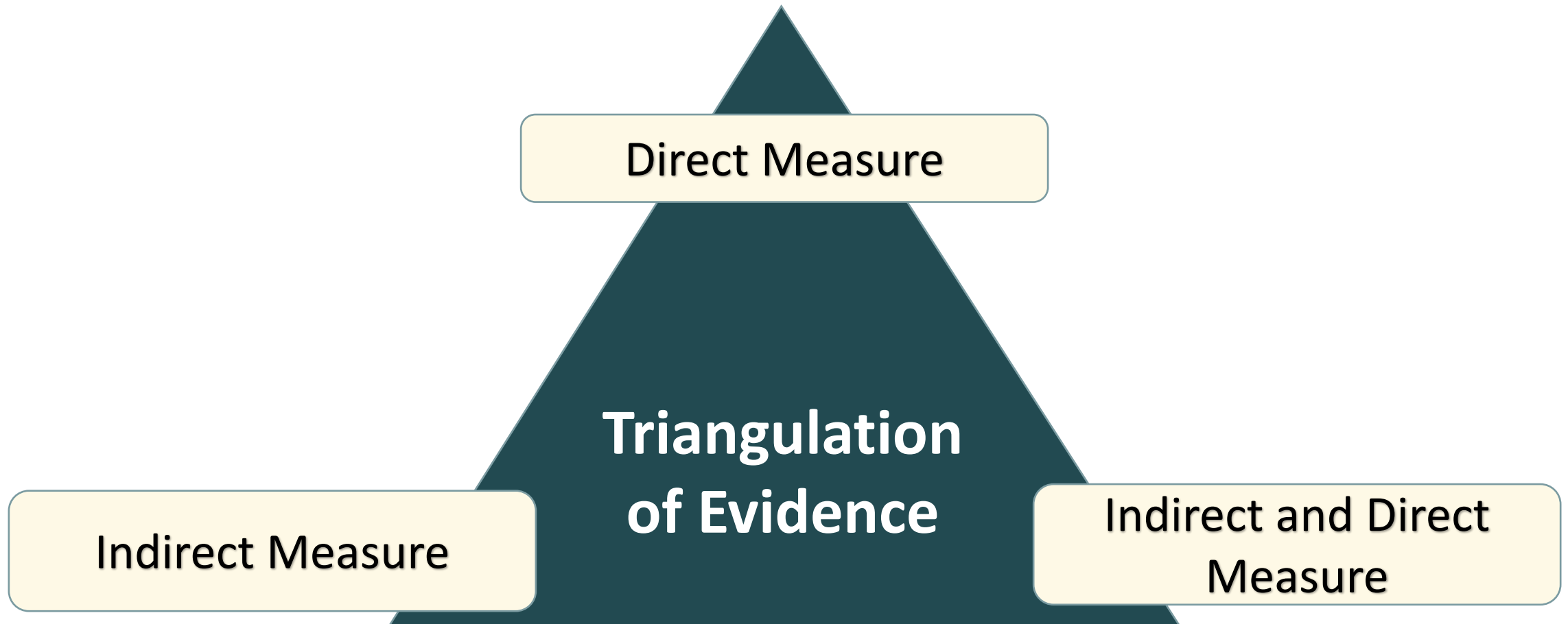
Assessment focusing on learning processes & experiences, in addition to traditional emphasis on outcomes

Outcomes alone don't necessarily yield information for improvement

Examining learning experiences, practices, and environments that support complex skills and transformative learning can move us toward more learner-centered assessment and improvement

Evidence of Learning Processes and Outcomes

Pair student survey data with direct measures of student learning to gain a holistic understanding of quality.



Ex: Connect Core Competencies with NSSE Items to Gain Insights into Processes & Experiences

Core Competencies

- **Applied Learning**
- **Problem Solving Skills**

- During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized...
 - Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations
- During the current school year, how often have you...
 - Connected your learning to societal problems or issues
- How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?
 - Complex Problem Solving

**Learning outcomes assessment is paramount...
but it is increasingly vital to assess and improve
the *conditions, processes* and *experiences*
contributing to the learning**

**Involve students in
interpreting assessment
results to achieve a holistic
view of learning**





Collaborating among units for student learning outcomes assessment and success and making time to discuss and act

Assessment requires leadership and broader stakeholder engagement

Distributed leadership at multiple levels as assessment spreads from curriculum to co-curriculum



More emphasis on faculty discussion of student learning and asking larger questions

Do students who visit the Writing Center show stronger writing skills?

Which course sequences yield the best preparation for the research capstone?





REFLECTIONS on Currents Mobilizing Assessment for Equitable Learning & Student Success

- 1. Moving from compliance to improvement**
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A large, red, cloud-like thought bubble is located on the right side of the slide. It has a white outline and contains the text 'What currents excite you?'. Three smaller red circles of decreasing size lead from the bottom of the bubble towards the list of points.

**What
currents
excite
you?**

Returning to our Why

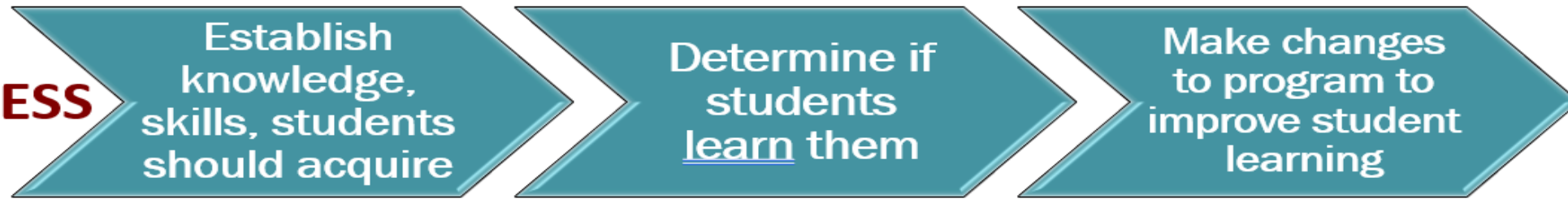


Assessment for Equitable Learning & Student Success



GOAL Assessment should be simple to conduct, and yield data that faculty trust enough to make changes based upon it.

PROCESS



This model fits the 3 purposes for assessment germane to academic affairs (Hong & Moloney, 2020):

- (a) large-scale assessment focused on the evaluation of institutional performance in relation to standards and with expectations for improvement,**
- (b) program evaluation with the goal of improving instruction and curricula, and**
- (c) assessment of student learning for mastery with continuous feedback.**

Central to these 3 traditions is the specification of the *use of assessment evidence for change*.

Using assessment evidence for change



Assessment should be undertaken with an expectation to make changes that improve student learning and success



“Assessment is a powerful instrument for improvement.. And in the right hands it is potentially the best lever for change” (Walvoord, 2010)



Assessment leaders who increasingly looking to data and evidence to aid in the improvement of educational delivery and quality are the “right hands” (Kinzie 2024)

Concern about the lack of action on assessment results led to question:

Q. Is the juice worth the squeeze?

A. Assessment is worthwhile when it is initiated with a question about student learning, and results are used to facilitate educational transformation



72% Presidents recognize the need to change

**Let's Make Assessment
a more powerful lever
for equitable learning
and success**

Thank you!

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