UC San Diego Student Affairs Assessment Coalition

WHAT DO I WANT TO KNOW?
WHAT AM I CURIOUS ABOUT?
WHAT ARE MY STUDENTS LEARNING?
CAN I HELP THEM LEARN MORE?

Why Assessment?

- Assessment begins with our natural curiosity
- We're motivated to provide the most powerful educational opportunities
- What do we want students to be able to learn, do or know as a result of our programs?
- Am I making a difference in the lives of my students?
- How do I know?

Assessment

- "...a rich conversation about students and student learning informed by data"

  - Ted Marchese, AAHE

- "...the systematic collection, review and use of information about programs/services undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development"

  - Palomba and Banta 1999

Precepts of Assessment Coalition

- A *culture* of assessment, not just projects
- Assessment *for*, rather than *of*, learning
- Assessment as engaged practice
- Assessment as reflective practice
- Assessment as transparent practice

Data Gathering—the foundation of decision-making

- Ongoing
- Natural
- Short turnaround time
- Involvement
- Sense of openness and full disclosure
- Potential for increasing levels of trust
- Creative process

Foundational Constructs

- Astin's *Involvement in Learning* (1984):

  - Students' learning and developmental outcomes are directly proportional to student involvement in the college experience
  - Both the quantity and quality of involvement that students invest in their college experience make a difference
  - Academic activities, co-curricular activities, and interaction with peers, faculty and administration all have value

Foundational Constructs

- Student Learning Imperative (1994):

  - Learning, student development and personal development are intertwined and inseparable

  - Deeper learning occurs through active engagement and collaboration with others

  - Environments can be intentionally designed to promote learning

Foundational Constructs

- Powerful Partnerships (1998) : *Learning ...*

  - Is about making and maintaining connections
  - Takes place in compelling situation with challenge and support
  - Active search for meaning by learner
  - Cumulative, involving whole person
  - Intrinsically tied to others as collaborators
  - Affected by educational climate
  - Requires frequent feedback
  - Can take place informally and incidentally
  - Grounded in particular context and individual experience

Foundational Constructs

- Learning Reconsidered (2004, 2006):

  - Cognitive complexity
  - Knowledge acquisition, integration and application
  - Humanitarianism
  - Civic Engagement
  - Interpersonal and intrapersonal competence
  - Practical competence
  - Persistence and academic achievement

Assessment Coalition Principles

- **Meaningful** = about something important
- **Transparent**=understood by students, with their full involvement
- **Manageable** = takes into account varying resources, including time – do not assess everything every year
- **Flexible** = takes into account assessment learning curves – some people will be more sophisticated in their assessment than others

Ask Yourself These Questions

- What decisions did you make about your program(s) last year?
- What evidence did you use to inform that decision?
- What was it that you were trying to influence about your program when making that decision with the stated evidence?

The Assessment Cycle
Adapted from CUPR Guidelines

- The key questions…
  - What are we trying to do and why? or
  - What is my program supposed to accomplish?
  - How well are we accomplishing that which we say we are?
  - How do we know?
  - How do we use the information to improve or celebrate successes?
  - Do the improvements we make work?

Bloom's Taxonomy

- **Knowledge**
- **Comprehension**
- **Application**
- **Analysis**
- **Synthesis**
- **Evaluation**

* From Benjamin S. Bloom *Taxonomy of educational objectives.*
Published by Allyn and Bacon, Boston, MA. Copyright (c) 1984 by Pearson Education.

Knowledge

- observation and recall of information
- knowledge of dates, events, places
- knowledge of major ideas
- mastery of subject matter
- *Question Cues:*
  list, define, tell, describe, identify, show, label, collect, examine, tabulate, quote, name, who, when, where, etc.

Comprehension

- understanding information
- grasp meaning
- translate knowledge into new context
- interpret facts, compare, contrast
- order, group, infer causes
- predict consequences
- *Question Cues:*
  summarize, describe, interpret, contrast, predict, associate, distinguish, estimate, differentiate, discuss, extend

Application

- use information
- use methods, concepts, theories in new situations
- solve problems using required skills or knowledge
- *Questions Cues:*
  apply, demonstrate, calculate, complete, illustrate, show, solve, examine, modify, relate, change, classify, experiment, discover

Analysis

- seeing patterns
- organization of parts
- recognition of hidden meanings
- identification of components
- *Question Cues:*
  analyze, separate, order, explain, connect, classify, arrange, divide, compare, select, explain, infer

Synthesis

- use old ideas to create new ones
- generalize from given facts
- relate knowledge from several areas
- predict, draw conclusions
- *Question Cues:*
  combine, integrate, modify, rearrange, substitute, plan, create, design, invent, what if?, compose, formulate, prepare, generalize, rewrite

Evaluation

- compare and discriminate between ideas
- assess value of theories, presentations
- make choices based on reasoned argument
- verify value of evidence
- recognize subjectivity
- *Question Cues*
  assess, decide, rank, grade, test, measure, recommend, convince, select, judge, explain, discriminate, support, conclude, compare, summarize

Student Learning Outcomes

- What group of students…
- Who participate in…
- What activity, course, program or service…
- Will be able to do, know or value what…
- Determined by what means…

Keeling et al., 2007

Questions to Ask Yourself
About Outcomes

- Is it measurable/identifiable?
- Is it meaningful?
- Is it manageable?
- Who is the target audience of my outcome?
- Who would know if my outcome has been met?
- How will I know if it has been met?
- Will it provide me with evidence that will lead me to make a decision for continuous improvement?

Assessment methods

- Direct: require students to display what they've learned

- Indirect: reflect upon the learning that has occurred

<div align="right">Palomba and Banta, 1999</div>

- Naturally –occurring: embedded in the project—debates, presentations

- Designed—surveys

<div align="right">Ewell, 2003</div>

Direct Assessment methods

- Observations of student behavior
- Portfolios
- Juried reviews of projects
- Case study performance
- Document analysis
- Use of rubrics for self-assessment
- Pre- and post-tests

Indirect Assessment methods

- Exit interviews
- Employer surveys
- Job placement
- Retention studies
- Alumni surveys
- Percentages of students involved in X

Sample learning outcomes

- Students will successfully apply conflict resolution skills in their organization
- Students will demonstrate responsible leadership by organizing a successful event that their group's membership deems important and relevant to the community
- Leaders will hold members accountable who demonstrate an inability to make responsible choices
- Students that live in the residence hall will demonstrate an understanding of personal safety practices
- Students will demonstrate improved study skills

Pieces of the Assessment Puzzle (Ratcliff)

- Usage: Track who uses your services and programs

- Satisfaction: Measure user satisfaction with facilities and services

- Needs: Assess student needs in systematic way

- Environments and cultures: Assess perceptions of climate, norms and sub-groups

- Benchmarks: Identify best practices

- Standards: Compare your operations to professional standards

A range of related questions: start where you are!

- Who uses our services?
- How satisfied are our users?
- What are the needs of our users?
- What are the needs of our stakeholders?
- How satisfied are our stakeholders?
- In what ways do we contribute to the University?
- What is our image in the eyes of our users?
- What are the implications of our data for our planning?

Examples of Evaluative Evidence

STUDENT RECRUITMENT MATERIALS:
- Brochures & other program information
- Participation policies & procedures

PROGRAM DOCUMENTS:
- Mission statements; program purpose & philosophy statements
- Catalogs & related materials
- Staff & student manuals; policies & procedures statements

ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTS:
- Organization charts; student & staff profiles
- Financial resource statements & budgets
- Annual reports

STAFF ACTIVITY REPORTS:
- Curriculum vitae & resumes; professional activity
- Service to other programs, departments, or community

STUDENT ACTIVITY REPORTS:
- Portfolios, developmental transcripts, resumes
- Reports of student service

RESEARCH & EVALUATION DATA:
- Needs assessments & self-studies
- Program evaluation; graduate & follow-up studies

Mable and Dean, CAS Basics, 2006

Building the coalition

- What talents, aptitude, and expertise exists within our team?
  - Where is program evaluation already common?
  - Which units are already data driven?
  - Who is pursuing a program of graduate study that includes inquiry?
  - Who has natural talent for assessment?

Building the coalition

- What natural inclinations to learn and measure have we demonstrated?
  - UCUES surveys
  - USES report
  - Grant applications
  - Admissions data
  - Health assessment
  - Program impact studies
  - Others?

Building the coalition

- What partners exist for this work?
  - Professional organizations
  - Graduate programs
  - Conferences
  - Academic departments
  - Individual faculty

Resources: NASPA's Net Results Assessment Corner

- Recent Topics include:
- Advanced Tools for Assessment: It's Not Your Grandfather's Assessment, Part III -- *April 9, 2008*
- Advanced Tools for Assessment: It's Not Your Grandfather's Assessment, Part II -- *February 13, 2008*
- Advanced Tools for Assessment: It's Not Your Grandfather's Assessment -- *January 30, 2008*
- Common Assessment Issues Across International Boundaries: A Half Dozen Concerns -- *January 16, 2008*
- Collecting Information about Current Learning Experiences and Current Measures Used -- *November 14, 2007*
- Accountability in Higher Education: Driven by Business or Social Responsibility? (Part II) -- *October 24, 2007*
- Accountability in Higher Education: Driven by Business or Social Responsibility? (Part I) -- *October 10, 2007*
- Measuring What Matters in Student Development and Enrollment Services -- *September 26, 2007*
- Demystifying Nonresponse Error in Student Survey -- *April 25, 2007*
- Using a Cohort for Survey Research -- *March 14, 2007*
- Suggestions for Student Affairs and Services Practitioners to Address the Implications of the Commission on the Future of Higher Education's Recommendations -- *November 9, 2006*
- Significance Testing – How Important is It? -- *October 11, 2006*
- Improving Assessment Through the Use of Peer Review -- *September 13, 2006*
- Offices of Assessment in Student Affairs: Permanent fixtures, temporary expertise, or passing fancy? -- *August 9, 2006*
- Conceptualizing and Introducing Assessment to Student Affairs Practice Through Diffusion of Innovation -- *July 13, 2006*
- The Politics of Assessment -- *June 14, 2006*

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS)

- Establish, adopt, and disseminate unified and timely **professional standards** to guide student learning and development programs and services

- **Promote assessment and improvement** of higher education programs and services through self-study

- Establish, adopt, and disseminate unified and timely professional preparation standards for the education of student affairs practitioners, and to promote the assessment and improvement of graduate preparation programs

- Advance the use and importance of **professional standards**

- Develop and provide materials to **support the use of standards**

- Promote and encourage a focus on **quality assurance**

- **Promote inter-association efforts** to address these issues

Ellis, CAS Basics, 2008

Range of existing CAS Standards

- Academic Advising
- Admission Programs
- Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Programs
- Campus Activities Programs
- Campus Information and Visitor Services
- Campus Religious & Spiritual Programs
- Career Services
- Clinical Health Programs
- College Honor Societies
- College Unions
- Commuter and Off-Campus Living Programs
- Conference and Events Programs
- Counseling Services
- Disability Support Services
- Distance Education Programs
- Educ. Abroad Programs and Services
- Financial Aid
- Fraternity and Sorority Advising Programs
- Health Promotion Programs

- Housing and Residential Life Programs
- International Student Programs
- Internship Programs
- Learning Assistance Programs
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Programs
- Multicultural Student Programs and Services
- Orientation Programs
- Outcomes Assessment and Program Evaluation
- Recreational Sports Programs
- Registrar Programs and Services
- Service-Learning Programs
- Student Conduct Programs
- Student Leadership Programs
- TRIO and Other Educational Opportunity Programs
- Women Student Programs
- Master's Level Student Affairs Administration Preparation Programs

CAS Learning Domains

- intellectual growth
- effective communication
- realistic self-appraisal
- enhanced self-esteem
- clarified values
- career choices
- leadership development
- healthy behaviors
- meaningful interpersonal relationships

- independence
- collaboration
- social responsibility satisfying and productive lifestyles
- appreciation of diversity
- spiritual awareness
- achievement of personal and educational goals

Komives, CAS Handout

Building the coalition—Discussion Groups

- Needs assessment
- Climate studies
- Program evaluation
- Qualitative research
- Focus groups
- Data-mining
- Benchmarking
- Standards
- Exit interviews
- Writing for publication

- Others?

Questions? Comments?

- Next Steps?

- Commitments?

- Ongoing interest?