

Self-Study Institute

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The Commission's Expectations for the Assessment of Student Learning and Institutional Effectiveness

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This morning...

- Understanding and interpreting
 - *Characteristics of Excellence*
 - Standards 7 & 14
 - Institutional assessment
 - Assessment of student learning
 - MSCHE expectations for documenting compliance with both standards
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Understanding the *Characteristics of Excellence*

Accreditation Standards

Characteristics of Excellence Format

- Standard
 - Context
 - Fundamental Elements
 - Optional Analysis & Evidence
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The Standard

- What the institution must demonstrate that it is doing
 - Often expressed in deliberately general terms
 - Interpret in context of institution's mission & context
 - *Standard 10 (Faculty): Instructional programs are developed by qualified professionals.*
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Context

- Provides guidance, clarification, & context
 - Why this standard is important
 - The **intent** of the standard
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Fundamental Elements

- The qualities that together comprise the standard
 - **Not a checklist!**
 - Consider the **totality** created by Fundamental Elements and other relevant information
 - When an institution doesn't evidence a Fundamental Element, does it demonstrate that it meets the standard through **other evidence**?
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Example:

5. Administration

- “administrative leaders with appropriate skills, degrees, and training to carry out their responsibilities and function”
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Optional Analysis & Evidence

- Good ideas but not requirements
 - Provided for the institution, not the team
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Understanding Standards 7 & 14

7. Institutional Assessment

14. Assessment of Student Learning

1. Mission & Goals

2. Planning

3. Resources

4. Leadership/Governance

5. Administration

6. Integrity

8. Admissions

9. Student Support Services

10. Faculty

11. Educational Offerings

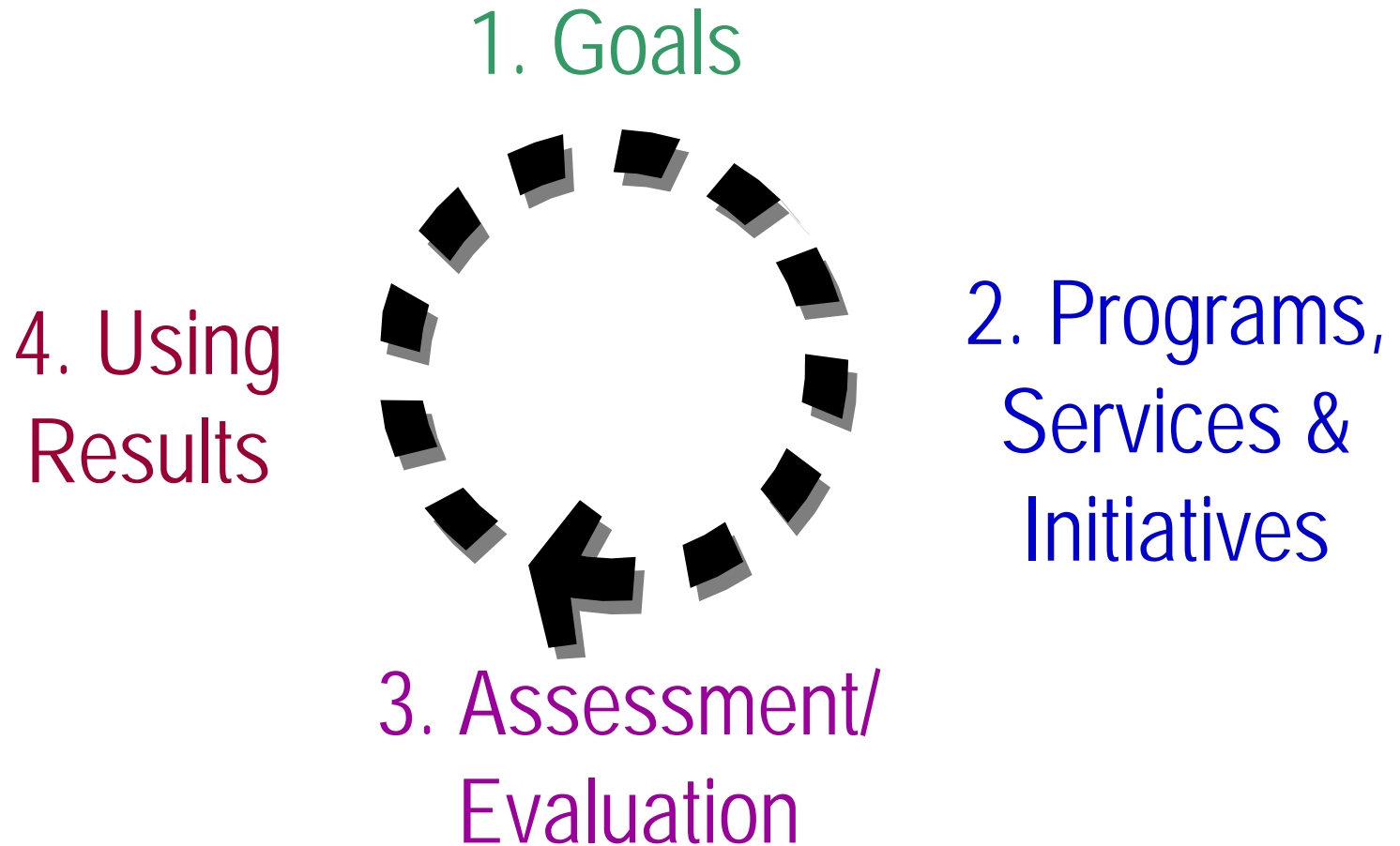
12. General Education

13. Related Educ. Activities

7. Institutional Assessment

14. Asmt. of Student Learning

Assessment as a Four-Step Cycle



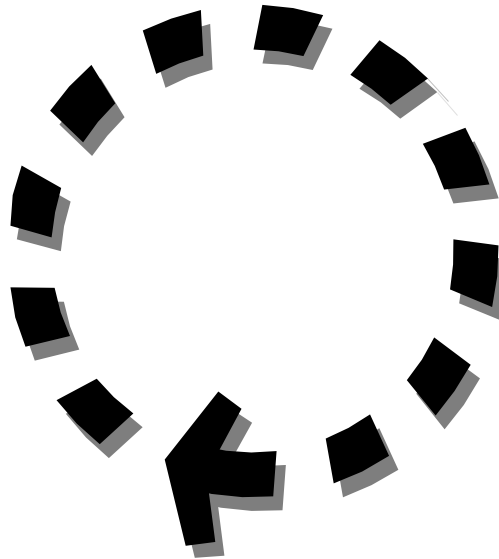
Student Learning Assessment as a Four-Step Cycle

1. Learning Goals

2. Learning Opportunities

3. Assessment

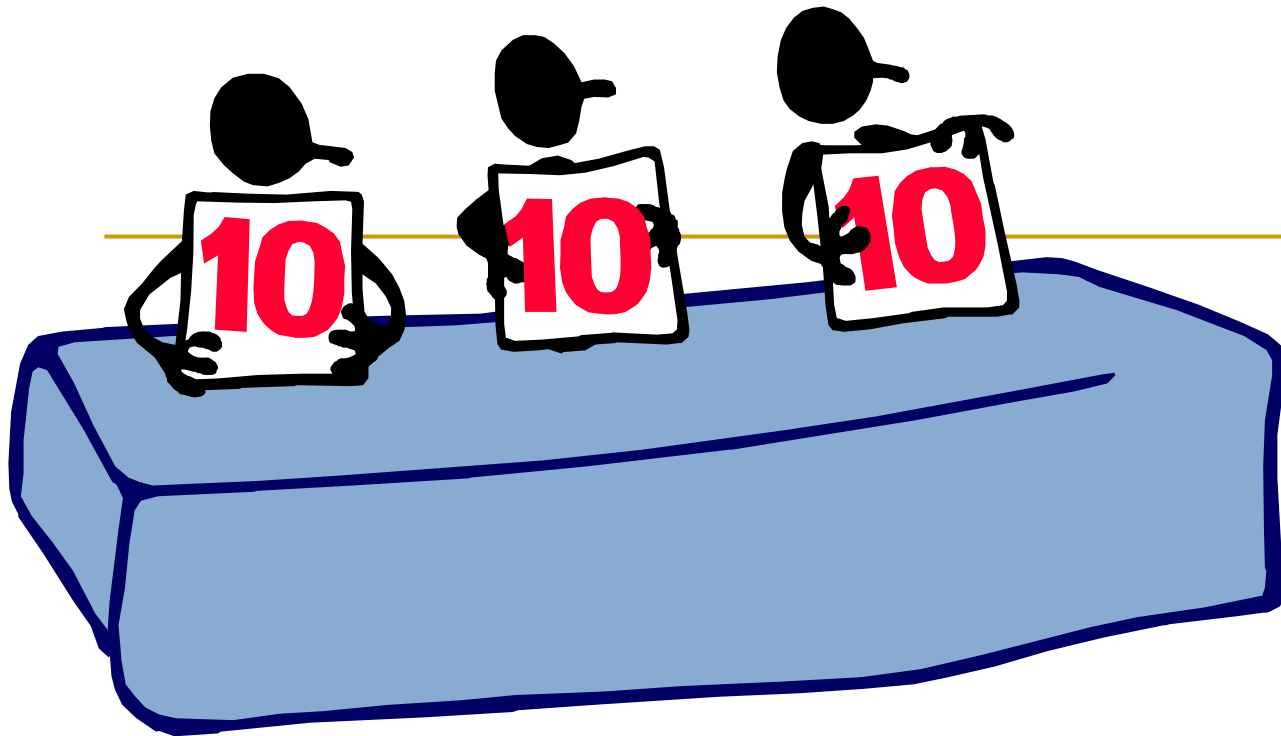
4. Using Results



Institutional Effectiveness: *Are We Achieving...*

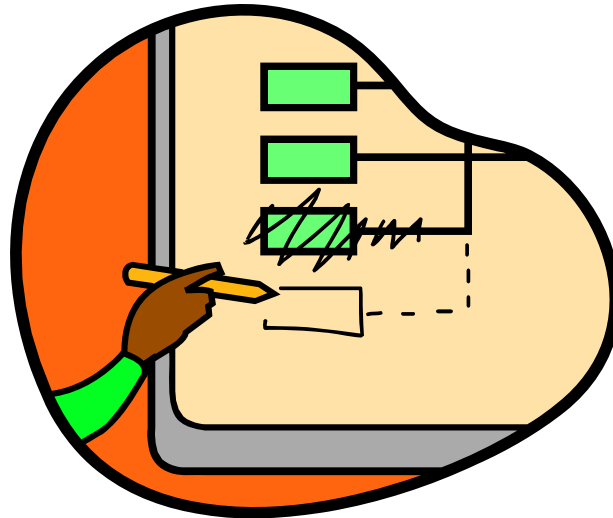


What is “Good” Assessment?



1. Good assessments are useful.

- Periodically evaluate assessments.
- Adapt as things change.



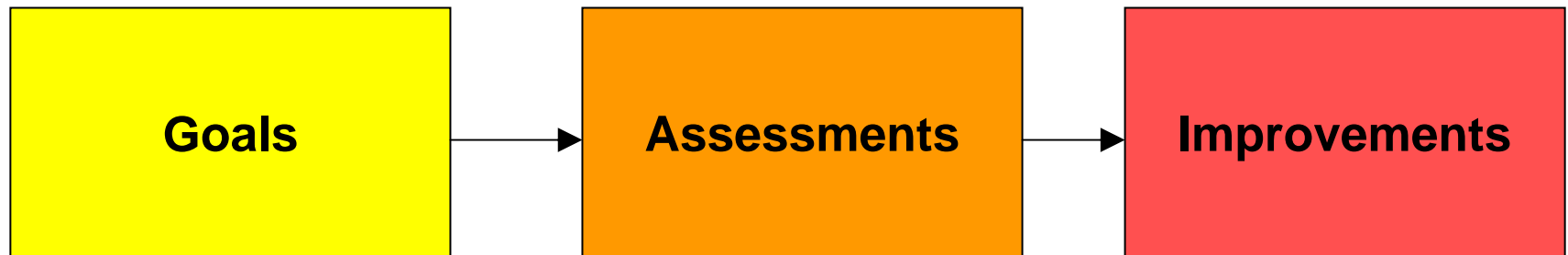
2. Good assessments are cost-effective.

- Keep things simple.
 - Focus on a few (3-6) important goals in each program, unit, curriculum.
 - Stagger assessments.
 - Use samples.
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3. Good assessments are reasonably accurate & truthful.

- Not dissertation-quality research
 - *Stay cost-effective.*
 - Goal and tool match
 - Multiple **kinds** of tools
 - *Student learning: Include **direct** evidence*
 - Care in choosing/creating tools
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4. Good assessments are organized, systematized, and sustained.



What Should Institutions Document?

- Clear statements of goals
 - Documented, organized, sustained assessment process (“assessment plan”)
 - *Principles, guidelines, support*
 - *What assessments are already underway*
 - *What assessments are planned, when, & how*
 - Assessment results documenting achievement of goals
 - How results have been used for improvement
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Why does MSCHE ask for this?

- Help ensure that
 - Everyone at the institution knows what they are to do.
 - Everyone is on the same page (priorities).
 - Resources are available.
 - The institution is indeed achieving its mission & goals.
 - The institution is indeed making appropriate improvements.
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How Might Institutions Document This?

- Not a fancy bound document!
 - An overview in the self-study
 - A chart or “roadmap” for assessment documentation in the self-study or as an appendix
 - More thorough information in the on-site “resource room” and/or online
 - A few samples of student work
 - Exemplary, adequate, inadequate
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Questions that an Evaluation Team or Reviewer Might Ask

Is there a culture of assessment?

- Do institutional leaders understand & value assessment?
 - Is there adequate support for assessment?
 - Are assessment **efforts** encouraged, recognized, & valued?
 - Are efforts to **improve teaching** honored & valued?
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Are goals clearly articulated?

- Are goals clearly articulated at **every** level?
 - *Institutional, units, programs, courses*
 - Do goals have appropriate interrelationships?
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Are **learning** goals clearly articulated?

- Do the undergraduate curriculum & requirements address
 - *Institutional learning outcomes?*
 - *MSCHE's general education competencies?*
 - Are learning outcomes of sufficient rigor?
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Have appropriate assessment processes been **implemented**?

- Are assessments already implemented for an appropriate proportion of goals?
- Are assessments systematic and sustained?
 - *More than anecdotes?*
 - *Which programs have implemented assessments?*
- Are there multiple assessments?
- Do student learning assessments include **direct** evidence of student learning?

Have appropriate assessment processes been **planned** to plug holes?

- ❑ Are timelines appropriate?
 - ❑ Do plans have sufficient detail, ownership, simplicity and practicality to be feasible?
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What do assessment results tell us?

- Do they provide convincing evidence that the institution is achieving its mission and goals, including key learning goals?
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How have assessment results been used?

- Have results been appropriately **shared & discussed?**
 - Have results **led to appropriate decisions?**
 - *Curricula and pedagogy?*
 - *Programs and services?*
 - *Resource allocation?*
 - *Institutional goals and plans?*
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Have assessment processes been evaluated?

- Are assessment processes reviewed regularly?
 - Have the reviews led to improvements in
 - *Assessment processes?*
 - *Support for assessment?*
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