

## Assessment Administrators Anonymous: 12 Steps for Involving Faculty in Assessment

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The 12 focal areas for encouraging faculty engagement with assessment:

1. Assessment *of and for* learning
2. Embedded assessment
3. Connecting to broader institutional initiatives (Gen Ed reform, high impact practices)
4. Peer-to-peer mentoring
5. Systematic assessment training for the next generation (Preparing Future Faculty, New Faculty Orientation)
6. Smorgasbord of assessment resources (website, handbook, handouts)
7. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
8. Promote curriculum mapping
9. Student involvement in assessment
10. Faculty forums for assessment
11. Assessment as part of annual evaluation/promotion and tenure
12. Celebrating successes (newsletters, workshops, awards)

National Institute for  
Learning Outcomes Assessment  
Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

### NILOA Report -- Using Assessment Results: Promising Practices of Institutions That Do It Well

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Reflective Questions and Resources

#### ***What does assessment mean to our institution based on our history, values, mission, educational priorities, and student population?***

- For effective assessment, build an understanding of students and their needs, the campus context, and the institution's educational and assessment goals.
- Across the institution, build a collective understanding of assessment and respect departmental approaches. To build a shared understanding, assessment should involve multiple actors across the institution as opposed to being designated the responsibility of an individual or single office.

When selecting measures to reflect institutional priorities, goals, and student population, see the assessment resource, *Measuring Quality in Higher Education: An Inventory of Instruments, Tools, and Resources* ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/MeasuringQuality.html](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/MeasuringQuality.html)), and the NILOA Occasional Paper, *Three Promising Alternatives for Assessing College Students' Knowledge and Skills* by Trudy Banta, Merilee Griffin, Teresa Flateby and Susan Kahn ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpapertwo.htm](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpapertwo.htm)).

#### ***Who is currently involved in and engaged with assessing student learning, and who needs to be involved in and engaged with this work?***

- Involve many campus constituents in conversations about assessment activities and results, including faculty, administrators, and students. Strive to make assessment activity regular, routine, continuous, and connected to valued practices in departments and units. Embed assessment into other campus review systems so that assessment activities are done regularly and revisited during the next cycle.
- Create a group of campus assessment experts or champions made up of faculty and staff from throughout the campus, as well as top administrators, to monitor assessment plans and program reviews and to become the campus experts on assessment.

For resources on engaging faculty, see the NILOA Occasional Paper by Pat Hutchings, *Opening Doors to Faculty Involvement in Assessment* ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpaperfour.htm](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpaperfour.htm)), and the faculty assessment brief by Pat Hutchings, *What Faculty Need to Know About Assessment* ([www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/ABfaculty.htm](http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/ABfaculty.htm)). For resources on involving student affairs, see the NILOA assessment brief by Marilee Bresciani, *Making Assessment Meaningful: What New Student Affairs Professionals and Those New to Assessment Need to Know* ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/ABstudentaffairs.htm](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/ABstudentaffairs.htm)), and NILOA Paper by John Schuh and Ann Gansemer-Topf, *The Role of Student Affairs in Student Learning Assessment* ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpaperseven.htm](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpaperseven.htm)).

#### ***What resources are available and what resources are needed to move our assessment work forward?***

- Develop the requisite infrastructure and processes necessary for institution-wide learning outcomes assessment and recognize that this takes time, requires resources, and the involvement of many different groups throughout the institution.
- Provide administrative support for an assessment vision and strive to continually assess student learning across the institution by providing professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

For additional information, see NILOA Occasional Papers by Jane Wellman, *Connecting the Dots Between Learning and Resources* ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpaperthree.htm](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpaperthree.htm)), and by Randy Swing and Christopher Coogan, *Valuing Assessment: Cost-Benefit Considerations* ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpaperfive.htm](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpaperfive.htm)).

### ***How do internal stakeholders view assessment of student learning? How are examples of good assessment practice shared?***

- To promote assessment activities, emphasize that assessment is a kind of scholarly inquiry, as featured in the literature on the scholarship of teaching and learning, and identify what most interests faculty in assessment.
- Encourage programs to learn from each other—evidence from one program might be a starting point for another. Advance this connection and encourage those involved with assessment to exchange ideas about creative approaches to conducting assessment.

For additional resources on program-level assessment, see the NILOA report by Peter Ewell, Karen Paulson and Jillian Kinzie, *Down and In: Assessment Practices at the Program Level* ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/Down-AndIn.htm](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/Down-AndIn.htm)); and the NILOA report by Jillian Kinzie, *Perspectives from Campus Leaders on the Current State of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: NILOA Focus Group Summary 2009–2010* ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/Perspectives.htm](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/Perspectives.htm)).

### ***How do our external stakeholders view assessment of student learning? How is this view similar to or different from our own institutional views?***

- To move from an assessment agenda focused on accountability to one focused on improvement requires opportunities to make sense of data collaboratively through structured support experiences that allow those interested in assessment to dig deeper into the results and to create processes, policies, and pedagogies to improve student learning outcomes.
- Use regional and program accreditation to help facilitate ongoing, internal, continuous improvement of student learning and assessment processes. Leverage existing state-mandated or institutional structures to stimulate assessment.

Additional information on accreditation may be found in the NILOA Occasional Paper by Staci Provezis, *Regional Accreditation and Student Learning Outcomes: Mapping the Territory* ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpapersix.htm](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpapersix.htm)). For the state policy role in assessment, see the NILOA Occasional Paper by Peter Ewell, Natasha Jankowski and Staci Provezis, *Connecting State Policies on Assessment with Institutional Assessment Activity* ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/ConnectingStatePolicies.htm](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/ConnectingStatePolicies.htm)).

### ***How are results communicated and to whom? Are there opportunities to reflect on and make sense of results from assessment?***

- Reflection and time are vital parts of any assessment process. Time and space are needed to review accomplishments, and the thoughtful analysis of assessment information is best done prior to making changes or improvements that evolve from actionable items.
- Share assessment information openly with faculty at retreats and with all stakeholders through an easily accessible website.

Useful resources when considering ways to communicate assessment information, results, and uses are the NILOA Transparency Framework ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/TransparencyFramework.htm](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/TransparencyFramework.htm)) and the NILOA report by Natasha Jankowski and Staci Provezis, *Making Student Learning Evidence Transparent: The State of the Art* ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/Transparencyofevidence.htm](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/Transparencyofevidence.htm)).

### ***How effective are our assessment processes in meeting desired institutional and program goals?***

- Assess your assessment activities. Do not allow your assessment process to become stagnant. Regularly review your assessment materials and create small, manageable assessment projects that can showcase the fruits of these labors to encourage larger scale projects.
- Being intentional about the potential uses from the beginning of assessment efforts leads to enhanced use of assessment results and more effective assessment processes.

For resources on using assessment results, see the NILOA Occasional Paper by Charlie Blaich and Kathleen Wise, *From Gathering to Using Assessment Results: Lessons from the Wabash National Study* ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpapereight.htm](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpapereight.htm)). For engaging the many roles of institutional research in assessment, see the NILOA Occasional Paper by J. Fredericks Volkwein, *Gaining Ground: The Role of Institutional Research in Assessment Student Outcomes and Demonstrating Institutional Effectiveness* ([www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpapereleven.htm](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/occasionalpapereleven.htm)).

[www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/CrossCase\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/CrossCase_FINAL.pdf)