

Donnelly College

# Excellence through Assessment

Assessment Handbook

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## **Donnelly College Mission**

Donnelly College is a Catholic institution of higher education that seeks to continue the mission of Jesus Christ in our own time by making the love of God tangible in our world.

Specifically, the mission of Donnelly College is to provide education and community services with personal concern for the needs and abilities of each student, especially those who might not otherwise be served.

## **Donnelly College Values**

The three values are the pillars of our mission at Donnelly College:

- **Seek Truth**

As a Catholic institution of higher education we are a community of scholars, “fellow learners,” seeking to discover and communicate truth as best we can grasp and understand it. We believe that faith and reason (*fides et ratio*) “...bear harmonious witness to the unity of all truth.” (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 17). A Catholic college “is a place of research, where scholars scrutinize reality with the methods proper to each academic discipline, and so contribute to the treasury of human knowledge. Each individual discipline is studied in a systematic manner; moreover, the various disciplines are brought into dialogue for their mutual enhancement.” (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 15). Donnelly College students, staff and faculty seek truth in all things.

- **Build Community**

Rooted in Benedictine and Christian values, Donnelly College is proud of its diverse and inclusive community. We seek “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God” (cf *Micah 6:8*). Donnelly College faculty and staff seek to serve our students and the greater community, instilling in each person a sense of their great dignity, their personal vocation and their call to be servant leaders. Donnelly College is committed to build community in all places.

- **Pursue Excellence**

Donnelly College serves our faculty, staff and students best when we challenge each other to become “the best versions of ourselves.” We strive for excellence in scholarship, in the classroom and in our various extra-curricular activities. We strive for personal holiness and virtue through our varied religious traditions and practices. As a community and as individuals, we accept the ongoing challenge to grow and improve, to preserve and keep striving, to always reach higher in our goals and efforts. Donnelly College pursues excellence at all times.

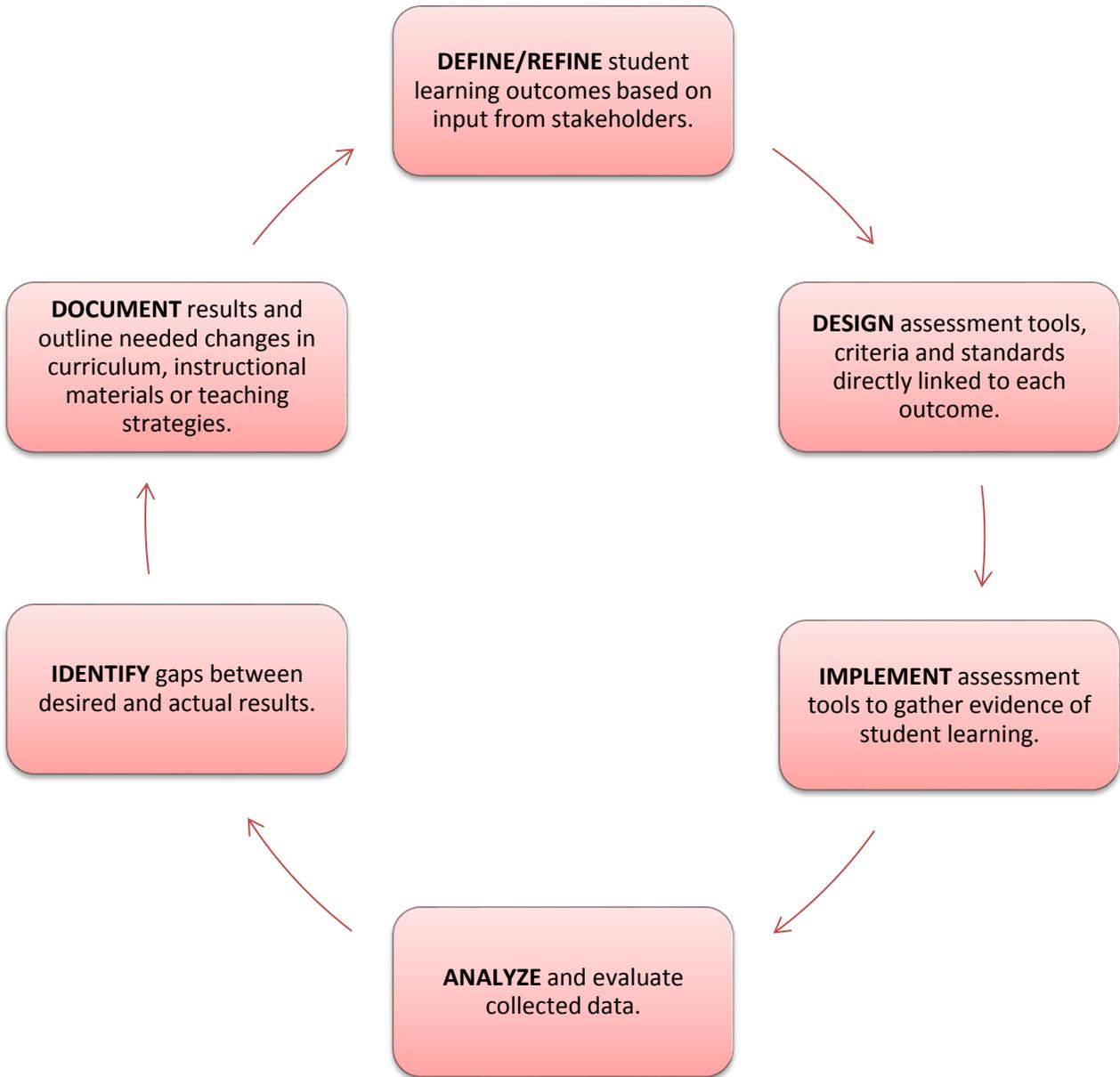
## **Assessment Philosophy**

Donnelly College's assessment framework has been designed to promote continuous program improvement. The faculty, staff, and students of Donnelly College recognize that program improvement can come in many forms, but that without taking time to examine and critically reflect on programmatic and internal operations there will be little chance of making meaningful or significant changes.

## **What Is Assessment of Student Learning?**

Assessment is a systematic collection and analysis of data to improve student learning. The assessment process collects and analyze data on whether students can demonstrate a set of knowledge and skills after completing a program of study. It informs curriculum and program improvements.

# Assessment Cycle



## **Philosophy of General Education**

Donnelly College has consistently maintained a strong commitment to the liberal arts and sciences as a foundation for a complete education. The faculty strongly believes that the liberal arts and sciences provide the context through which students can engage with the larger questions about students' place in the world and their pursuit of truth. Therefore, the College's general education requirements are designed to ensure that liberal arts and sciences graduates develop a breadth of content knowledge and the skills and abilities which will enable them to become educated participants in a diverse global community.

## **Donnelly College Learning Outcomes**

The Donnelly College faculty has articulated seven student learning outcomes that constitute the foundation of the College's general education.

1. **Communication Skills:** Students will communicate effectively in writing and speaking.
2. **Technology and Information Literacy Skills:** Students will demonstrate proficiency in information literacy skills.
3. **Symbolic Problem Solving:** Students will demonstrate competency in qualitative and quantitative problem solving.
4. **Analytical Thinking:** Students will employ reflective thinking to evaluate diverse ideas in the search for truth.
5. **Personal and Interpersonal Skills:** Students will develop an understanding across cultural differences locally, nationally, and internationally.
6. **Academic Inquiry:** Students will engage independently and effectively in lifelong learning.
7. **Values:** Students will demonstrate moral and ethical behavior in keeping with our Catholic identity.

## **Program Learning Outcomes**

### **Associate of Arts (AA), Liberal Arts**

In addition to the general education learning outcomes – communication skills, technology and information literacy skills, symbolic problem solving, analytical thinking, personal and interpersonal skills, academic inquiry, and values – upon successful completion of the Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts degree, students will demonstrate:

1. Proficiency and creativity in written and verbal communication.
2. Effective use of current technology in support of academic work.
3. Proficient use of qualitative and quantitative methods in problem solving.
4. Critical and Analytic thinking across a range of disciplines.
5. A commitment to ethics and integrity in academic and professional relationships, within the community and the environment.
6. The ability to conduct research using sources, strategies, and approaches across disciplines.

**Associate of Applied Science (AAS), Concentration in Business**

## **Associate of Applied Science (AAS), Concentration in Information Technology**

In addition to the general education learning outcomes – communication skills, technology and information literacy skills, symbolic problem solving, analytical thinking, personal and interpersonal skills, academic inquiry, and values – upon successful completion of the Associate of Applied Science degree with a concentration in Information Technology, the graduate should be able to demonstrate:

1. Knowledge of computer hardware and operating systems.
2. Knowledge of current computer programming tools, techniques, and languages.
3. Knowledge of current tools and techniques of computer networking.
4. An ability to function effectively in teams to accomplish a common goal.
5. An ability to communicate effectively.

**Associate of Applied Science (AAS), Concentration in Practical Nursing**

**Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN)**

## **Associate of Science (AS), Liberal Arts**

In addition to the general education learning outcomes – communication skills, technology and information literacy skills, symbolic problem solving, analytical thinking, personal and interpersonal skills, academic inquiry, and values – upon successful completion of the Associate of Science in Liberal Arts degree, students will demonstrate:

1. Proficiency and creativity in written and verbal communication.
2. Effective use of current technology in support of academic work.
3. Proficient use of qualitative and quantitative methods in problem solving.
4. Critical and Analytic thinking across a range of disciplines.
5. A commitment to ethics and integrity in academic and professional relationships, within the community and the environment.
6. Use of the scientific method.

## **Bachelor of Arts (BA), Organizational Leadership**

In addition to the general education learning outcomes – communication skills, technology and information literacy skills, symbolic problem solving, analytical thinking, personal and interpersonal skills, academic inquiry, and values – upon successful completion of the Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Leadership degree, students will demonstrate:

1. A scholarly approach to oral and written communication.
2. The capacity to differentiate and critique leadership theory and behavior as it applies to groups and organizations.
3. The aptitude to analyze qualitative and quantitative data to make informed decisions.
4. The ability to engage in self-evaluation in order to create an effective personal leadership approach.
5. The capability to evaluate and apply ethical considerations as they relate to leadership theories and social responsibilities.
6. An understanding of their leadership style and application of that style to various situations.
7. Service leadership to others by developing a service-leadership plan that integrates theory and practice.

**Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS), Organizational Leadership**

## **Bachelor of Arts (BA), Elementary Education**

In addition to the general education learning outcomes – communication skills, technology and information literacy skills, symbolic problem solving, analytical thinking, personal and interpersonal skills, academic inquiry, and values – upon successful completion of the Teacher Education program, students will demonstrate:

1. Integration of content knowledge, pedagogy and culturally relevant skills for all students in a safe learning environment.
2. Ethical professionalism which is reflective, responsive, fair and collaborative.
3. An understanding of intellectual, cognitive, social and emotional development theories and the characteristics of a diversity of learners.
4. Effective use of technology to enrich learning and increase student learning.
5. Positive relationships with the school community and its stakeholders to ensure effective teaching and learning.
6. Effective and appropriate verbal, nonverbal, written and media communication techniques in their teaching, interactions with students, colleagues, parents and the community.
7. Use and analyzation of multiple methods of assessment data independently and collaboratively to identify learners' needs and to guide planning.

## **Bachelor of Science, Information Systems**

In addition to the general education learning outcomes – communication skills, technology and information literacy skills, symbolic problem solving, analytical thinking, personal and interpersonal skills, academic inquiry, and values – upon successful completion of the Bachelor of Science in Information Systems degree, students will demonstrate:

1. An ability to communicate effectively on multidisciplinary teams with a wide range of people.
2. An ability to use the techniques, skills, and modern computing tools necessary for technological practice.
3. The aptitude to analyze qualitative and quantitative data to make informed decisions.
4. An ability to ethically design a system, component, or process to meet desired needs within realistic constraints.
5. The capacity to function effectively on teams that understand the impact technology has in a local, national, and global context.
6. Recognition of the need for, and willingness to engage in life-long learning through a continuous investigation of contemporary issues.
7. The capacity to make informed decisions in computing practice based on an understanding of professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities.

## **Certificate, Practical Nursing**

In addition to the general education learning outcomes – communication skills, technology and information literacy skills, symbolic problem solving, analytical thinking, personal and interpersonal skills, academic inquiry, and values - upon successful completion of the Certificate in Practical Nursing, students should be able to demonstrate:

1. Aspects of a safe, effective care environment, including coordination of care, safety and infection control.
2. Health promotion and maintenance, including growth and development through the life span and prevention and early detection of disease.
3. Psychological integrity, including coping, adaptation and psychosocial adaptation.
4. Physiological integrity, including basic care and comfort, pharmacology, parenteral therapies, reduction of risk potential and physiological adaptation.

### **Student Success (co-curricular)**

In addition to the general education learning outcomes – communication skills, technology and information literacy skills, symbolic problem solving, analytical thinking, personal and interpersonal skills, academic inquiry, and values – students will demonstrate:

1. Active participation in academic and career selection.
2. Enhanced knowledge of resources to help them succeed in college.
3. Active academic and social engagement, growth, and development.
4. The skills to work cooperatively in diverse communities and build a strong support network of faculty, staff, and peers.

## **Success First, Emphasis in Reading and Writing**

In addition to the general education learning outcomes-communication skills, technology and information literacy skills, symbolic problem solving, analytical thinking, personal and interpersonal skills, academic inquiry, and values-upon successful completion of the Success First program, students will demonstrate:

1. Effective communication; both in written and oral form
2. A literal comprehension of college level readings
3. A range of reading rates according to reading purpose
4. Prewriting techniques to develop ideas for paragraphs and essays
5. The ability to give and receive effective feedback to improve writing
6. The use of standard English grammar and effective sentence skills
7. The characteristics, habits and attitudes of an effective learner

## **Success First, Emphasis in Reading and Writing**

In addition to the general education learning outcomes-communication skills, technology and information literacy skills, symbolic problem solving, analytical thinking, personal and interpersonal skills, academic inquiry, and values-upon successful completion of the Success First program, students will demonstrate:

1. An understanding of phonemic awareness, word analysis, and high frequency word recognition
2. Expanded recognition and usage of vocabulary
3. Reading strategies that build comprehension
4. Improved oral fluency
5. Written production of complex sentences and short essays

**ASSESSMENT PLAN TEMPLATE – [AY XX-XX]**

<b>Program:</b>	<b>Date Submitted:</b>
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**Program Mission Statement:**

**Outcome 1** *(You need at a minimum one learning outcome)*

<b>Outcome</b>	[Which learning outcome will be assessed in this cycle.]
<b>Methods of Assessment</b>	<p>[Specify methods of evaluation (i.e., pre- and post-test, portfolio, capstone presentation) and the tool (i.e. rubric) used to evaluate progress toward meeting the student learning outcome.]</p> <p>[If you use a written assignment, portfolio etc. make some statement about reliability, add “multiple reviewers will be used. “ Include the number and method, e.g. two reviewers will score the portfolios.]</p> <p>[If you use test items, include a complete discussion of these items to include the kind of items (are they multiple choice or some other type), number of items per outcome, and some effort to evaluate the reliability and validity of the items.]</p>
<b>Measures/Levels of Expectation</b>	[What is your criteria for success.]
<b>Assessment Results</b>	[If you have 30 or fewer students complete, add “Due to the small student population, aggregation of data is ongoing and will be reported once statistically viable sample sizes are gathered.”]
<b>Use of Results for Program Improvement</b>	[How your results can lead to change; once a viable sample is obtained, results will be used to inform program’s content.]

## Course Matrix (Example)

Donnelly Core (Institutional Outcomes)	Courses							
	Course #							
1. Communication Skills								
2. Technology and Information Literacy Skills								
3. Symbolic Problem Solving								
4. Analytical Thinking								
5. Personal and Interpersonal Skills								
6. Academic Inquiry								
7. Values Exploration								
<b>Program Learning Outcomes</b>								
PLO 1								
PLO 2								
PLO 3								
PLO 4								
PLO 5								

## Syllabi

Every course syllabus must include (a) Donnelly College's Philosophy of General Education, (b) Program Learning Outcomes, and (c) Course Learning Outcomes. For example:

### Donnelly College's Philosophy of General Education

Donnelly College has consistently maintained a strong commitment to the liberal arts and sciences as a foundation for a complete education. The faculty strongly believes that the liberal arts and sciences provide the context through which students can engage with the larger questions about students' place in the world and their pursuit of truth. Therefore, the College's general education requirements are designed to ensure that liberal arts and sciences graduates develop a breadth of content knowledge and the skills and abilities which will enable them to become educated participants in a diverse global community. These requirements ensure that students are exposed to the institution's central values. The Donnelly core curriculum and distribution requirements in the humanities, natural sciences and social sciences promote competencies in seven major domains including:

1. *Communication Skills*: Students will demonstrate effective communication by employing clear organization, analysis, and the thoughtful and ethical evaluation and integration of outside source material.
2. *Technology and Information Literacy Skills*: Students will demonstrate proficiency and adaptability in technologies and information literacy skills that support academic work.
3. *Symbolic Problem Solving*: Students will demonstrate competency in qualitative and quantitative problem solving and the ability to understand and use scientific method.
4. *Analytical Thinking*: Students will employ reflective thinking to evaluate diverse ideas from the Liberal Arts and Sciences so as to integrate knowledge in the search for truth.
5. *Personal and Interpersonal Skills*: Students will recognize their own self worth and champion the dignity of the other in light of the transcendent destiny of every human person.
6. *Academic Inquiry*: Students will demonstrate an openness to exploration in the search for truth as accessed by faith and/or reason.
7. *Values*: In keeping with our Catholic identity, students will value excellence in the pursuit of truth, ethical behavior and the appreciation of the diversity of thought.

### Program Learning Outcomes

[Provide list of learning outcomes students will meet as a result of successfully completing the program of study (AA, AAS, AS, BA, BAS, or BS).

### Course Learning Outcomes

[Provide list of objectives students will meet as a result of successfully completing the course. The department may have already set objectives for the course; if not, the instructor should determine and set out objectives.]

Following each objective listed, supply the appropriate above-mentioned General Education that pertain to that objective; i.e., DCGE #1.

- Example: Students will be able to present material in both written and oral formats. (DCGE #1, #3, and #6)

## Timeline

Date	Action
	•
	•
	•
	•
	•
	•
	•
	•
	•

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

*We need to add a process/responsibilities for data collection and analysis. Perhaps a standard set of data reports that can be used by all programs in their assessment reports.*

### **Dissemination**

*We need to add a process/responsibilities for the dissemination of reports (data analysis, findings, and improvements made based on findings.)*

## **Program Review**

Program review is a systematic process to analyze the objectives and performance of an academic unit. It is an interactive process with open, professional dialogue among all participants. Successful program review depends on faculty and academic staff willingness to engage in a self-study process. The program review will be consistent with Donnelly College's Strategic Planning and Assessment Plans.

Each program will be reviewed using the following criteria<sup>1</sup>:

1. Centrality of the program to fulfilling the mission and role of Donnelly College.
2. The quality of the program as assessed by the strengths, productivity and qualifications of the faculty and/or staff.
3. The quality of the program as assessed by its impact on student learning.
4. Demonstrated student need and employer demand for the program.
5. The program's cost-effectiveness.

## **Schedule**

- 2016-2017 (data from 2015-2016)
  - Information Systems
  - Information Technology
  - Organizational Leadership
  
- 2017-2018 (data from 2016-2017)
  - Elementary Education
  - Practical Nursing
  - Success First
  
- 2018-2019 (data from 2017-2018)
  - Gateway to College
  - Liberal Arts & Sciences
  - Associate Degree in Nursing

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<sup>1</sup> Based on recommendations from the Kansas Board of Regents.

## Timeline

Date	Action
August (1 <sup>st</sup> week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional Research provides data on enrollment, retention, revenue, and expense.</li> <li>• Chair/program director notifies the Assurance of Learning Committee of the program review coordinator and program review committee members. The program review committee must include at least three program faculty members.</li> </ul>
August (2 <sup>nd</sup> week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program review orientation/question session for program directors and chairs.</li> </ul>
August-December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department/program faculty prepare the program review document.</li> </ul>
January (2 <sup>nd</sup> week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program review document submitted to Dean of the College for review and recommendations.</li> </ul>
February (2 <sup>nd</sup> week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program review document with Dean's recommendation submitted to department/program.</li> </ul>
March (1 <sup>st</sup> week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program review document submitted to Assessment Committee for review/recommendations.</li> </ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results and recommendations presented to Cabinet, Divisions 3 &amp; 4, and Campus Community.</li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results and recommendations presented to Board of Directors.</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results and recommendations are posted on Donnelly College's web site.</li> </ul>

Refer to the Program Review Process and Program Review Report Template documents for more detailed information about the review process.

## Appendix A

### AAHE Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning<sup>2</sup>

1. *The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.*

Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. Its effective practice, then, begins with and enacts a vision of the kinds of learning we most value for students and strive to help them achieve. Educational values should drive not only *what* we choose to assess but also *how* we do so. Where questions about educational mission and values are skipped over, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what's easy, rather than a process of improving what we really care about.

2. *Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.*

Learning is a complex process. It entails not only what students know but what they can do with what they know; it involves not only knowledge and abilities but values, attitudes, and habits of mind that affect both academic success and performance beyond the classroom. Assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods, including those that call for actual performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration. Such an approach aims for a more complete and accurate picture of learning, and therefore firmer bases for improving our students' educational experience.

3. *Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.*

Assessment is a goal-oriented process. It entails comparing educational performance with educational purposes and expectations -- those derived from the institution's mission, from faculty intentions in program and course design, and from knowledge of students' own goals. Where program purposes lack specificity or agreement, assessment as a process pushes a campus toward clarity about where to aim and what standards to apply; assessment also prompts attention to where and how program goals will be taught and learned. Clear, shared, implementable goals are the cornerstone for assessment that is focused and useful.

4. *Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.*

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<sup>2</sup> Authors: Alexander W. Astin; Trudy W. Banta; K. Patricia Cross; Elaine El-Khawas; Peter T. Ewell; Pat Hutchings; Theodore J. Marchese; Kay M. McClenney; Marcia Mentkowski; Margaret A. Miller; E. Thomas Moran; Barbara D. Wright. These principles were developed under the auspices of the AAHE Assessment Forum with support from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education with additional support for publication and dissemination from the Exxon Education Foundation. Copies may be made without restriction.

Information about outcomes is of high importance; where students "end up" matters greatly. But to improve outcomes, we need to know about student experience along the way -- about the curricula, teaching, and kind of student effort that lead to particular outcomes. Assessment can help us understand which students learn best under what conditions; with such knowledge comes the capacity to improve the whole of their learning.

5. *Assessment works best when it is ongoing not episodic.*

Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. Though isolated, "one-shot" assessment can be better than none, improvement is best fostered when assessment entails a linked series of activities undertaken over time. This may mean tracking the process of individual students, or of cohorts of students; it may mean collecting the same examples of student performance or using the same instrument semester after semester. The point is to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement. Along the way, the assessment process itself should be evaluated and refined in light of emerging insights.

6. *Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.*

Student learning is a campus-wide responsibility, and assessment is a way of enacting that responsibility. Thus, while assessment efforts may start small, the aim over time is to involve people from across the educational community. Faculty play an especially important role, but assessment's questions can't be fully addressed without participation by student-affairs educators, librarians, administrators, and students. Assessment may also involve individuals from beyond the campus (alumni/ae, trustees, employers) whose experience can enrich the sense of appropriate aims and standards for learning. Thus understood, assessment is not a task for small groups of experts but a collaborative activity; its aim is wider, better-informed attention to student learning by all parties with a stake in its improvement.

7. *Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.*

Assessment recognizes the value of information in the process of improvement. But to be useful, information must be connected to issues or questions that people really care about. This implies assessment approaches that produce evidence that relevant parties will find credible, suggestive, and applicable to decisions that need to be made. It means thinking in advance about how the information will be used, and by whom. The point of assessment is not to gather data and return "results"; it is a process that starts with the questions of decision-makers, that involves them in the gathering and interpreting of data, and that informs and helps guide continuous improvement.

8. *Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.*

Assessment alone changes little. Its greatest contribution comes on campuses where the quality of teaching and learning is visibly valued and worked at. On such campuses, the push to improve educational performance is a visible and primary goal of leadership; improving the quality of undergraduate education is central to the institution's planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions. On such campuses, information about learning outcomes is seen as an integral part of decision making, and avidly sought.

9. *Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.*

There is a compelling public stake in education. As educators, we have a responsibility to the publics that support or depend on us to provide information about the ways in which our students meet goals and expectations. But that responsibility goes beyond the reporting of such information; our deeper obligation – to ourselves, our students, and society – is to improve. Those to whom educators are accountable have a corresponding obligation to support such attempts at improvement.