

Presentation by David Smith
NMSU and Assessment
National Survey on Assessment Attitudes

Fill in the blank: _____ is the primary reason assessment is conducted at my institution.

- A. Accreditation
- B. Improving student learning
- C. Accountability
- D. Compliance with government mandates
- E. Other

Accreditation: HLC Criteria

“The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.”

- Purpose: Clearly-stated goals for student learning.
- Effectiveness: Assess achievement of learning outcomes.
- Improvement: Use assessment information to improve student learning (“closing the loop”)
- Process: Substantial participation of faculty...

Next: Taking the focus off of accreditation!

Demonstrating the quality of your educational programs... where to start?

- Centered around student learning and learning outcomes. What should a graduate of your program know, value, and be able to do, etc.? *“Outcomes” express these things in terms that can be measured!*
- What should be measured? (Based on importance, need, or a schedule.) How will it be measured? What do you expect to find? What did you find? Who should you tell? What does it mean?
- How will you use your findings (results of an assessment) to improve student learning? (*Compliance with reporting should not be the primary objective of assessment!*)

Summary: Assessment = healthy, faculty-led self assessment of educational programs

Complementary yet Competing Priorities

Effectiveness

- Show we are doing well!
- *Meeting targets (KPIs, etc.) is encouraged and rewarded.*
- Demonstrate a process for evaluating effectiveness.

Primary role of program review and external program accreditation.

HLC Perspective: An effective program is always characterized by a commitment to improvement.

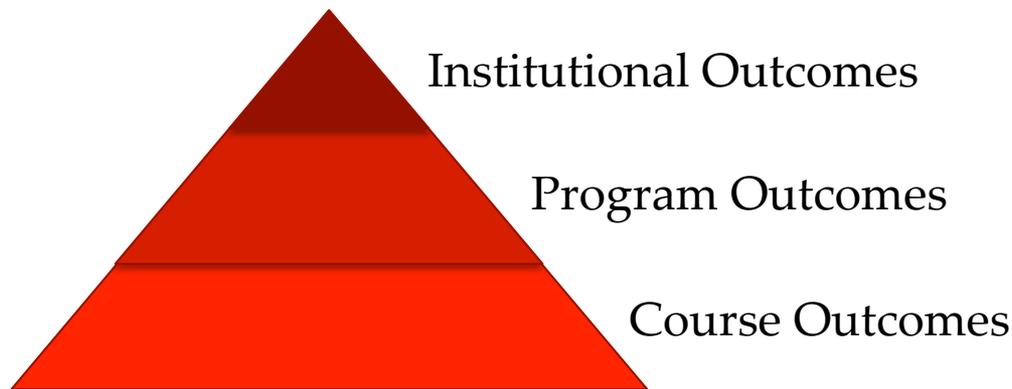
Improvement

- Show where change is needed!
- *Meeting targets is not the goal.*
- Re-assessment is an essential part of the process.
- Demonstrate a process for continuous improvement.

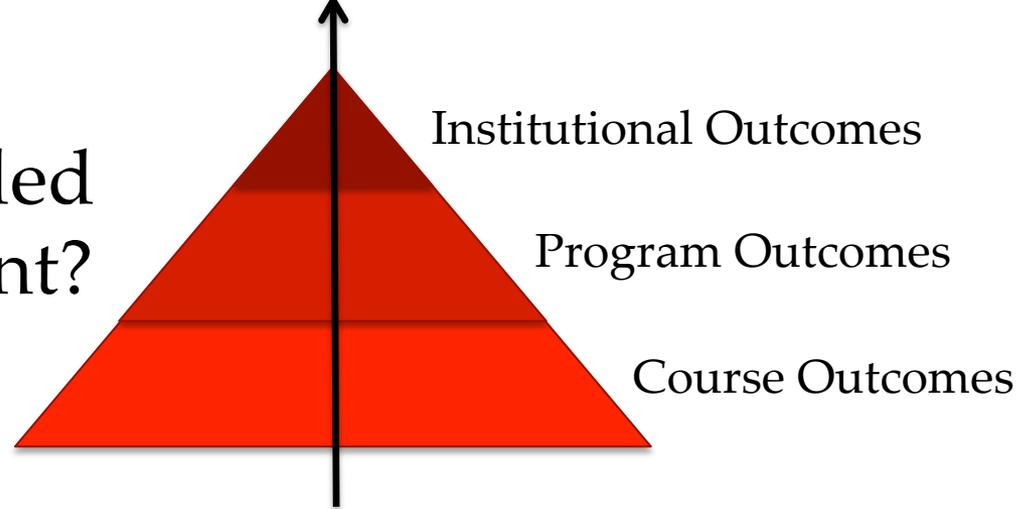
Primary role of annual academic departmental and program assessment.

Current Challenges

- Closing the loop. Reaccreditation is threatened if we cannot demonstrate widespread efforts of assessment toward improvement. *This will be my number one priority in providing feedback on departmental assessment reports.*
- Articulating and aligning course, program, and institutional learning outcomes.



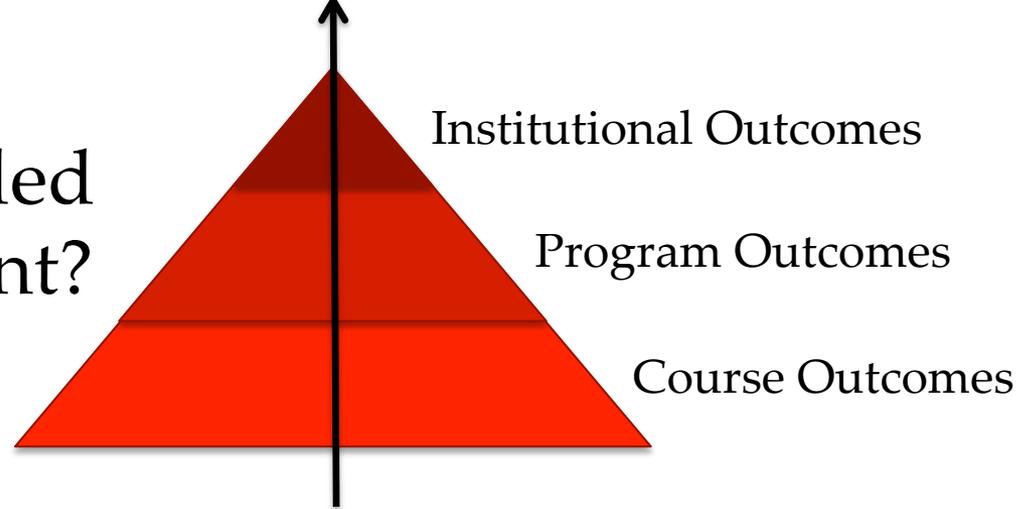
Classroom Embedded Program Assessment?



Yes, using well-designed assignments!

- alignment with program and institutional outcomes makes them useful for assessment
- faculty participation is natural not forced
- students are motivated to complete “assessments”
- communicate to students what is important to faculty.

Classroom Embedded Program Assessment?



- Watch for a spring workshop on assignment design for assessment.
- National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) “Charrette” opportunity to design “signature assignments” for your program. Posted in their assignment library.
Contact me immediately if interested.

Assessment Reporting



Benefits of WEAVE

- Repository of assessment information
 - analysis and reporting for accreditation.
 - determination of alignment with institutional objectives (“associations”)
 - “action plan” support for closing the loop
 - potential arena for training in assessment
- Sharing of processes and data, internally, and in support of transparency

I want to solicit your input on how to make WEAVE work better for you.... after today's workshop.

Quality Initiative (QI) and Assessment

- Initiative for *institutional improvement* in support of our upcoming reaffirmation of accreditation
- Last year's assessment emphasis on writing is just one part of the initiative. *It was a one-time mandate of assessment content.*
- Work toward closing the loop on the QI assessment is encouraged. However,
- There is no mandated assessment topic from the office of assessment for the 2015 – 2016 assessment cycle.

Summary

Demonstrating a *quality improvement process* takes priority over quality assurance.

- Focused on students and their learning
- Self-reflective and self-critical departmental process
- Assessment's value is determined by how data are used