

Assessment 101: Learning the Basics

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Learning Outcomes for Today:

Participants will be able to define assessment within the context of higher education;

Participants will be able to describe the assessment planning cycle used by the Division of Student Affairs at UC Merced;

Participants will be able identify the Student Affairs divisional Student Learning Outcomes. There are 7 and there will a test, and a prize!

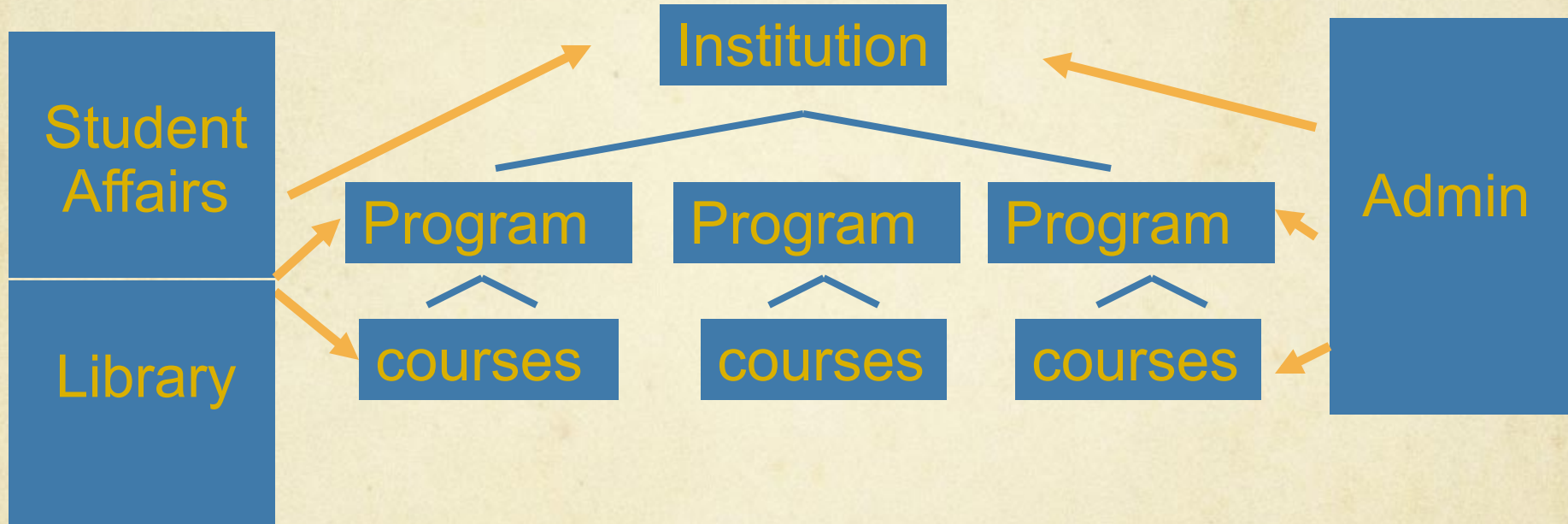
What underpins higher education assessment?

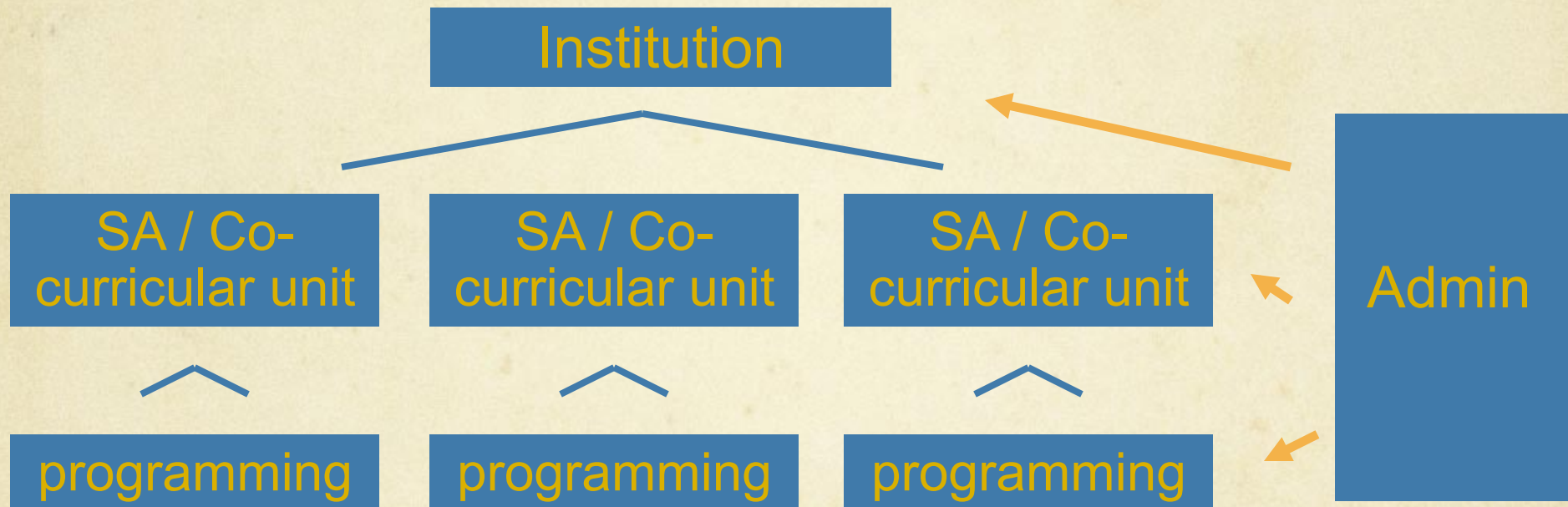
- Mission of entire institution is to educate
- Holistic, integrated approach – all contribute

Institutional
Mission &
Strategic
Academic
Vision



- academic
- co-curricular (Student Affairs)
- administration





What is Assessment?

- The systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development.
- The word 'assess' comes from the Latin verb '**assidere**' meaning 'to sit with'.

(Palomba, C.A., & Banta, T.W. (1999). *Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.)

What Assessment Is Not...

- Not performance evaluation
- Not testing
- Not research, which traditionally tests theories while assessment informs practice.
- Not summative, it's formative
- Not focused on individual or personal, it's focused on department and divisional level

Why do Assessment?

- ***Survival:*** Demonstrating contribution to UCM mission
- ***Quality:*** Ensuring programs and services are high quality
- ***Policy Development:*** Providing information to inform policies
- ***Politics:*** Responding to external questions of accountability
- ***Affordability:*** Prioritizing in tight fiscal environment

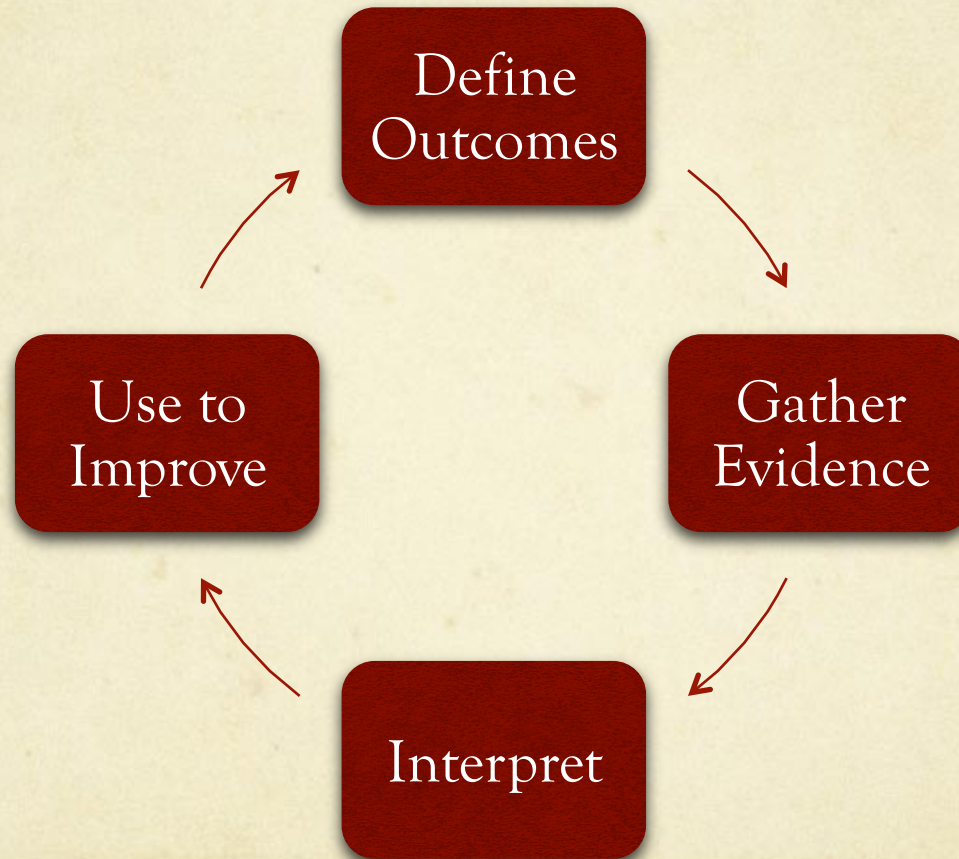
Upcraft and Schuh, 1996

Mission: Research Universities value systematic inquiry

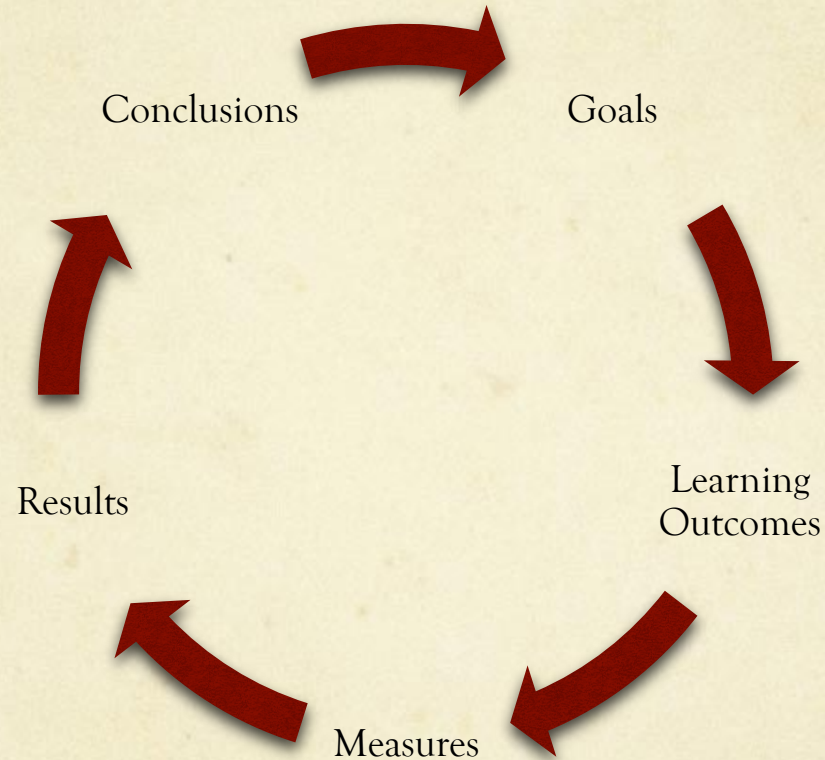
Assessment in Student Affairs

- **Divisional Strategic Planning**
 - First 5 Year Plan: 2007-2012
 - Next: Aspirations need to be translated into plans and goals
- **Annual Assessment Planning and Reporting**
 - Assessment reports for 2013-14 in Dept Annual Report (June, 2014)
 - Assessment plan for 2014-15 due in August, Departmental and Divisional outcomes
- **Periodic Program Review (7 year cycle)**
 - Has your unit been through PR yet?
 - When are you up?

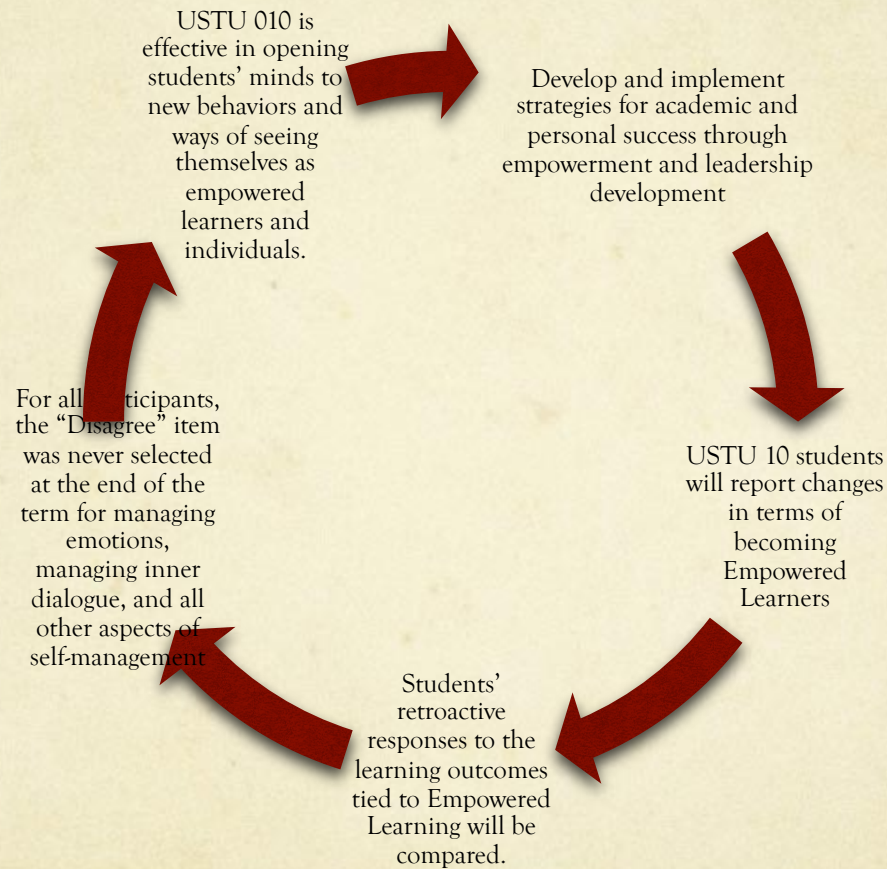
Generic Assessment Cycle



SA Annual Assessment Planning Cycle



SA Annual Assessment Planning Cycle



SA Assessment Template

- I. Mission Statement
- II. Divisional Student Learning Outcomes
- III. Annual Planning Goals
- IV. Student Learning Outcome of the Year
- V. Measures
- VI. Reliable Results
- VII. Results Summary
- VIII. Conclusions

Mission Statements

- Mission is related to VISION, which comes first...
- MISSION tells us WHAT YOU DO whereas VISION tells us what you want to become
- We assess what we CURRENTLY do, not what we want to become... so vision is less critical in Assessment Cycle.

Mission & Vision Statements

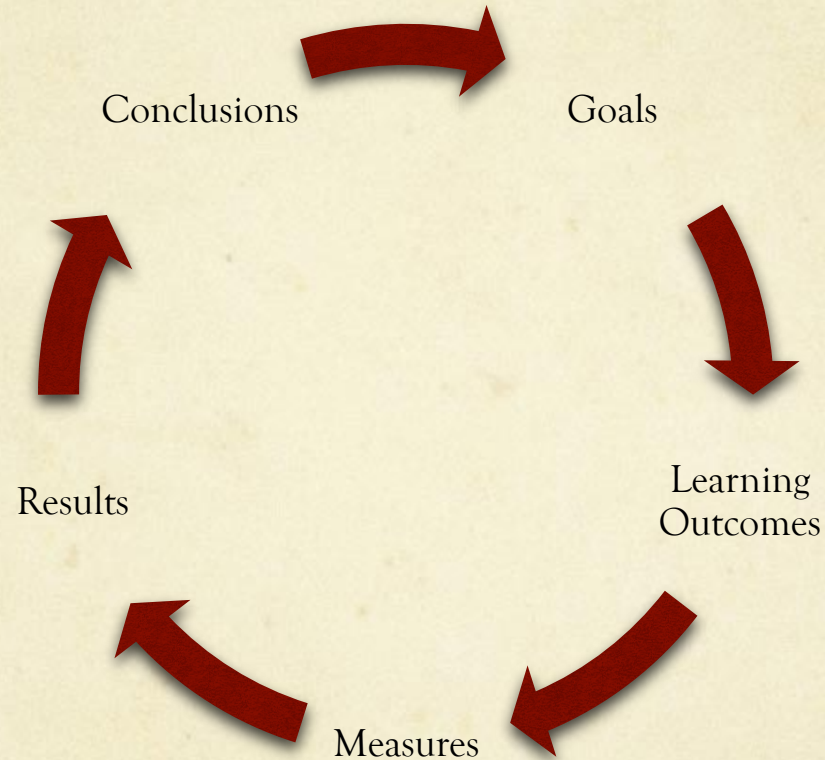
MISSION

Student Affairs recruits and develops dedicated students and staff who are committed to lifelong learning. In keeping with the university's Principles of Community, we cultivate a campus environment characterized by respect for human dignity and diversity. Toward these aims, Student Affairs promotes an enriched learning environment, often collaborating with faculty and units campus wide, to provide students with opportunities to realize their intellectual, physical, social and emotional potential.

VISION

The Division of Student Affairs strives to become a leading model of innovative approaches for student-centered initiatives as we deliberately grow to meet the expanding needs of our richly diverse students, alumni, and greater community.

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Goal Statements

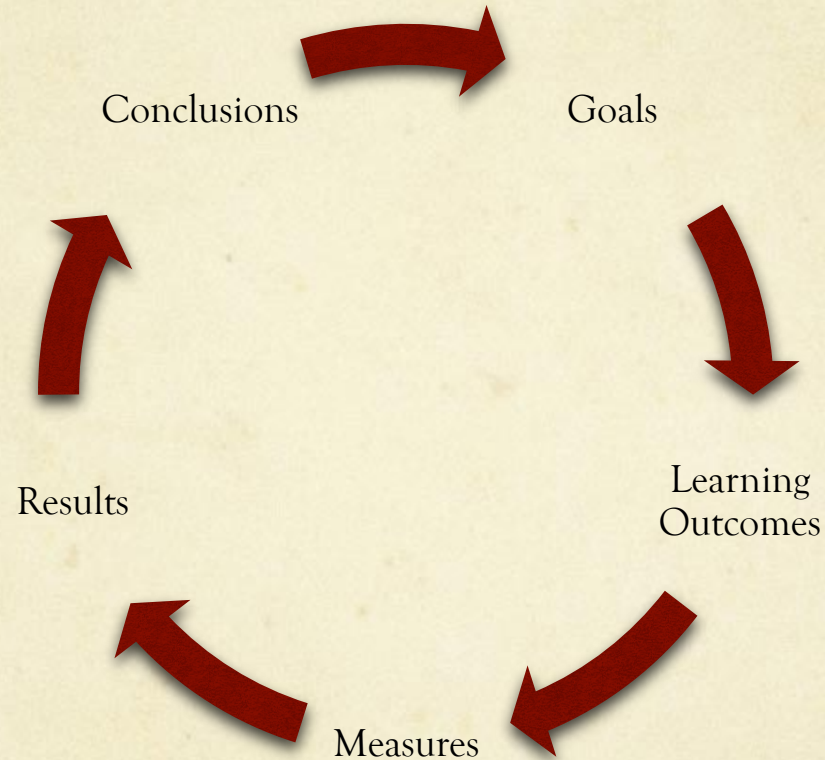
- Broad statements that describe the overarching long-range outcomes of an administrative unit
- Are usually not measurable and need to be further developed as separate distinguishable outcomes
- Are primarily used for general planning and are used as the starting point to the development and refinement of outcomes

(CSU, Sacramento)

Annual Planning Goals

- At UC Merced, are identified in Year End Reports submitted in June to VC.
- Ideally linked to Strategic Plan when Division is in a planning cycle.
- Should be at departmental level, could be collaborative in nature.

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Student Learning Outcomes

- Student Learning Outcomes reveal the changes in attitudes, aptitudes or behaviors that a student user can describe or demonstrate after utilizing a service or program. (CSU, Sacramento)
- e.g. *First year participants in the Emerging Leaders Program will report “above average” leadership abilities 10% higher than non-participant peers after their first year of college.*

Example from Rubric Session

Program Student Learning Outcome:

As a result of the RA training program, all RAs write concise incident reports that are professional, include critical factual details, and use language that is non-judgmental. (Target 100%)

Student Affairs Divisional Learning Outcome:

Demonstrate effective written, verbal, and technological communication skills.

Divisional Student Learning Outcomes

- Civic Responsibility
- Communication Skills (2014-15)
- Confidence in One's Abilities
- Leadership and Teamwork (2015-16)
- Sense of Self and Impact on Others
- Appreciating Human Differences
- Life-long Learning and Personal Wellness

PAIR AND SHARE:

Which of these SLOs do you most promote in the students you serve?

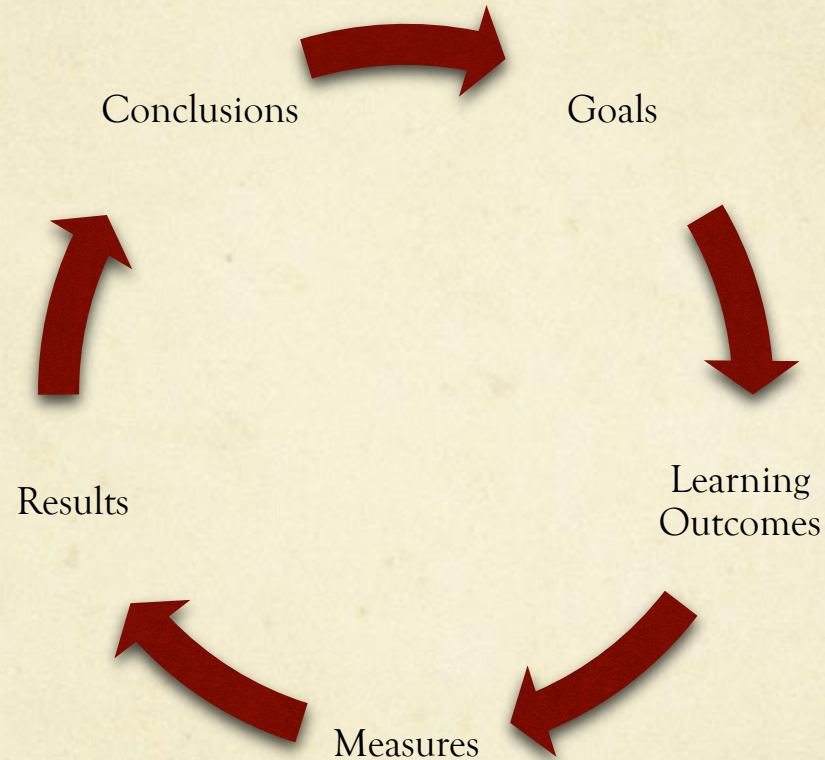
- ☐ Civic Responsibility
- ☐ Communication Skills
- ☐ Confidence in One's Abilities
- ☐ Leadership and Teamwork
- ☐ Sense of Self and Impact on Others
- ☐ Appreciating Human Differences
- ☐ Life-long Learning and Personal Wellness

How do we know we are successfully
contributing to student learning?

Great job!



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Measures of SLO

- Student Learning Outcome: *First year participants in the Emerging Leaders Program will report “above average” leadership abilities 10% higher after completion of the year-long program.*
- Student Learning Outcome Measure: All first year students complete the First Year survey in October and a follow up survey in April which includes a self-report of leadership abilities.

Measurement Strategies

INDIRECT EVIDENCE

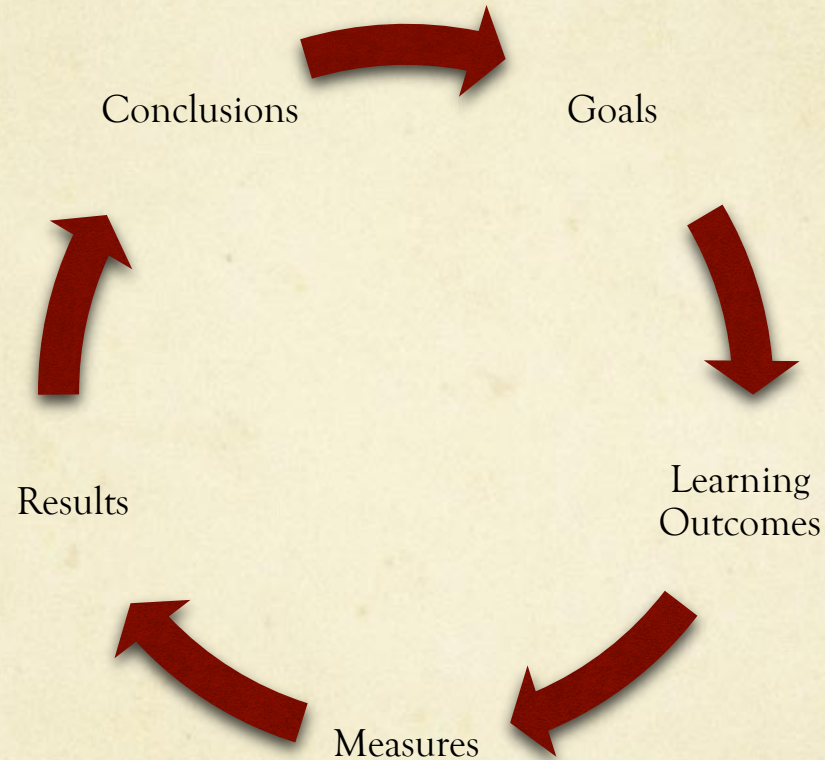
- Surveys... not ANOTHER survey!?
 - Institutional-level survey data
 - Department-level or program-specific surveys
 - Friday session on Institutional level datasets
 - Monday session offers Hands on Help
 - *Qualtrics not Survey Monkey...*

Measurement Strategies

DIRECT EVIDENCE:

- Asking students in Focus Groups or Interviews (SATAL session is 6/4)
- Observation or review of student work or performance -- using Rubric (6/3)
- Evidence is all around us: from participation trends to student performance evaluations.

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Results from Leadership SLO

Percentage who report “Above Average” in response to their current abilities

First Year Survey, October	Emerging Leaders	Non-Participants
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Leadership Ability	84	82
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Follow up Survey, April	Emerging Leaders	Non-Participants
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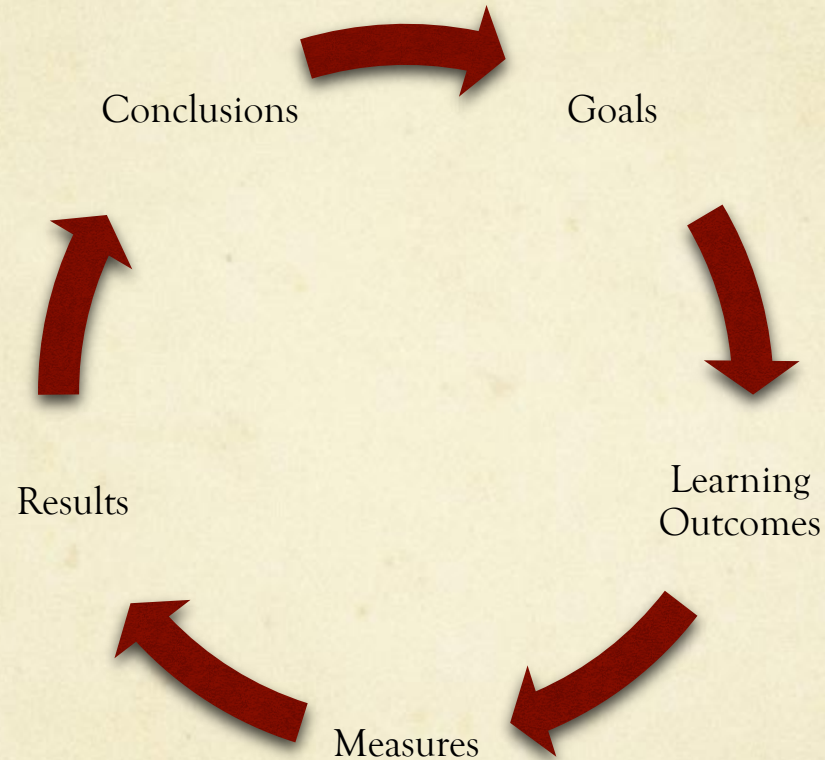
Leadership Ability	95	84
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Results from Focus Group

WHERE DID YOU PRACTICE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN THE CO-CURRICULUM?

- “As a Lead Peer Instructor, I have had to continuously learn ways to better communicate with my students about the lessons for the day.”
- “As an orientation leader coordinator, I have to know what is expected and communicate with the team.”
- “In SFAC deliberation.”
- “In both sports and Greek life, communication is key in order to get the job done.”
- “I learned a lot from HEROES when it comes to effective communication. Not only have I learned to communicate with staff and my peers but also with the student body.”

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Conclusions

- An effective conclusion 'closes the loop' by implementing change on the basis of results.
- Identify relevant implications of the data collection methods.
- Specific actions should be provided since the goal is continued improvement.
- Changes might address improvements to the assessment process in addition to services and programming.

“Closing the Loop”

- Shout it from the rooftops
- Revisit goals and objectives with results in mind – apply your findings
- Allocate your resources accordingly
- Tweak “unmet” objectives

The A Team

- Vernetta Doty, Campus Life
- Patti Hachten, Enrollment Management
- Kristin Hlubik, Wellness
- Hector Sambolin, Bright Success Center

ALSO...

- Laura Martin, Campus Assessment Coordinator

Next Steps with Assessment

In Fall, 2014, Departments will begin divisional level coordination, assessing one SLO annually

- 2014 AY of Effective Communication
- 2015 AY of Leadership & Teamwork

July 1, 2014 begins Year 1 of Dashboards

- Enrollment Management
- Auxiliaries
- Wellness

What are your Questions?

Finally... an assessment!

- We have an evaluation to determine if the presentation met the learning outcomes... no names!
- We also want to know what you learned that was most helpful, what you still need and what we should work on in the future