

## Using Standardized Measures of Student Development and Achievement

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## AAHE Good Assessment Practices

- Assessment of student learning begins with educational values
- Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time
- Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes
- Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved

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## Connecting Assessment to Standards for Accreditation

- 2.6 Evaluation enables the institution to demonstrate through **verifiable means** its attainment of **purposes and objectives both inside and outside the classroom**. The results of evaluation are used **systematically** for **improvement** and to inform institutional planning, especially **as it relates to student achievement** and resource allocation.

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## Connecting Assessment to Standards for Accreditation

- 4.44 The institution implements and supports a systematic and broad-based approach to the assessment of student learning focused on educational improvement through **understanding what and how students are learning through their academic program** and, as appropriate, through experiences outside the classroom. This approach is **based on a clear statement or statements of what students are expected to gain, achieve, demonstrate, or know by the time they complete their academic program**. The approach provides useful information to help the institution understand what and how students are learning, improve the experiences provided for students, and **assure that the level of student achievement is appropriate for the degree awarded**. Institutional support is provided for these activities.

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### *Connecting Assessment to Standards for Accreditation*

- 4.50 The institution uses a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the experiences and learning outcomes of its students. Inquiry may focus on a variety of perspectives, including understanding the process of learning, being able to describe student experiences and learning outcomes in normative terms, and gaining feedback from alumni, employers, and others situated to help in the description and assessment of student learning. The institution devotes appropriate attention to ensuring that its methods of understanding student learning are trustworthy and provide information useful in the continuing improvement of programs and services for students.

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### *Putting Assessment Data to Work*

- Gather data set
- Interpret data set
- Identify strengths and weaknesses
- Translate patterns in the data into “action plans”

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### *Wabash National Study details*

- 49 institutions
- More than 17,000 students to date
- Longitudinal
  - Follow one class for *at least* 4 years
- Purpose
  - To identify teaching practices and institutional conditions that promote critical thinking, moral reasoning, openness to diversity, leadership, psychological well-being, need for cognition

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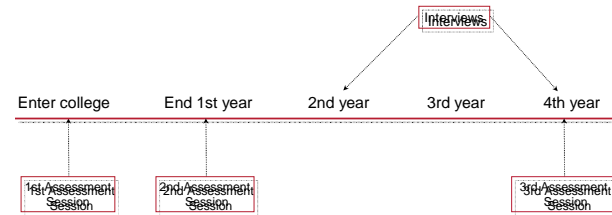
### *Wabash National Study*

- Larger institutions
  - Brandeis University
  - Butler University
  - Delaware State University
  - Fairfield University
  - Millersville University
  - North Carolina A&T State University
  - Salem State College
  - San José State University
  - University of Kentucky
  - University of Michigan
  - University of North Carolina Wilmington
- University of Notre Dame
- University of Rhode Island

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### Wabash National Study - Small colleges

- Allegheny College
- Alma College
- Alverno College
- Augustana College
- Bard College
- Bard College at Simon's Rock
- Bennington College
- Blackburn College
- Carleton College
- Coe College
- College of the Holy Cross
- Columbia College (SC)
- Connecticut College
- Drew University
- Franklin College
- Gustavus Adolphus College
- Hamilton College [www.liberalarts.wabash.edu](http://www.liberalarts.wabash.edu)



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### What surveys and tests do students take?

- Survey questions on
  - Long-term goals and aspirations
  - High school and college experiences
  - Economic and social background
- Outcome surveys and tests
  - CAAP Critical Thinking Test
  - Defining Issues Test
  - Need for Cognition Scale
  - Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being
  - Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale
  - Socially Responsible Leadership Scale
  - Additional short scales [www.liberalarts.wabash.edu](http://www.liberalarts.wabash.edu)

What changed?

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*Some things went up, some things went down . . .*

- Improvement
  - Critical thinking and moral reasoning
- No change
  - Interest in intellectual work, well-being, leadership
- Decline
  - Interest in the sciences and arts
  - Academic motivation
  - Openness to diversity and challenge
- *Large differences among individuals*

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What practices and  
conditions made a  
difference?

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*Good teaching and high-quality interactions with  
faculty*

- Students report that they
  - Have faculty who are interested in teaching
  - Have faculty who are good at teaching
    - Give clear explanations, summarize material well, use good illustrations, use class time effectively, and have command of what they are teaching
  - Have faculty who are interested in helping students grow personally and professionally
  - Get prompt feedback
  - Have meaningful interactions with faculty outside of class
- Positive impact on 24/28 outcome measures
  - High = 28%; Moderate = 72%; Low = 1%

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*Academic challenge and high expectations*

- Students report that they
  - Work hard both in terms of quantity and difficulty
  - Get exams and assignments that require them to write and think
  - Are asked challenging questions by faculty and students
  - Are asked to integrate, synthesize, and interpret information and ideas
- Positive impact on 24/28 outcome measures
  - High = 18%; Moderate = 82%

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### *Diversity experiences*

- Students report that they
  - Attend lectures and debates on political and social issues
  - Participate in multicultural awareness workshops
  - Have meaningful conversations and interactions with students and staff who are different from themselves
- Unique positive impact on 17/28 outcome measures
  - Negative impact on academic motivation
  - High = 3%; Moderate = 83%; Low = 14%

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### *Example - College X*

- Audit
  - Are there interesting patterns in the data?
- Communication
  - Data distributed to key administrators
  - Campus wide presentation
  - Conversations with faculty and student groups
- Action
  - Used same questions on an advising survey
  - Reviewed earlier NSSE data
  - Discussed data with faculty
  - Measured again

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### *Northeast College*

- Guiding questions
  - "Responding to Data about Student Learning and Student Experiences"
- Fact Sheet
- Data Tables
  - "Table 1 Good Practices Scales"
- Good Teaching Practices
  - "Scale 1 – Good Teaching and High-Quality Interactions with Faculty"
- NSSE and CLA data
  - "Additional Assessment Information for Northeast College"
- Action Plan Worksheet

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### *The Action Plan\**

- Issue Description:

\*Derived from the AIR/CIC Data and Decisions Workshop, Fall, 2008

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*The Action Plan*

- Data That Describe the Issue:

*The Action Plan*

- Goal:

*The Action Plan*

- Key Activities (activities required to meet goal)
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.

*The Action Plan*

- Activity 1:
  - Action
  - Measure of Success
  - Barriers to Success
  - Time line:
  - Person(s) Responsible
  - Resources Needed (financial/nonfinancial)
  - Priority

(Repeat for Activity 2, etc.)