Assessment Overview

Presentation to the Curriculum Committee
of the Faculty Senate
October 6th, 2010

What is Assessment?

- Focuses on, sets high expectations for, and reflects on student learning
- Should be accurate and objective
- Provides insight into what the program is doing well and what can be improved upon
- Answers what we want students to know or be able to do
- Should be scholarly endeavor
- Should be used to improve the delivery of these outcomes
- Highly valued by accrediting agencies
- More than just data and information – gives guidance for strategic change and improvement
- Pieces of assessment:
  - Learning outcomes: expectations for students' knowledge, skills, or abilities
  - Measurement of these outcomes
  - Reflect on findings and focus on continuous program improvement

What Assessment is NOT?

- **<u>The same as student grades</u>**. Grades are not by themselves pieces of assessment. A good program looks at the relationship between the program curriculum and the student learning outcomes. Grades may be used as assessment pieces if they are directly linked to specific learning outcomes and are collected in that way.
- **<u>Student opinion or satisfaction.</u>** Indirect information about student learning can be important but each of the programmatic learning outcomes should be directly measured.
- **<u>Just evaluation</u>**. Assessment is a process of improvement and should never be used to make a judgment about a particular faculty member.
- **<u>An end or just part of accreditation.</u>** Assessment should not be conducted just to meet accreditation requirements. To be successful it should be an on-going process of development, measurement, and reflection.
- **<u>Useless.</u>** Assessment (if used properly) has a variety of uses in program development and student learning.

Why do we conduct assessment?

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- ❧ Assessment is conducted to improve programs and student learning.
  - ❧ Helps to identify areas for improvement
  - ❧ Shows strengths of programs
  - ❧ Provides assurance of student learning attainment
  - ❧ Encourages people to focus on curriculum rather than courses
- ❧ Accountability
  - ❧ Assists the University and programs in meeting accrediting standards
  - ❧ Assists University in meeting state mandates

SACS* Standards: Related to Assessment

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- Section 2: Core Requirements
  - 2.5 *The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.(pg.16)*
  - 2.12 *The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that includes an institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes and / or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution. (pg.19)*
- Section 3: Comprehensive Standards
  - 3.3.1 *The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of results in each of the following areas:*
    - 3.3.1.1 *educational programs, to include student learning outcomes*
    - 3.3.1.2 *administrative support services*
    - 3.3.1.3 *educational support services*
    - 3.3.1.4 *research within its educational mission, if appropriate*
    - 3.3.1.5 *community / public service within its educational mission, if appropriate (pg.25)*
  - 3.5.1 *The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which graduates attained them. (pg.27)*

SACS Accreditation

- SACS is our overarching accrediting body that requires institutions identify student learning outcomes, develop systematic means of evaluating these outcomes, and use this information for improvement in academic programs.
- SACS also requires that institutions identify learning outcomes for general education and measures graduates attainment of these outcomes.
- SACS also requires institutions develop a Quality Enhancement Plan focused on "enhancing" the quality of its programs and services within the context of the [Institutional] mission.
- What SACS does NOT prescribe:
  - Assessment methods
  - The design or timeline for the assessment
  - How programs use the assessment information for improvement

SCHEV: Competency Assessment and Program Review

Competency Assessment

- SCHEV mandates that all universities in the Commonwealth evaluate six areas that are expected to be core competencies for undergraduate students.
  - Institutions choose their outcomes for each area
  - Institutions choose how these are assessed
- The new University Core A program will allow for four areas to be evaluated (critical thinking, oral communication, written communication, and information/technology literacy); two other areas will be evaluated in the overall core curriculum (quantitative reasoning and scientific reasoning)

Program Review

- SCHEV requires that we review academic programs. SCHEV does not mandate specifics of the program review or evaluate the reports. Rather, SCHEV only makes sure there is a process and it is on-going.

Programmatic Accreditation

 A number of our degree programs have accrediting bodies
 These agencies have specific requirements based on the field of instruction
  Most require student learning outcomes, assessments of student competence in these required areas, and use of information in improvement
  Examples: Nursing, Education, Psychology, Theatre, College of Business and Economics, and Recreation, Parks, and Tourism
 Radford University is working on obtaining programmatic accreditations for all available fields of study

How does this all tie together?

- SCHEV requires that we review academic programs and assess the six core competency areas
- SACS requires that each academic program assess their programmatic learning outcomes, universities assess their general education program, and universities develop and assess their Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
- Accrediting bodies are responsible for accrediting specific programs or majors. Most of these agencies have regulations regarding the systematic assessment and evaluation of the degree program.

How does this all tie together?
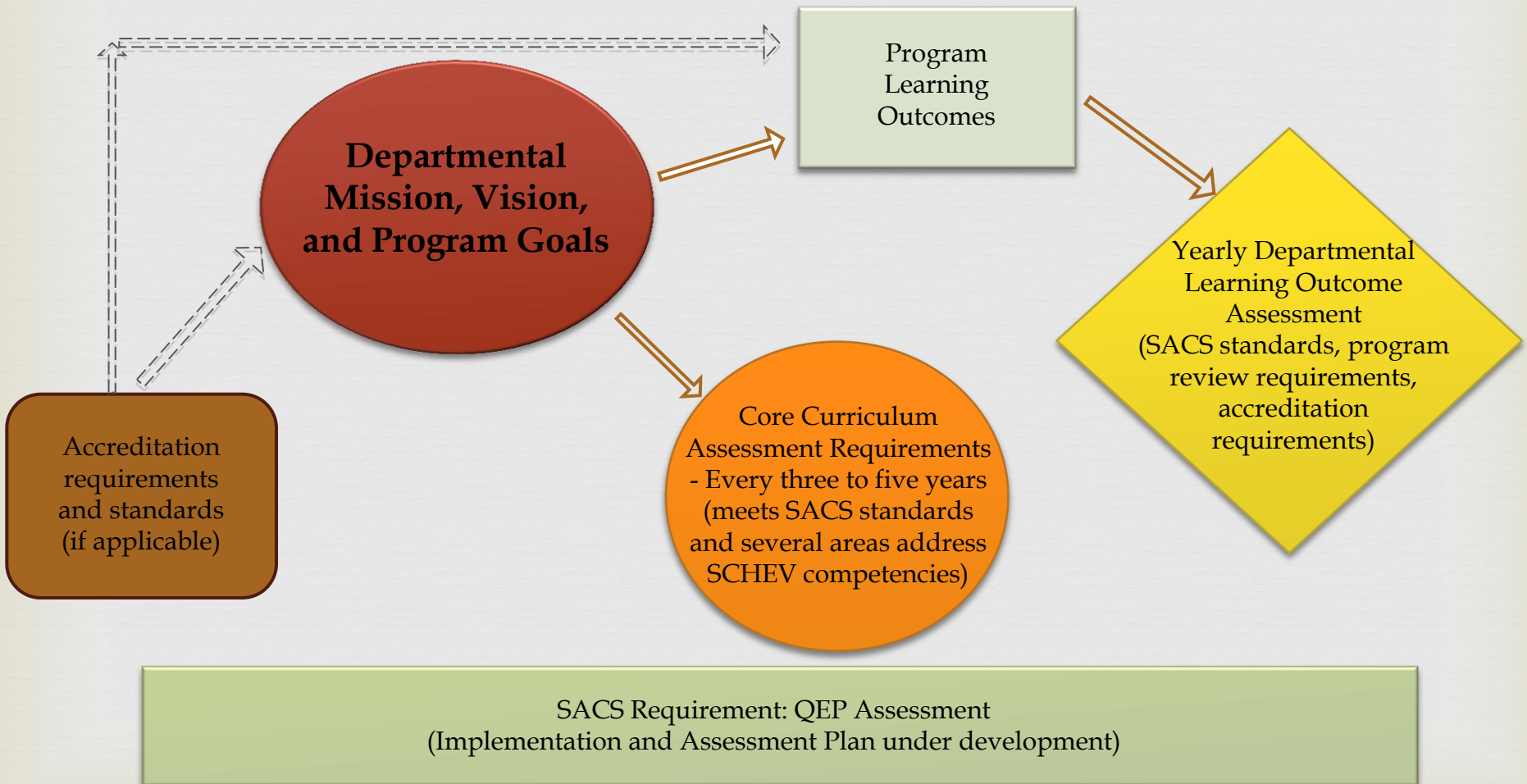
Departimental Assessment

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- Yearly Departmental Learning Outcome Assessments / Program Review
  - Mission statement, department vision, program goals
  - Learning outcomes
  - Curriculum map of learning outcomes as related to courses
  - Map of departmental student learning outcomes and related accreditation outcomes (if applicable)
  - Procedures and methodologies for both direct and indirect assessments for each learning outcome
  - Timeline of when / where all assessment information is to be collected; details of the assessment procedures by student learning outcome
  - Results for each outcome designated above
  - Describe changes implemented or planned to address curriculum deficiencies identified as a result of the assessment
  - Analysis question

Core Curriculum Assessment

- Assessment Planning for the Core Curriculum
  - Assessment plan for the entire Core Curriculum Program: Embedded course assessment
  - Assessment plan for University Core A: Collection of works in 4 CORE courses
    - CORE A piloting is taking place this year through collection of works and development of rubrics
    - Potential use of an ePortfolio system that is a component of D2L
  - Potential programmatic assessment
    - Some possibilities include: Cohort studies, the use of a standardized instrument, Portfolios, etc.
  - These assessment designs have be used to develop the plan for SCHEV competency testing submitted in March of 2011

QEP Assessment

Implementation and Assessment Plans are under development

Other materials are available from the

Office of Academic Assessment.

Please contact Bethany Bodo

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