Assessment Glossary

Assessment: Any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, divisional, or departmental effectiveness (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996, p. 18).

Types of Assessment:

Needs Assessment: Any effort to determine the types of services and programs that students indicate they would like or need (Brescianni, et.al., 2009, p. 21).

Descriptive Assessment: Any effort to describe the number of type of students/constituents who are using a particular program or service (Brescianni, et.al., 2009).

Satisfaction Assessment: Any effort to measure students' approval or enjoyment of a particular program or service (Brescianni, et.al., 2009, p. 22).

Outcomes-based Assessment: A systematic and intentional process to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence that demonstrates the achievement of intentional program or learning outcomes (Brescianni, et.al., 2009).

Bloom's Taxonomy: A classification of measurable verbs created by Benjamin Bloom in 1956 to describe and classify observable knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors and abilities (Anderson, & Krathwohl, 2001)**.**

CAS Standards: A comprehensive set of criteria to assess overall program quality and effectiveness developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Higher Education (CAS). The CAS Standards include both general and program specific statements of good professional practice generally agreed upon by the profession-at-large (CAS, 2012).

CAS Learning and Development Outcomes: Six broad categories of relevant and desirable learning identified in the CAS Standards. These outcomes provide a framework to articulate and assess how programs and services should contribute to student learning and development (CAS, 2012). The six domains are (1) knowledge acquisition, construction, integration and application; (2) cognitive complexity; (3) intrapersonal development; (4) interpersonal competence; (5) humanitarianism and civic engagement; and (6) practical competence.   *(See also DSO Purposeful Learning Domains.)*

Cycle of Assessment/Evaluation: A systematic and intentional process that (1) articulates what a program intends to accomplish in regard to its services, research, and/or student learning efforts; (2) purposefully plans the program so the intended results can be achieved; (3) implements methods to gather evidence which demonstrates whether the intended end results have been achieved; and (4) analyzes this evidence to plan improvements or make recommendations for staff development, policy change, resource reallocation, or similar actions (Brescianni, 2006, p. 14).

Culture of Evidence: A commitment to the use of data to demonstrate how the programs offered, the processes implemented, and the services provided are effective and contribute significantly to both the achievement of strategic goals and the fulfillment of the institutional and department mission (Culp, 2012).

DSO Purposeful Learning Domains: Seven broad categories of intentional learning prioritized in the programs and services provided by the Dean of Students Office The seven domains are (1) responsibility; (2) self-understanding; (3) community; (4) leadership; (5) civic engagement; (6) well-being; and (7) life-long learning. These learning domains are systematically integrated across all

units; students who engage in DSO programs and services will advance their knowledge in these domains. *(See also CAS learning and Development Outcomes.)*

EAB: The Educational Advisory Board (EAB) is a one of the largest providers of research, technology, and consulting services to colleges and University. Iowa State is a member of EAB who strives to be the "first place members turn for help in tackling their most pressing problems." The Advisory Board is one of the largest research and consulting firms serving educational and other non-profit, mission-driven organizations (EAB, 2015).

Evaluation: Any effort to use assessment evidence to improve institutional, divisional, or departmental effectiveness (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996, p. 19).

Evidence Based Decisions: The use of data to demonstrate how the programs offered, the processes implemented, and the services provided are effective and contribute significantly to both the achievement of strategic goals and the fulfillment of the institutional and department mission. A commitment to this professional mindset is also known as a "culture of evidence" (Culp, 2012).

External Review: Assessment and evaluation conducted by experts outside the organization, such as from an accrediting body, consulting firm, or professional association. External reviews may be perceived as bringing greater objectivity and credibility to the assessment/evaluation project (Fitzpatrick, et.al., 2011, p. 28).

Formative: Assessment data or evaluations used to improve organizational or institutional effectiveness (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996, p. 19). These include, but are not limited to, assessment related to strategic program and student learning outcomes.

Internal Review: Assessment and evaluation conducted by stakeholders within the organization, such program administrators or student users. Internal reviews may be perceived as being more contextual and aligned with both the organizational history and political climate (Fitzpatrick, et.al., 2011, p. 28).

IRB: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a committee within the Office of Responsible Research that reviews all research at Iowa State University involving human participants, including proposals to gather data from participants for theses, dissertations, and other student projects (ISU, 2015).

Metrics: a commonly understood standard of measurement or institutional benchmark used in descriptive assessment and other quantitative assessment and evaluation contexts.

Professional Competencies: A comprehensive set to criteria developed jointly by ACPA & NASPA to establish the knowledge, skills and in some cases attitudes expected of student affairs professionals regardless of the area of specialization or positional role within the field; which specifically includes basic, intermediate and advance competencies related to assessment, evaluation and research (A/E/R) (ACPA & NASPA, 2010).

Program Outcomes: Identifies what a program, department, or unit is to do, achieve, or accomplish for its own improvement and/or in support of institutional or divisional goals. Program outcomes can often be measured by simple questions such "Was the task or activity completed?" (Bresciani, 2001).

Qualitative Methodologies: The use of detailed description of situations, events, people, interactions, and other observed behaviors; the use of direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts; and/or the analysis of documents, correspondence, or other artifacts to gather data about a particular phenomenon or object of assessment (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996, p. 53).

Quantitative Methodologies: The use of numerical or other evaluative symbols to describe objects, events or observations according to standard measures so that varying perspectives and experiences can be fit into predetermined response categories facilitating comparisons and statistical aggregation and analysis of the data (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996, p. 85).

Research: A systematic investigation designed to develop, test and/or evaluate theory, or contribute to generalizable knowledge; for example, investigations that
  • attempt to make comparisons or draw conclusions from the gathered data;
  • attempt to reach for generalizable principles of historical or social development;
  • seek underlying principles or laws of nature that have predictive value and can be applied to other circumstances for the purpose of controlling outcomes;
  • create general explanations about all that has happened in the past; or
  • predict the future (ISU Office of Responsible Research, 2015).

Summative: Assessment data or evaluations conducted for the purposes of accountability and strategic planning. These efforts are used to determine if a program or service should be continued, enhanced, curtailed, or eliminated. (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996, p. 19). These include, but are not limited to, internal and external CAS program reviews or other efforts to identify best practices.

Student Development: As a theoretical construct, student development describes how students change, grow and develop as a result of the college experience. As a goal, the term also refers to the commitment of student affairs professionals to provide programs and services that help students develop in positive ways while they are in college. For the purposes of assessment we understand student development as both a theoretical approach and a programmatic goal (Culp, 2012, p. 6).

Student Learning Outcome: A description of how students will be different as a result of an experience: the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students should take with them from the learning activity. (Suskie, 2009).