



Program Assessment at UC Merced

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Talk Outcomes

Regarding academic program assessment,

1. How we do it.
2. Why we do it, and who does it.
3. How it is supported (for success).
4. What has been learned and done.
5. Value as noted by faculty program leads.



What are we trying to do?

Establish habit of regularly

- *asking,*
- *answering, and*
- *acting on*

questions about student learning – collectively and collaboratively.



What are we trying to do?

To what extent are our students learning what we intend as a result of their degree programs?

Why (or why not)?
How?

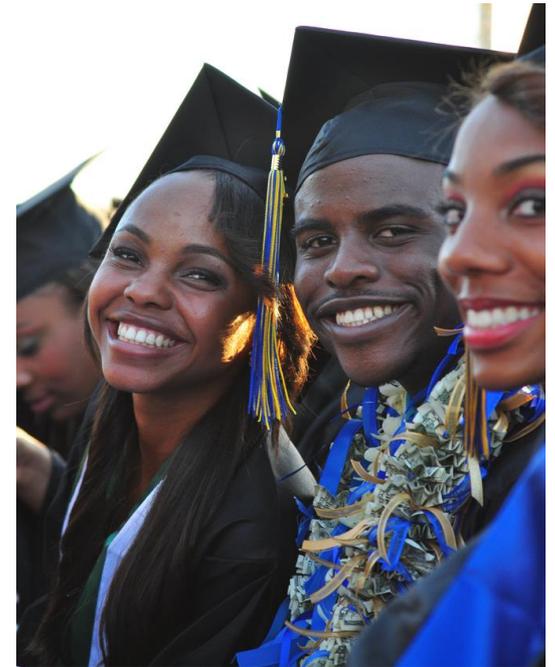


Habitual Inquiry

Annual

Level of each degree,

- 21 undergraduate majors
- 8 standalone minors
- 9 PhD degrees, excluding emphases
- 8 masters degrees, excluding emphases



Focused on *Program Learning Outcomes*

- Intentions for student learning achievement at the degree level.

Who is doing it?

Faculty

- Coordinated by *Faculty Assessment Organizer (FAO)*
- Assessment committees, all faculty meetings
- With support of graduate students

Institutional Support

- Assessment specialists
- Institutional research
- SATAL
- Report review committee



Student learning evidence

What students can do



Student work

Why and how they can.

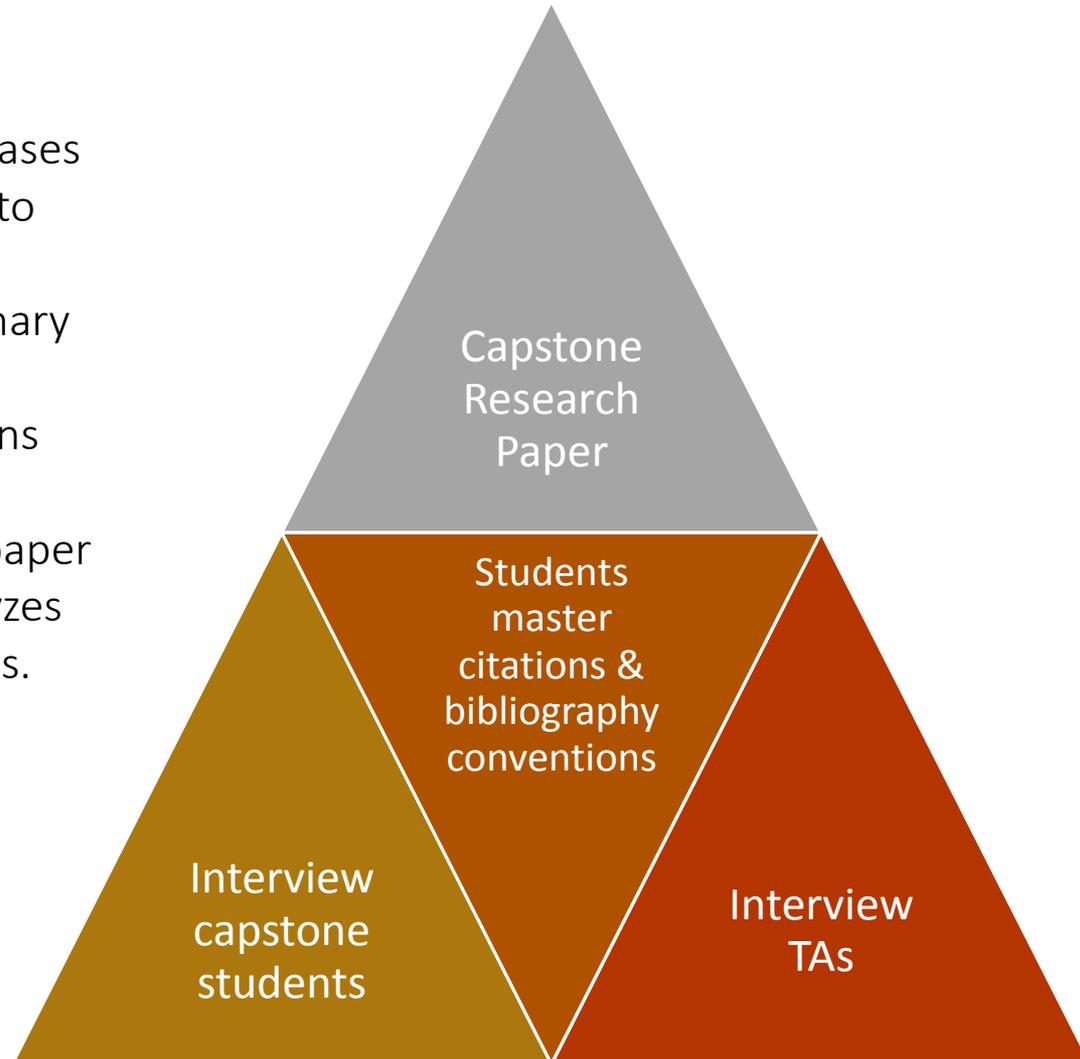


- Student perceptions of learning
- Descriptions of the learning environment

Example: History

PLO 3: Research Skills

- Use the library, relevant databases and indexes, and the Internet to identify and locate sources.
- Develop bibliographies of primary and secondary sources.
- Master conventions for citations and bibliographies.
- Produce an original research paper (20-page minimum) that analyzes primary and secondary sources.



How are the results used?

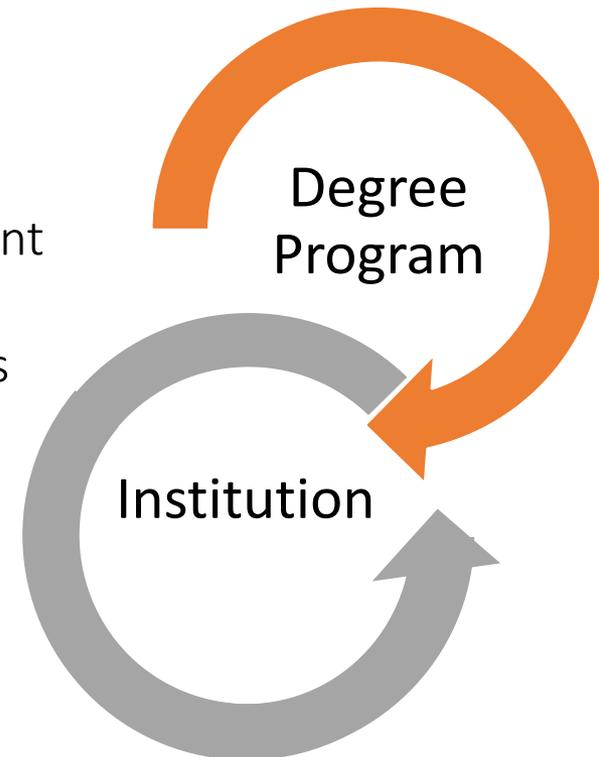
Annual Program Assessment

Program

- Revise curriculum
- Change pedagogy
- Communicate expectations more clearly to students
- Revise assessment strategies

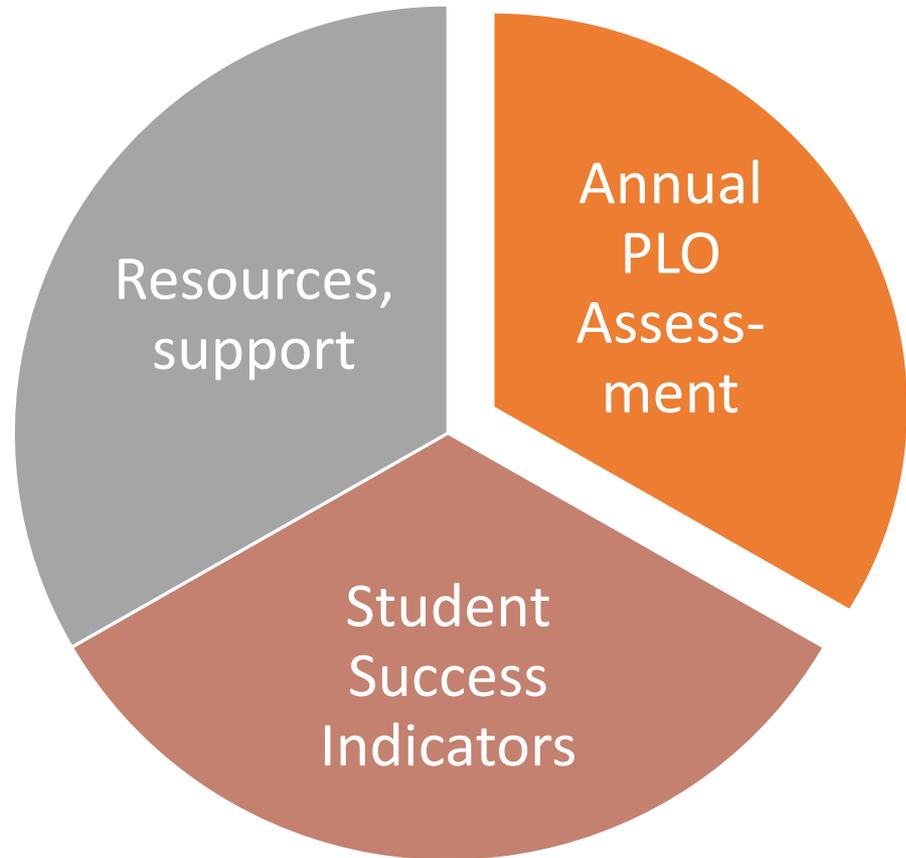
Institution

- Identify emerging student learning trends
- Ask additional questions
- Formulate institutional responses



How are the results used?

Periodic Program Review



Why do it?

- Continuously improve student learning & success
- Develop cohesive, coherent educational programs
- Align student learning and success priorities with institutional academic plan and mission
- Inquiry about student learning and student success consistent with values as research university

6

UCM
Principles of
Assessment

How has annual assessment impacted programs and student learning?

Question to FAOs

What do you find most valuable about the annual assessment process?



Faculty-identified value to program assessment

Benefits

- Program planning (85%)
- Faculty communication and group perspective (45%)
- Curriculum coherence (30%)
- Gaining student input (25%)
- Pedagogy and instruction (15%)
- Administrative continuity (5%)
- Identifying data needs to advance program goals (5%)



Illustrative comments

Assessment is really valuable; it forces us [the faculty] to be metacognitive about our teaching and goals, and allows us to begin structuring our program in a more coherent way, as opposed to treating each course as an independent entity unconnected to the other courses. For example, working on writing, and scaffolding it through the program.

- STEM Faculty Member

Illustrative comment

It allows us to make substantial changes to our program....we have implemented a lot from the results over the years. I also find it to be valuable for directing faculty to have a specific focus for developing our program. Because a structure is already established, we can be more organized and sort of forced to strategically improve our program. And we get validation from our focus groups with students. We often hear from the students things that we have already been thinking about ourselves as faculty – ideas for future changes are validated by the students.

- STEM Faculty Member

Illustrative comment

The most valuable part of assessment is getting together with colleagues, and getting a sense of curricular coherence. We could also see improvement in many PLOs, but not writing, so we changed the curriculum to have small seminars in the beginning courses.

- SSHA Faculty Member

Illustrative comment

It makes us go back to our teaching and to see whether our students are learning what we intend, and how to narrow down assignments and prompts to better facilitate learning. In that way, it increases program cohesiveness. The process also helps us communicate what our program is about when talking to other faculty, which is also helpful for new faculty.

- SSHA Faculty Member

Illustrative quotes

The process of reviewing each and every student as a faculty is valuable for identifying trends. It allows you to see a picture bigger than just the students that you work with. Allows you to see the strengths in students, not just the weaknesses.

- STEM Faculty Member
about graduate program
assessment

Conclusion:

Establish habit of regularly

- ✓ *asking,*
- ✓ *answering, and*
- ✓ *acting on*

questions about student learning – collectively and collaboratively – as means to continuously improve teaching and learning.



Questions?

