Steps to Building an Assessment System

1st – Determine your goal(s) for establishing an assessment system. Examples include but are not limited to reasons related to: Accountability; Program improvement; Increase in student learning; Become more efficient as a department; Continuous improvement; etc. Are the goals initiated by internal or external reasons or stakeholders or both?

2nd – Evaluate for whom and when you are accountable (stakeholders). Examples include but are not limited to employers that hire our graduates; program administrators or other faculty members; policymakers; accrediting agencies.

3rd - Establish the questions that need to be answered based on the goals and stakeholders’ needs.

For example, if the reason for developing an assessment system to purely to meet the needs of external stakeholders, then it is imperative to determine what the needs are of those external stakeholders. If the primary goal is to improve the program, then clearly articulate what it is that needs to be reviewed in order to improve the program.

**Courses** – How well are students performing in each course? Are there trends in failure rates in specific courses? Are there trends in withdrawal rates within specific courses? Are students performing as well in online courses as they do in face-to-face courses?

**Program** – How well are our students performing/meeting our defined student learning outcomes throughout their program? What are our completion rates? How long is it taking students to complete this degree? How many students do we have? How many are we losing? What is our faculty to student ratio? What percentage of our graduates is immediately obtaining employment in their field? How satisfied are the employers that are hiring our graduates? How satisfied are our students and recent graduates with their program? Is the sequence of courses appropriate to meet the desired student learning outcomes? How satisfied are our faculty in this program? What is the percentage of full-time faculty and adjuncts teaching coursework in this program?

4th – Establish various types of assessment data required to meet the goals and needs of stakeholders. Think about three areas: Inputs, Processes, and Outputs

5th – Determine what evidence is needed from each nested level. Think about individual students, courses, programs, departments, institutions.

**Student Level Data** – (Entrance characteristics, performance on assignments, program satisfaction, remediation, etc.)

**Course Level Data** – Some data are reviewed at the individual student level and others are aggregated for each individual course. (Individual and aggregated student performance results on identified course student learning outcomes, course evaluations, course syllabi, etc.)

**Program Level Data** – Most data are aggregated across each program. (Faculty productivity/qualifications, use of adjuncts, enrollment, curriculum maps, retention & graduation rates, program satisfaction surveys, employer satisfaction, student performance, graduate hire rates, etc.)

**Department Level Data** – Most data are aggregated for all programs in a department. Same as Program but add budget and efficiency related measures, etc.

**College and/or Institutional** - Most data are aggregated by department or overall college. Holistic Analysis.

# 6th – Create &/or determine the measures & Establish minimum expectations

Rubrics, test scores, surveys, advisory groups, syllabi, course evaluations, etc.

# 7th – Create process for collecting and reporting data