

# VISIONING THE FUTURE: THE COLLABORATIVE ASPIRATIONS OF FACULTY AS A CATALYST FOR ASSESSMENT PLANNING

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*F*ITCHBURG STATE COLLEGE



# WHO ARE WE



- Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg Massachusetts
- We have found a connection between assessment and strategic planning.

# WRITING PROMPT

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- How does your department or academic unit define its work? What was it like ten years ago, five years ago? What is it like now? What will its work be like in the future?

# ACADEMIC PLANNING

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- In many places competition exists over who has responsibility for planning, decision-making, and the allocation of resources
- At our College faculty and administration began working together to enhance collaboration, improve the flow and use of information, and understand the relationship of each person to the institution.

# VISION PLANNING AS ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- We created a new academic planning structure that focused on the planning process as well as its products and would encourage continuous discussion of mission, vision, goals, and outcome assessment with each department across the College.

# VISION PLANNING



- The Vision Statement incorporates the central reason for being and can serve as the catalyst for active academic planning

- The Vision Statement extends beyond the mission statement to communicate to faculty, students, and the administration what the major or department aspires to become.

- Once drafted the vision statements work along with the missions statements to guide future planning and continuous review.

# PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING (AAHE, 1992)

1- *The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.*

2- Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.

3 - Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear explicitly stated purposes.

4 - Assessment requires attention to outcomes, but also and equally to the experiences that lead to these outcomes.

5 - Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.

6 - Assessment fosters wider improvements when representatives from across the educational community are involved.

7 - Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.

8 - Assessment is more likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.

9 - Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and the public.

# HAS ASSESSMENT MADE A DIFFERENCE? ASSESSING ASSESSMENT

Some measurable and readily discernible results

1 - Changes in classroom activities that promote student learning of specified outcomes

2- Changes in curricula that help promote student learning

3- Improvements in the assessment of student learning (designing exams, establishing evaluation criteria, assessing internships, etc.)

*Banta et. al. (1996)*

## Some Mixed Results:

- 1 - assesses what is easy, instead of what matters
- 2 - confirms what is already known (no new discoveries)
- 3 - becomes forensic in its orientation
- 4 - ceases to be forward-looking and alive

Discovery: Faculty and administrators wanted to talk about the process of assessment

# VISIONING THE IDEAL DEPARTMENT

- Build shared trust. Begin by lowering social and interpersonal barriers to change
- Build shared motivation: collectively determine the goals worth working toward
- Build a shared language
- Design backward from shared vision and work forward
- Think and act systemically
- Don't assume, ask. Make the implicit explicit. Use assessment to focus on what matters most
- Create and tell stories about your process

# CONCLUSIONS

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- Assessment at our institution
- Progress to date
- Areas for improving assessment

# QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION