Assessment of Graduate Education: getting started.

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The What and Why of Assessment

- HLC 2017 Accreditation
- Continuous improvement of graduate program quality
- Benefits:
  - Agility in making changes based on evidence rather than anecdote
  - Critical accountability
  - Increase faculty ownership
  - Provides students a clearer expectation

WHAT

DATA

EVALUATION

GOALS

WHAT

WHY

Identify the Plan: First Steps

1. Develop Learning Goals
2. Form an Assessment Committee
3. Select Pilot Programs for Assessment

IMPLEMENTATION = COMMUNICATION

- “Assessment” is not “Review”
- Keep it simple and just enough
- Provide Workshops & Experts
- Programs want evidence for “critical thinking” or “scientific literacy”

Pitfalls
- Mere compliance
- Too complicated
- Gathering useless data

What’s a (GS) Learning Goal?

- Clear, brief focused statement of intended learning outcomes
- Research and Scholarly focused (rather than classroom)
- Goals should be defined with evidence in mind. Evidence should be meaningful, manageable, and appropriate.
- Evidence: Candidacy Exam, Dissertation Exam, Publications, Placement Data

Learning Goals: Example

- POOR
  - PhD students of Hypothetical Engineering will be successful in their research.
  - No indication of “success”.
  - Type or quality of research of expected research.

- BETTER
  - PhD students of Hypothetical Engineering will be successful in conducting high-quality research.
  - Quality is identified but no indication of specific research capabilities students should possess.

- BEST
  - PhD graduates of Hypothetical Engineering will be able to conduct high-quality, doctoral research as evidenced by their results of experiments and projects, dissertations, publications, and technical presentations.
GATHERING EVIDENCE
ON TO THE TOOLS...