

# 5 Best Practices in Assessment

*From your friends on the Teaching & Learning Committee*

## #1 Tell your students about *learning outcomes* on the first day of class!

- We write learning outcomes in order to clarify what we want our students to know and be able to do by the end of the semester (CSLOs) or program (PSLOs). Share these learning goals with students the first day so they know what you'll be working towards!
  - **Pair-share:** *What questions do you have about the CSLOs?*
  - **Written Reflection:** *To what extent can you do these things currently?* (Likert scale: 1-Strongly Agree... 5-Strongly Disagree)

## #2 Use *learning outcomes as objectives* for major assignments/class activities!

- Use your CSLOs and PSLOs to guide creation of learning objectives for individual assignments, quizzes, etc. If you want students to work towards these larger objectives, make this intention apparent in the work they do in class. Doing so will help focus you as the instructor as well.
  - **Assignment Prompt:** Include the language of the SLO in the assignment and how the assignment works towards major course/program learning goals.
  - **Quizzes/mini-assessments:** Make a quiz all about practicing mastery of one CSLO.

## #3 Ask students to *reflect on learning outcomes* at the end of semester/program!

- Ask students to what extent they've been able to reach the objectives throughout the semester and what learning experiences have gotten them there.
  - **Written Reflection:** Provide the CSLOs/PSLOs as prompts. *To what extent can you do these things now at the end of the course/program?*

## #4 Make your SLOs *actionable* and students' achievement of them *measurable*!

- Actionable outcomes will help your students focus on demonstrating the skills you've highlighted as being important and will help you figure out how to measure this demonstration. The assessment instruments (and students' responses) should make it clear to what extent students were able to demonstrate these outcomes. Make your assessment as data-driven and objective as possible.
  - **Assessment Report:** Include your sample sizes (e.g., 65 students across 3 sections), assessment instruments (assignments, prompts, etc., that you provided to your students), and any rubrics that you used to determine whether students reached the objectives.

## #5 Use SLO assessment to "*close the loop*" and *improve instruction*!

- After you assess to what extent your students achieved particular outcomes (CSLOs/PSLOs), use that data to drive decisions about improving instruction (and modifying SLOs and COORs).
- The process of assessment is an ongoing one, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that students are learning what you want them to learn. Closing the loop after assessment empowers us to make effective changes, backed by our data, to improve our courses.