

# DEFINING AND REFINING LEARNING OUTCOMES

UK Office of Assessment

# Office of Assessment

## □ Primary Charge:

- Campus-wide assessment of student learning at the program level (General Education)

## □ Other Charges:

- Providing consultation, training, logistical support for all academic and co-curricular units

## □ Staff

- Director: Dr. Marsha Watson
- Assistant Director of Measurement & Analysis: Dr. Kenneth Royal
- Assessment Specialist: Dr. Julie Johnson
- Graduate Assistants: Natasha Mamaril and Letao Sun

# The **LEARNING** Initiative

## *Dual Track Implementation Strategy*

<b>Completion Dates</b>	<b>Not actively engaged in program level assessment</b>	<b>Actively engaged in program level assessment</b>
<b>Sept 2009</b>	Program level student learning outcomes revised and/or updated	
<b>Dec 2009</b>	Assessment strategy in place	
<b>Jan-Mar 2010</b>	Assessment strategy implemented	
<b>April 2010</b>	Assessment results available for faculty reflection and action	
<b>May 2010</b>	First cycle completed and improvement plans submitted	At least one cycle completed and improvement plans submitted
<b>September 2010</b>	First annual <b>LEARNING Improvement</b> awards announced	
<b>May 2011</b>	Two cycles completed	At least two cycles completed
<b>August 2011</b>	SACS Compliance Audit begins	
<b>September 2011</b>	Second annual <b>LEARNING Improvement</b> awards announced	

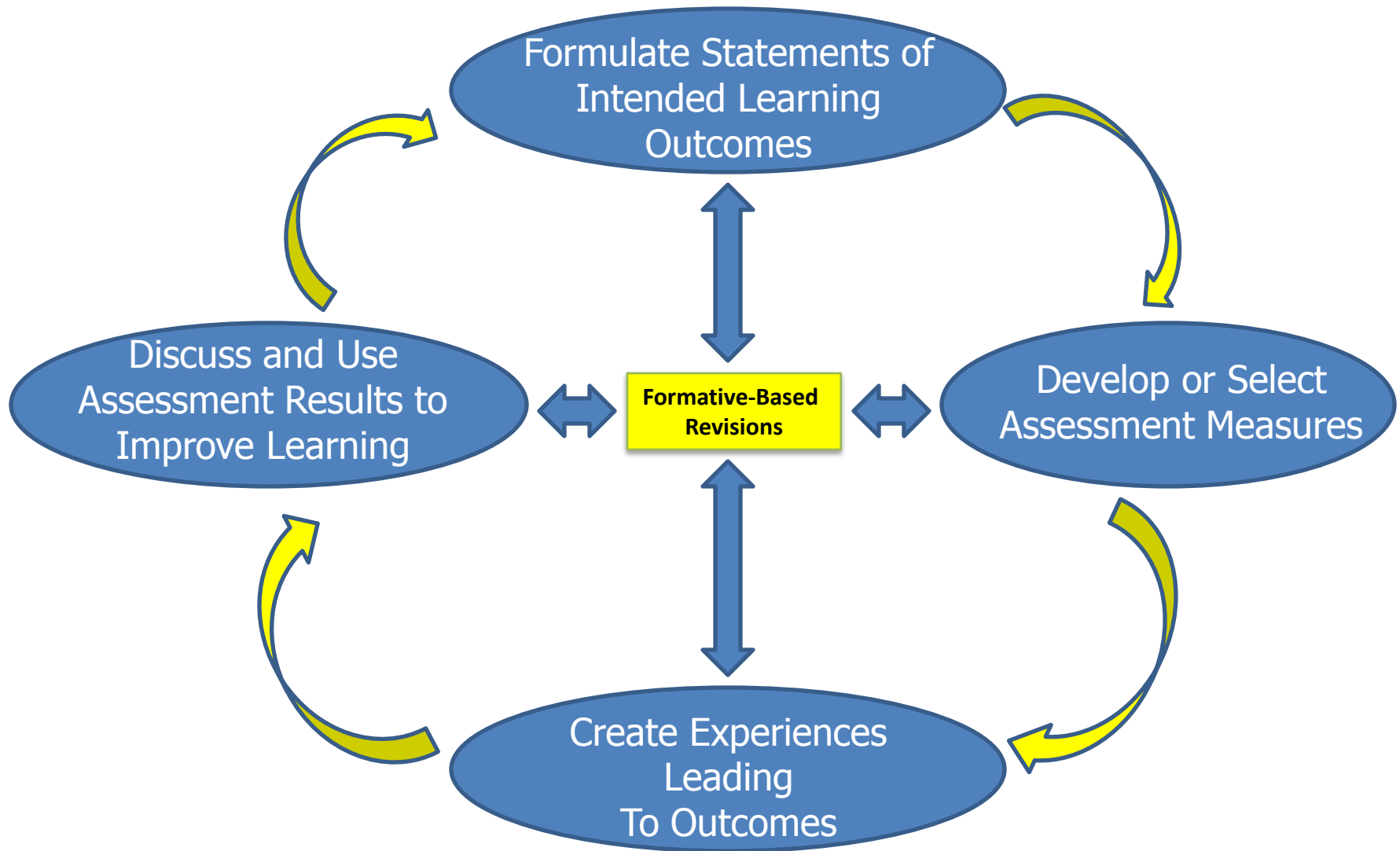
# Provost's Learning Initiative

- Goal: Two full cycles of assessment completed by May 2011
  - Includes the following activities:
    - Establish or strengthen ongoing program-level assessment to promote student learning and curriculum improvement for all degree programs
    - Formulate a plan to develop learning outcomes assessment coordinators in every college
    - Create *Provost's Learning Improvement Awards*
    - Implement a dual track strategy to advance continuous improvement through assessment

# Commitment vs Compliance

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- Assessment is more than a response to demands for accountability, more than a means for curricular improvement. *Effective assessment is best understood as a strategy for understanding, confirming, and improving student learning.*



# Review of Assessment Basics

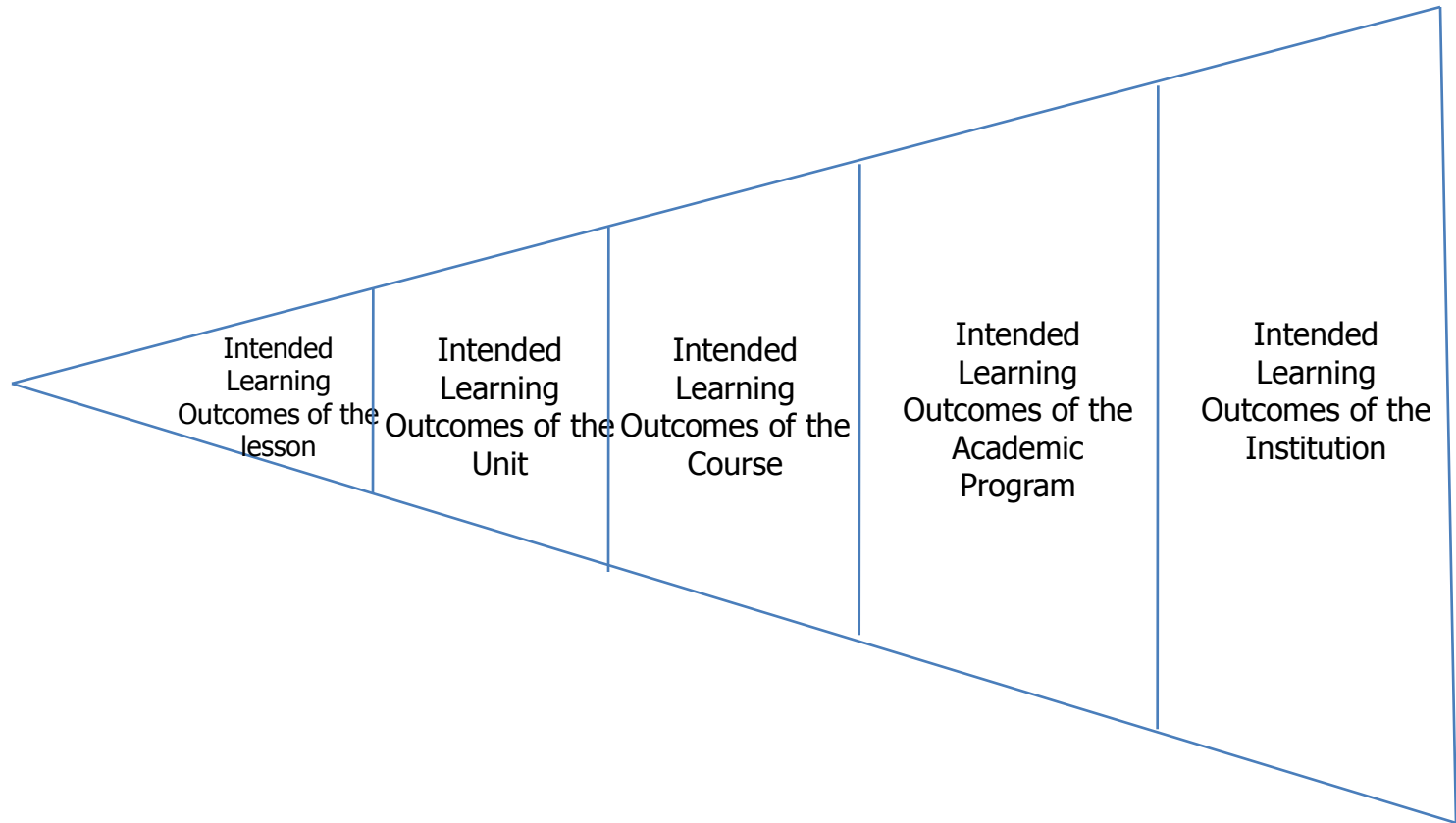
- Three levels of assessment
  - Course
  - Program
    - Undergraduate majors/programs
    - General education program
    - Graduate majors/programs
  - Institutional
- Course, Program, and Institutional outcomes should be aligned, but are not identical

# Review of Assessment Basics

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- Course Level:
  - Focused on ongoing pedagogical improvement
- Program-Level:
  - Focused on curricular improvement, planning and budgeting

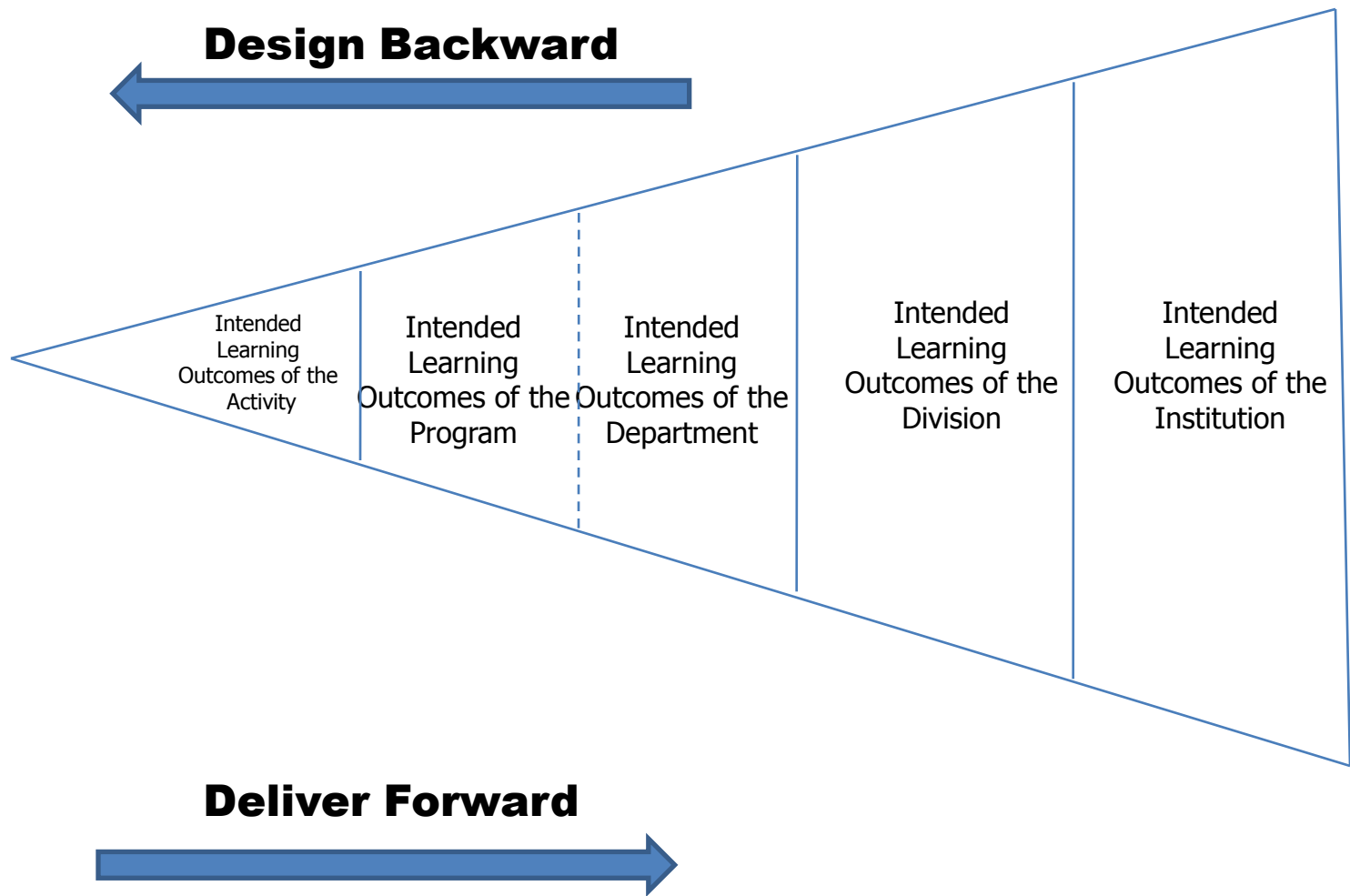
## Design Backward



## Deliver Forward



Huba, M.E. and Freed, J.E. (2000). Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses: Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning (p. 108). Allyn & Bacon, Needham Heights, MA.



*Revised:* Huba, M.E. and Freed, J.E. (2000). Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses: Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning (p. 108). Allyn & Bacon, Needham Heights, MA.

# General Characteristics of Learning Outcomes

- Student-focused
- Articulates a single measurable skill/competency/construct
- Describes learning resulting from an activity
  - Ask "what do students know that they didn't know before," **and** "what can they do that they couldn't do before?"
- Aligned with mission, values at all three levels

# Program Learning Outcomes

- Focus on broad skills developed over time
  - Not restricted to a single course or learning experience
- Demonstrate acquisition of specific disciplinary/professional knowledge and skills necessary *after* graduation
  - Ask: “What makes a graduate of the program able to function and learn in a specific discipline/profession after the degree?”
- Clear and specific enough to be measurable

# Measuring Learning Outcomes

- Measures must be appropriate to outcomes
  - Avoid cumbersome data-gathering
  - Use both direct and indirect methods
    - Indirect methods measure a proxy for student learning
    - Direct methods measure actual student learning
  - “Learning” = *what students know* (content knowledge) + *what they can do with what they know*

# Direct Evidence

- Students show achievement of learning goals through performance of knowledge, skills:
  - Scores and pass rates of licensure/certificate exams
  - Capstone experiences
    - Individual research projects, presentations, performances
    - Collaborative (group) projects/papers which tackle complex problems
  - Score gains between entry and exit
  - Ratings of skills provided by internship/clinical supervisors
  - Substantial course assignments that require performance of learning
  - Portfolios

# Indirect Evidence

- **Indirect methods measure proxies for learning**
  - Data from which you can make inferences about learning but do not demonstrate actual learning, such as perception or comparison data
  - Surveys
    - Student opinion/engagement surveys
    - Student ratings of knowledge and skills
    - Employers and alumni, national and local
  - Focus groups/Exit interviews
  - Course grades
  - Institutional performance indicators
    - Enrollment data
    - Retention rates, placement data
    - Graduate/professional school acceptance rates

# Action Verbs / Bloom's Taxonomy

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Comprehension</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Analysis</b>	<b>Synthesis</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
define	translate	interpret	distinguish	compose	judge
repeat	restate	apply	analyze	plan	appraise
record	discuss	use	differentiate	propose	evaluate
list	recognize	demonstrate	appraise	design	rate
recall	explain	practice	calculate	formulate	compare
name	identify	illustrate	categorize	arrange	value
relate	locate	operate	experiment	assemble	revise
tell	report	schedule	test	collect	score
quote	review	calculate	compare	construct	select
label	express	complete	contract	organize	choose
name	summarize	show	diagram	manage	assess
	describe	solve	relate	prepare	estimate
	interpret	examine	solve	combine	measure
	predict	modify	examine	modify	decide
	distinguish	change	separate	substitute	rank
	differentiate	relate	classify		recommend
			arrange		convince
			divide		conclude
			select		

# Activity:

## Defining/Refining Outcomes

- Activity Worksheet #1: Define new program learning outcomes
- Activity Worksheet #2: Refine/revise current program learning outcomes