

Guiding Principles for Assessment of Student Learning at Loyola Marymount University

Loyola Marymount University is committed to the encouragement of learning, the education of the whole person, and the service of faith and the promotion of justice. As such, LMU places a high value on teaching and learning, on providing a transformative educational experience, and on inquiry processes that focus on understanding and improving student learning.

1. The primary purpose of assessment is improvement of student learning.
 - By gathering meaningful evidence about student learning outcomes and processes we can make better decisions about pedagogy, the design of curricular and co-curricular programs and services, and how to allocate resources to enhance a student's university experience.
2. Assessment of student learning depends on clear statements of expected outcomes.
 - These statements describe what we expect students to know, be able to do, and value as a result of their university experience.
 - These statements should be derived from the mission statements of the University, the Colleges and Schools, and individual programs, as well as from faculty and staff intentions in program and course design.
3. Effective assessment attends not only to outcomes, but also to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
 - Knowing about final outcomes is important, but in order to improve outcomes, we need to know about student experiences along the way – about teaching, the learning environment, curricula, co-curricular programs, and the kinds of student efforts that lead to particular outcomes.
 - By examining these processes we can align our work more effectively with the University's mission and goals.
4. Assessment works best when it recognizes that learning is complex and multidimensional, and occurs in a variety of settings.
 - Assessment should involve a diverse array of methods, including those that call for objective evidence of student performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration.
5. Assessment is more meaningful and likely to lead to improvement when students are committed to learning and the faculty and staff who deliver the programs and services own the process.
6. Assessment works best when it is designed to be meaningful, manageable and sustainable.
 - It addresses issues and questions that people care about.
 - It is embedded into the ongoing work of educating students in order to minimize the additional burden on faculty, staff and students.
7. Clear statements of expected student learning outcomes will guide the design and ongoing review of programs.
 - By starting with learning outcomes, programs can intentionally plan meaningful, diverse learning experiences that will lead to student achievement of the outcomes.
 - By starting with learning outcomes, programs can embed manageable assessment methods into program design and ongoing review processes.
8. The University is committed to an ongoing program of assessment of student learning.
 - The University will provide the necessary resources for assessment activities, including professional development for faculty and staff.

References

American Association for Higher Education. (1992). *9 Principles of good practice for assessing student learning*. Retrieved October 10, 2008 from <http://ultibase.rmit.edu.au/Articles/june97/ameri1.htm>

Maki, P. (2004). *Assessing for learning: Building a sustainable commitment across the institution*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.