

To assess at the program level or to assess at the departmental level, that is the question -

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
and by opposing end them...

At various meetings in recent semesters there have been many questions about the difference between program assessment and departmental assessment. My answer has always been – there is no difference. What I have meant by that, is that it doesn't matter what you call it as long as there is a plan for assessing student learning. This answer has not been at all helpful and the confusion has continued.

I've spent the past week thinking about this and talking with faculty about the issue. I think I understand more about the confusion and I have a proposal:

I would like to write a position paper on the assessment of student learning at HWC. The goal I'd like for us to consider is that:

All units of student learning at HWC are engaged in the assessment process.

A unit can be:

- A course with stated SLOs and a tool to assess those SLOs
- Multiple sections of a course with the same SLOs and a systematic assessment process linked to those outcomes.
- 2 or more courses in a series with outcomes based on the completion of the series and a systematic assessment process linked to those outcomes.
- A concentration, emphasis, or basic/advanced certificate with outcomes based on the completion of the course requirements and a systematic assessment process linked to those outcomes.
- General education outcomes assessed across the institution, across a department, across a program, across a series of courses, or within a particular course – using a systematic assessment process linked to general education outcomes.

The goal of this college is that **all units** are engaged in the assessment of student learning. If this is true, then each of us is actively responsible for participating in the assessment process at whatever level we are involved.