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Goals and Guiding Principles of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment at The University of Scranton

The goal of *institutional effectiveness* at The University is evaluating, documenting, and communicating what the University does well, identifying areas where we can improve, and applying assessment results to make those improvements. This discipline combines both *institutional assessment* (the practices used to assess achievement of organizational mission and goals, developed through the various levels of the planning process) and *educational assessment* (the practices used to assess achievement of student learning outcomes, both directly within academic programs, and through co-curricular and related learning and formation activities). At the University, assessment is grounded in our Catholic, Jesuit mission, and broadly guided by the tenets of the Ignatian Educational Paradigm, a way of proceeding that guides institutions to assess learners' growth in heart, mind, and spirit. Evaluation is one of the five elements of the Ignatian paradigm, and it is informed by consideration of context, experience, reflection, and action.

Our planning and institutional effectiveness structure and cycles create an integrated framework for the development and assessment of goals and desired outcomes at the institutional, administrative division, college, and department and program levels, which are aligned with the University's mission. At each level, progress and outcomes are monitored and measured through both formative and summative assessments. Findings from these evaluations are used to inform decision making, planning and improvement, and resourcing of programs and services.

Guiding principles of institutional effectiveness and assessment:

- Assessment is mission-driven, in the particular context of the Ignatian educational paradigm and our Catholic, Jesuit character.
- Assessment is integrated within appropriate advisory and decision-making processes and structures.
- Assessment is iterative, adapting to changing needs and new opportunities.
- Assessment is collaborative and participatory, engaging all members of the University community in reflection.
- Assessment is transparent, its processes and outcomes communicated clearly and frequently.
- Assessment is evidence-based, supported by quality data and evidence that show how institutional and student learning goals are being met.
- Assessment is useful, designed and pursued in ways that are practical and relevant to unit and program needs, and cycles for decision making and resource allocation.
- Assessment results are used to "close the loop," with results applied through planning, resourcing, and continuous improvement of programs and services.
- Assessment is ongoing and cumulative, reflecting our performance over time.
- Assessment is itself assessed, its processes and structures evaluated and refined through ongoing reflection and planned cycles of review.