

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, and identifying areas where we can continuously improve. Institutional effectiveness intentionally builds links between planning (goal setting) and the evaluation and assessment of our achievement of those goals.

This discipline combines both *institutional assessment* (the practices used to assess achievement of organizational 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 through academic programs, and indirectly through co-curricular and related activities). At the University, assessment is 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.

The continuous improvement cycle creates a framework for the development of goals at the institutional, administrative division, college, and department and program level which are clearly aligned with the University's mission, and with one another. At each level, progress toward meeting goals and objectives is regularly monitored via mixed measures of evaluation, both formative and summative. Findings from these evaluations and assessments 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, with quality data and evidence that show how institutional and student learning goals are being met.
- Assessment is useful and used, its processes providing evidence of how results of assessments are 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 evaluated and refined through ongoing reflection and planned cycles of review.