



## **Session Handouts**

**What's That Diploma For, Anyway?  
Assessing Student Skills & Learning**

**September 23, 2014 Trustees Conference**

# Contents

1. What's That Diploma For, Anyway? Assessing What Students Know and are Able to Do  
*(Lane Glenn's and Bonnie Orcutt's PowerPoint presentation)*



Statewide Trustees Conference | September 23, 2014

## *What's that diploma for, anyway?* Assessing what students know and are able to do

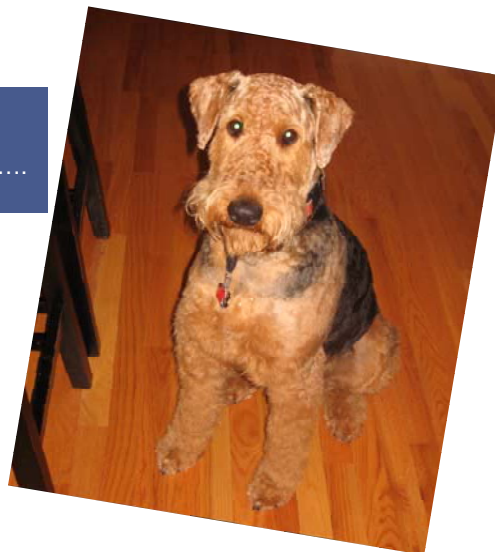
Lane Glenn, President, Northern Essex Community College  
Bonnie Orcutt, Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment, DHE



MASSACHUSETTS  
Department of  
Higher Education

## *What's that diploma for, anyway?* Assessing what students know and are able to do.

I taught my  
dog to  
whistle....



## *What's that diploma for, anyway?*

Assessing what students know and are able to do.

I taught my  
dog to  
whistle....



....I did not  
say he  
learned.

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## *What's that diploma for, anyway?*

Assessing what students know and are able to do.



*What's that diploma for, anyway?*  
Assessing what students know and are able to do.

## Three Central Problems

1. The setting up of generally accepted standards of achievement;  
**(STANDARDS)**
2. The devising of methods of measuring this achievement and holding pupils to performance;  
**(MEASUREMENT)**
3. The introduction of such flexibility in educational offerings that each individual may receive the education from which s/he is able to derive the greatest benefit.  
**(TEACHING AND LEARNING)**

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## Historical Overview: Four Eras



1. The origin of standardized tests of learning  
1900 - 1933
2. The assessment of learning for general & graduate education:  
1933-1947
3. The rise of test providers:  
1948-1978
4. The era of external accountability:  
1979-present

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**Assessment Lingo: Goals, Objectives, Outcomes**

<p><b>COURSE GOAL</b></p> <p>Acquaint students with the fundamental economic principles and frameworks which will provide a basis for understanding how the economic world works.</p>	<p><b>TEACHING OBJECTIVE</b></p> <p>Familiarize students with the workings of supply and demand analysis</p>	<p><b>STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME</b></p> <p>Students will analyze changes in market price and market quantity using supply and demand analysis.</p>
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*What's that diploma for, anyway?*  
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GRADING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Composite</li> <li>■ Based upon more than one learning outcome</li> <li>■ Based upon factors other than learning outcomes such as attendance and participation</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ASSESSMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Based upon one learning outcome at a time such as written communication</li> <li>■ Specific assessment tool – rubric assessment</li> <li>■ Apply rubric to a student paper</li> <li>■ Different assessment rubrics for different outcomes</li> </ul>
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**Improving Student Learning and Assessment of Student Learning**

Assignment Design – prompts in assignment instructions that call for students to demonstrate components of a learning outcome.

Example: Be sure to take into account assumptions you or others have made in presenting your position.

- Scaffolding within a course
- Scaffolding within a program of study and across programs of study

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- **Program Outcomes**  
Four to Six Program Outcomes
- **Program Level Assessments**  
Assess at different points in a student's academic path  
Course Level Assessments  
First-Year Seminars  
Capstones: Culminating student work
- **Course Outcomes**
  - Courses where program outcomes are introduced, reinforced, mastered
- **Course Level Assessments**

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- Results of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Use of outcomes for **intentional** change designed to improve student learning.

- Assignment Design
- Pedagogical Change
- Curricula Changes

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**Why is Assessment Important**

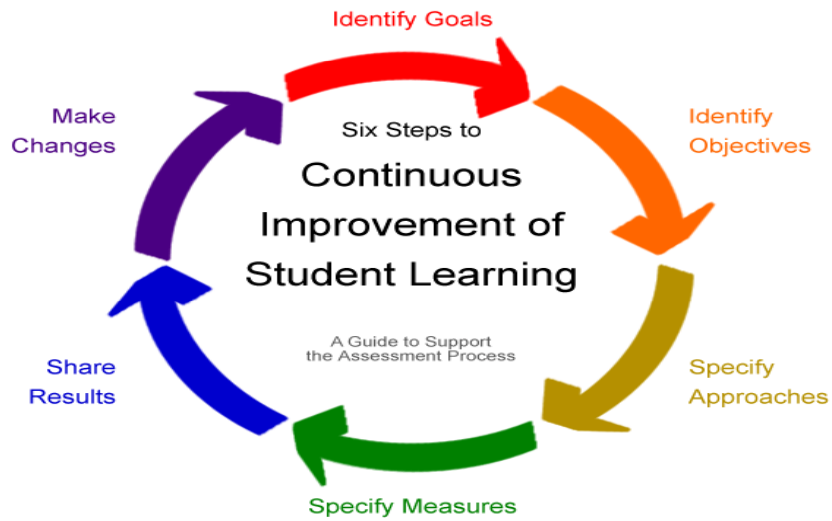
**Improvement**

**Accountability**





# Why is Assessment Important



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## Why is Assessment Important

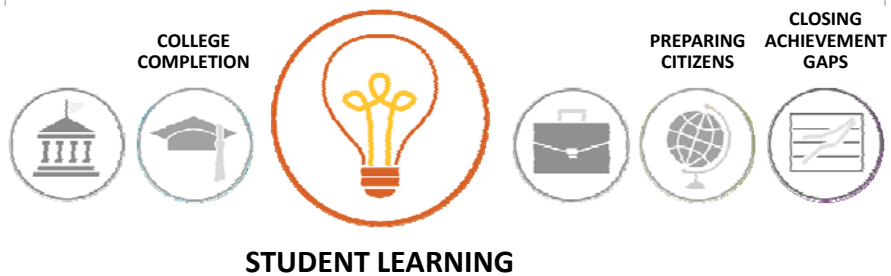
### Improvement

- Learning Outcomes
- Teaching
- Measuring
- Making Changes
- Improving Learning

### Accountability

- Students
- Families
- Legislators
- Employers
- Public/taxpayers
- Accreditors

# Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Initiatives



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## Learning Outcomes Assessment

### Advancing a Massachusetts Culture of Assessment

All public  
undergrad  
campuses



#### AMCOA TEAM

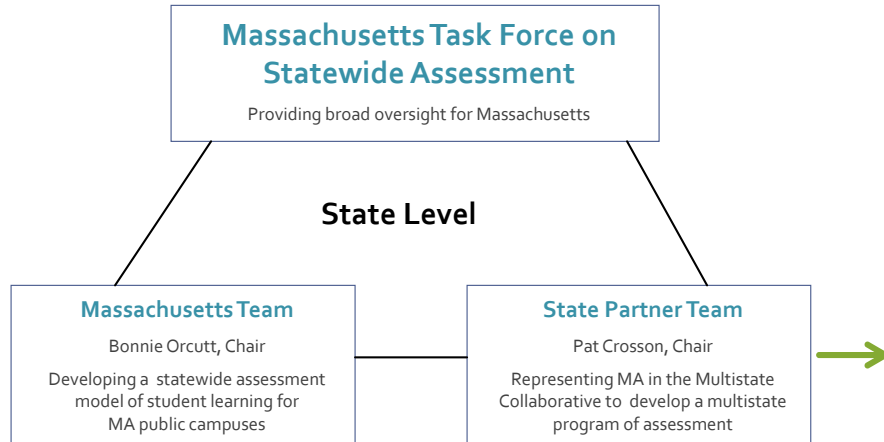
Four regional co-chairs

Advancing assessment of student learning on  
public campuses; strengthening campus  
assessment capabilities

DHE: Carlos Santiago, Senior Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs;  
and Bonnie Orcutt, Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment

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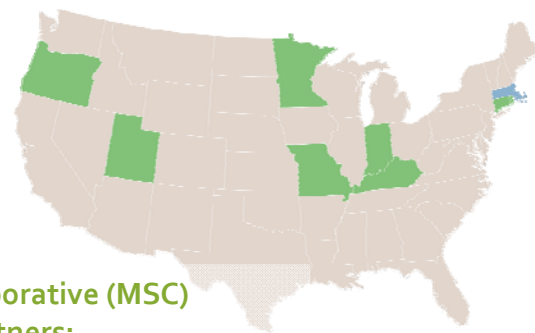
# Massachusetts LEAP State Initiative



DHE: Commissioner Freeland; Pat Crosson, Senior Advisor for Academic Policy; and Bonnie Orcutt, Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment

# Massachusetts LEAP State Initiative

**Multi-State Collaborative to Advance Learning Outcomes Assessment**  
9 states + SHEEO + AAC&U



**Multi-State Collaborative (MSC)**

**State Partners:**

→ CT, IN, KY, MA, MO, MN, OR, RI, and UT

**Steering Committee:**

Made up of state leads

**69 institutions participating in a pilot test of a multi-state model of outcomes assessment**

# Assessment and the Role of Trustees

## 1. Mission

**1.1** The mission of the institution defines its distinctive character, addresses the needs of society and identifies the students the institution seeks to serve, and reflects both the institution's traditions and its vision for the future. The institution's mission provides the basis upon which the institution identifies its priorities, plans its future and evaluates its endeavors; it provides a basis for the evaluation of the institution against the Commission's Standards.



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# Assessment and the Role of Trustees

## 2. Resources

**2.1** The institution preserves and enhances available financial resources sufficient to support its mission. It manages its financial resources and allocates them in a way that reflects its mission and purposes. It demonstrates the ability to respond to financial emergencies and unforeseen circumstances.



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## Assessment and the Role of Trustees

### 3. Accountability

#### *Some Questions to Ask:*

- *What institution-wide learning outcomes have been articulated as important to our institutions mission?*
- *How is evidence of student learning being collected?*
- *How is the evidence being evaluated and by whom?*
- *How is that evidence reported and to whom?*
- *How is evidence used to improve the curriculum, co-curriculum, or other aspects of students' experiences?*

## What's that diploma for, anyway?

Assessing what students know and are able to do.

# Discussion





