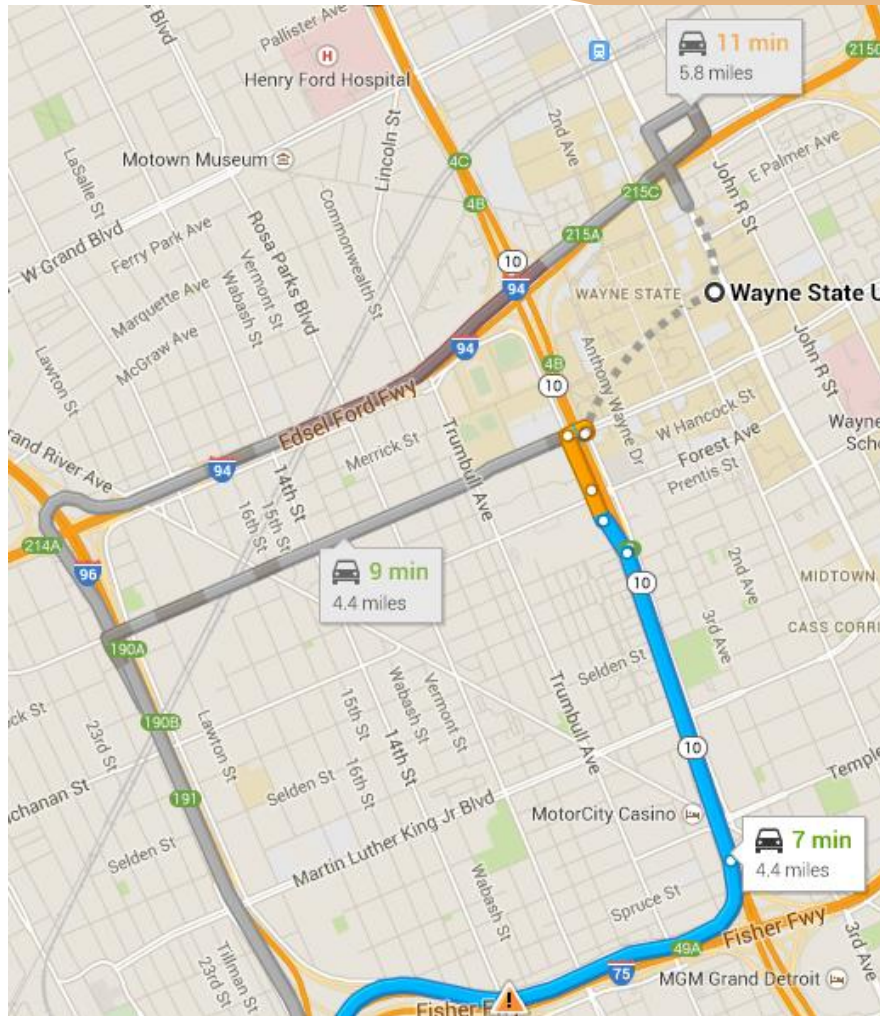# Program Assessment: Purposes, Benefits, and Process

Cathy Barrette, Director of Assessment

Wayne State University

Program Assessment is like Google Maps

You have to know where you're starting from and where your final destination is before you can choose the best route.

Landmarks along the way show you that you're on the right track.

What is Program Assessment?

* Specification and measurement of learning outcomes to understand how well program goals are being met
    * Learning outcomes: What students know, value, and can do
    * Program goals: The big-picture objectives of the program
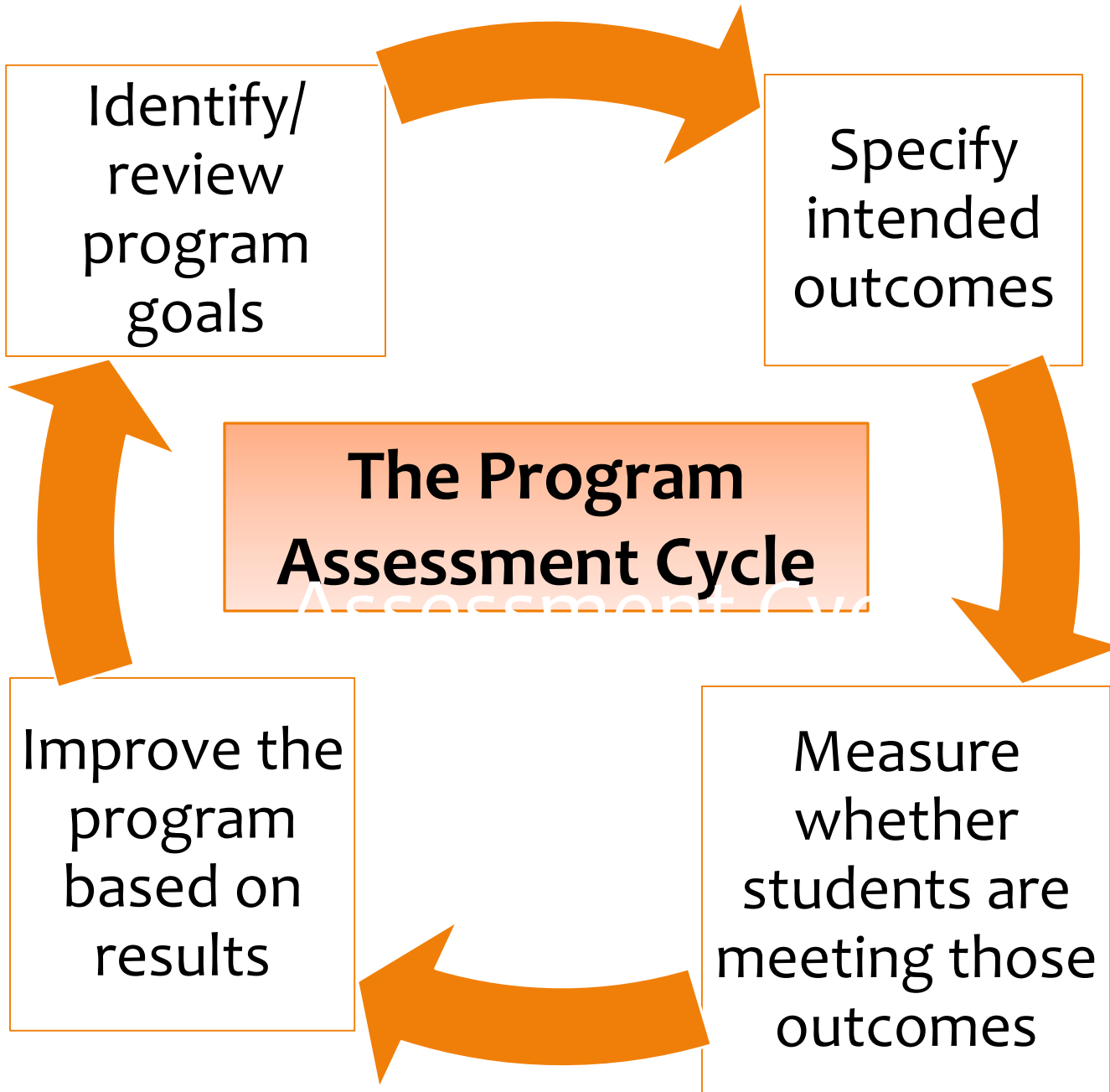* Ongoing, cyclical process
* Data-driven

Purposes of Program Assessment

* Diagnose what is working well, what could be better

* Reform/Revise the curriculum or program effectively

* Maintain WSU's accreditation

Benefits of Program Assessment (1)

* For students:
  * A better learning experience, more effective development of competencies, knowledge and skills
* For faculty and staff:
  * Useful information for communicating program successes and needs to stakeholders
  * Recruitment, retention, and funding tool
  * Effective use of time dedicated to curricular reform
  * Additional evidence of effective teaching and programs

Benefits of Program Assessment (2)

* For departments and programs
  * Great information for newsletters to alumni, community members, potential donors
  * Useful in articulating future program directions when seeking more resources and funding
* For WSU
  * Accreditation
  * Recruitment
  * External funding

The Program Assessment Cycle

Identify/ review program goals

Specify intended outcomes

Measure whether students are meeting those outcomes

Improve the program based on results

WSU Program Assessment Process (1)

1. Mission statement: Big picture goals
2. Learning outcomes: Concrete, measurable elements that contribute to the mission statement
3. Evidence/Data collection
   * Assessments: The "yardsticks" used to measure learning outcomes; can often be drawn from what you already do

Program Assessment Process (2)

4. Data analysis, interpretation and reporting
5. Use results: Action planning and implementation
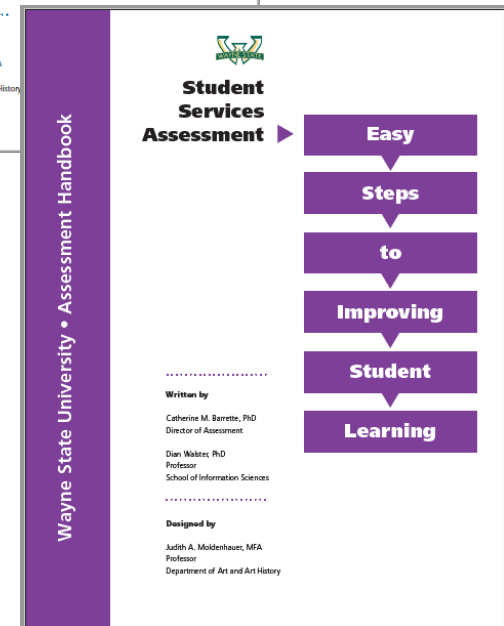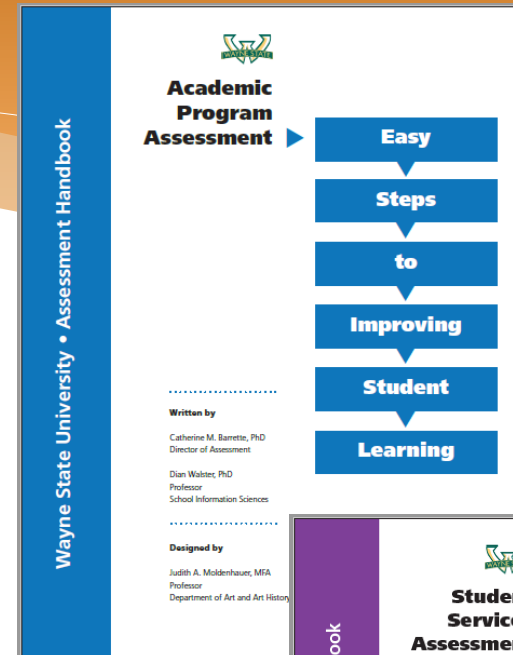6. Cycle through the process again

(Document everything in Compliance Assist.)

Documentation of Program Assessment

* Campus Labs Planning is the online repository for all of our program assessment information.
  * Contact the Director of Assessment for access and training.

* MS Word versions of the questions in Planning are also available as a tool for drafting responses.
  * Programs must copy and paste responses to Planning; attachments should only include supplemental information.

Want More Information?

* Additional presentations and the assessment handbooks explain how to:
    * Write mission statements
    * Write learning outcomes and curriculum maps
    * Choose assessments
    * Understand and use results
    * Use Planning to record your work
* Each part has examples and pitfalls to avoid as well!

Wayne State University • Assessment Handbook

Academic Program Assessment ▶ Easy Steps to Improving Student Learning

Written by
Catherine M. Barrette, PhD
Director of Assessment

Dian Walster, PhD
Professor
School Information Sciences

Designed by
Judith A. Moldenhauer, MFA
Professor
Department of Art and Art History

Wayne State University • Assessment Handbook

Student Services Assessment ▶ Easy Steps to Improving Student Learning

Written by
Catherine M. Barrette, PhD
Director of Assessment

Dian Walster, PhD
Professor
School of Information Sciences

Designed by
Judith A. Moldenhauer, MFA
Professor
Department of Art and Art History

Local Resources for Program Assessment

* Cathy Barrette, WSU Director of Assessment
  c.barrette@wayne.edu
  (313)577-1615
* WSU Assessment website
* Office for Teaching and Learning staff, workshops and website