

Graduate Student Learning Outcomes-Based Assessment:

A Plan for the Improvement of
Graduate Programs at the
University of Rhode Island

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Assessment???



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THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

The Graduate School

REASONS FOR ASSESSING GRADUATE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

REQUIRED BY EXTERNAL
ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS SUCH
AS THE RI OFFICE OFF HIGHER
EDUCATION

TO IMPROVE GRADUATE
EDUCATION AT URI

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Introduction

- Our graduate programs lacked a mechanism for self-analysis and self-improvement
- Prompted an effort, initiated in 2008, to develop such a mechanism.
- The Graduate School and the Graduate Assessment Team explored various models of graduate program assessment and developed a plan tailored to URI.

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Starting the Process

- Reviewed over 20 graduate assessment programs and reports
- NC State and Northern Arizona University
- Selected four pilot programs:
 - Communication Studies
 - Human Development and Family Studies
 - Mechanical, Systems, and Industrial Engineering
 - School Psychology

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Special Thanks: Pilot Program Leaders

- Jerome Adams, Human Development and Family Studies
- Norbert Mundorf, Communication Studies
- Martin Sadd, Mechanical, Systems, and Industrial Engineering
- Gary Stoner, School Psychology

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Contributors

- Graduate Council Assessment Committee
- Student Learning, Outcomes Assessment, and Accreditation Team (SLOAA)
- Learning Outcomes and Oversight Committee (LOOC)
- Four pilot programs
- Six additional SLOAA mini-grants awardees & their programs
- Peggy Maki, Nationally known assessment consultant
- Mike Carter, Associate Dean, North Carolina State University
- Faculty with expertise in assessment from diverse departments

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Process: Meaningful and Manageable

- **Three formal workshops:**
 - Workshop #1: Create objectives and outcomes
 - Workshop #2: Identify ways of assessing program outcomes
 - Workshop #3: Review the draft plan
- **Additional meeting:**
 - Pilot Programs & SLOAA Mini-Grant Awardees

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Next Steps: Partnerships and Collaboration

- The Graduate School will take the lead role in communicating with the graduate directors and faculty
- The office of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment and Accreditation will play an active role in aiding the Graduate School with:
 - Outcomes-based assessment training
 - Rubric workshops
 - Communicating and submitting of all reports, preferably in a three year cycle, to the Office of Higher Education.
- The Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee will play an essential role in vetting and evaluating the outcomes of each program

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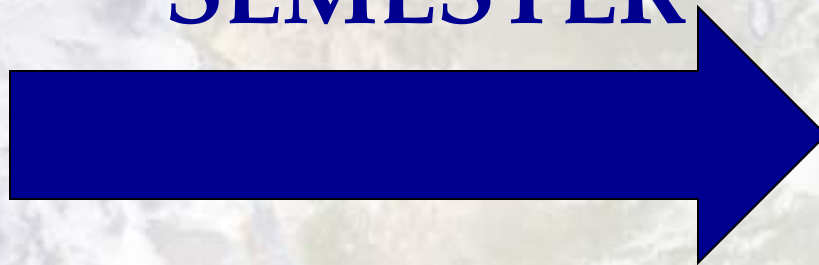
Next Steps: Collecting Data

- **Communication Studies**
- **Clinical Psychology**
- **English (Literature and Writing & Rhetoric)**
- **Human Development and Family Studies**
- **Mechanical, Industrial, and Systems Engineering**
- **School Psychology**

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**AN EXAMPLE OF AN
ASSESSMENT
INSTRUMENT BEING
TESTED THIS
SEMESTER**



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GRADUATE STUDENT THESIS/DISSERTATION DEFENSE EVALUATION

This form is designed to assist in the evaluation of a student's ability to successfully defend their graduate research. It is also an integral part of the graduate student learning outcomes assessment carried out by all graduate programs. The evaluation form will be completed during, or shortly after a thesis defense by every member of the defense committee and will 1) provide multiple assessments of a student's ability to successfully defend their research and to engage in a cogent discourse about their chosen field of study, 2) encourage conversations among colleagues in a department about graduate student learning outcomes and assessment, and 3) provide students, prior to their defense with a clear understanding of the elements of their upcoming defense deemed most important to the defense committee. In addition to the information provided to the evaluation form by individual department/program and will be used as an important component of the graduate student learning outcomes assessment. Thank you for your contribution to the education at the University of Rhode Island.

EVALUATOR ROLE

Student ID or alternative identifier: _____
Last name: _____

Program: _____

Degree: M.A. _____, M.S. _____, Ph.D., _____

Evaluator role: Major Advisor Internal Core Committee member External Core Committee member

External Defense Committee member External Defense Committee member and Defense Chair

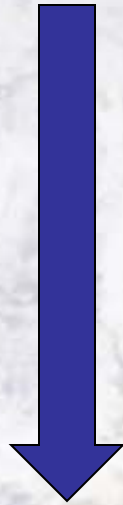
Other (explain) _____

Date of Defense: _____

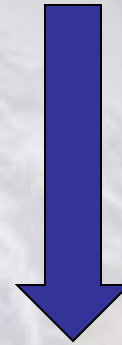
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**5. ABILITY TO
DRAW REASONED
CONCLUSIONS
FROM A BODY OF
KNOWLEDGE**



**DISCUSSION WAS
SUPERIOR, ACCURATE, AND
ENGAGING;
CONCLUSIONS/SUMMARIES
AND RECOMMENDATIONS
APPROPRIATE AND
CLEARLY BASED ON
FINDINGS/OUTCOMES**

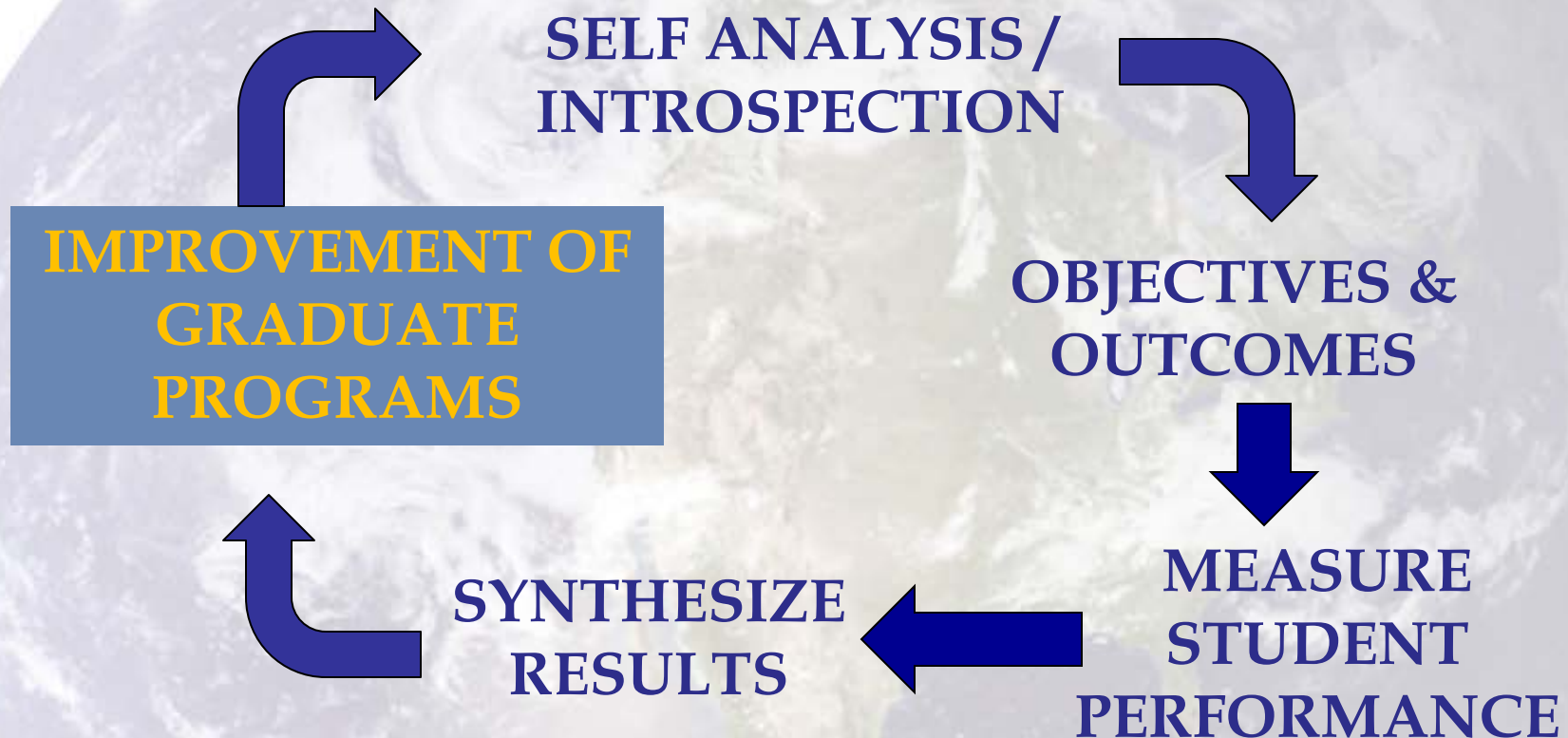


**MAJOR TOPICS OR
CONCEPTS
INACCURATELY
DESCRIBED;
CONSIDERABLE
RELEVANT DISCUSSION
MISSING;
CONCLUSIONS/SUMMARY
NOT ENTIRELY
SUPPORTED BY
FINDINGS/OUTCOMES**

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The Goal: Improve Graduate Programs



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Thank You

**Graduate School
&
Graduate Assessment Team**

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