



# What is Assessment and Why Do We Do It?

## Dr. Paul R. Gormley

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences - Annual Conference 2017  
Pre-conference Assessment Workshop  
March 21, 2017



# Personal Experience

Why did we (at my prior institution) “do” Assessment?

- Buzzword
- Top down
- Faculty expected to justify:
  - student benefit of program & course
  - institutional benefit of program & course
  - learning objectives, effective teaching, and appropriate methods of assessment
- Limited faculty control or input of:
  - Method & scope of assessment
  - Time and manner of administration

# What is Assessment?

## Two responses:

1. Assessment has a variety of meanings in higher education. It includes “any activity designed to collect information on the success of a program, course, or University curriculum” in order to “improve institutional practices” (Stassen et al., 2001, p.5).
2. Program assessment “focuses on assessing student learning and experience to determine whether students have acquired the skills, knowledge, and competencies associated with their program of study” (Stassen et al., 2001, p.7).

# What changed?

## Old with the old:

- No longer “an accountability device, a quality control vehicle concocted by others higher in the organizational food chain to ensure that work is being done well, with resource allocation decisions lying in wait.” (Terenzini, 1993, Introduction section, 4).

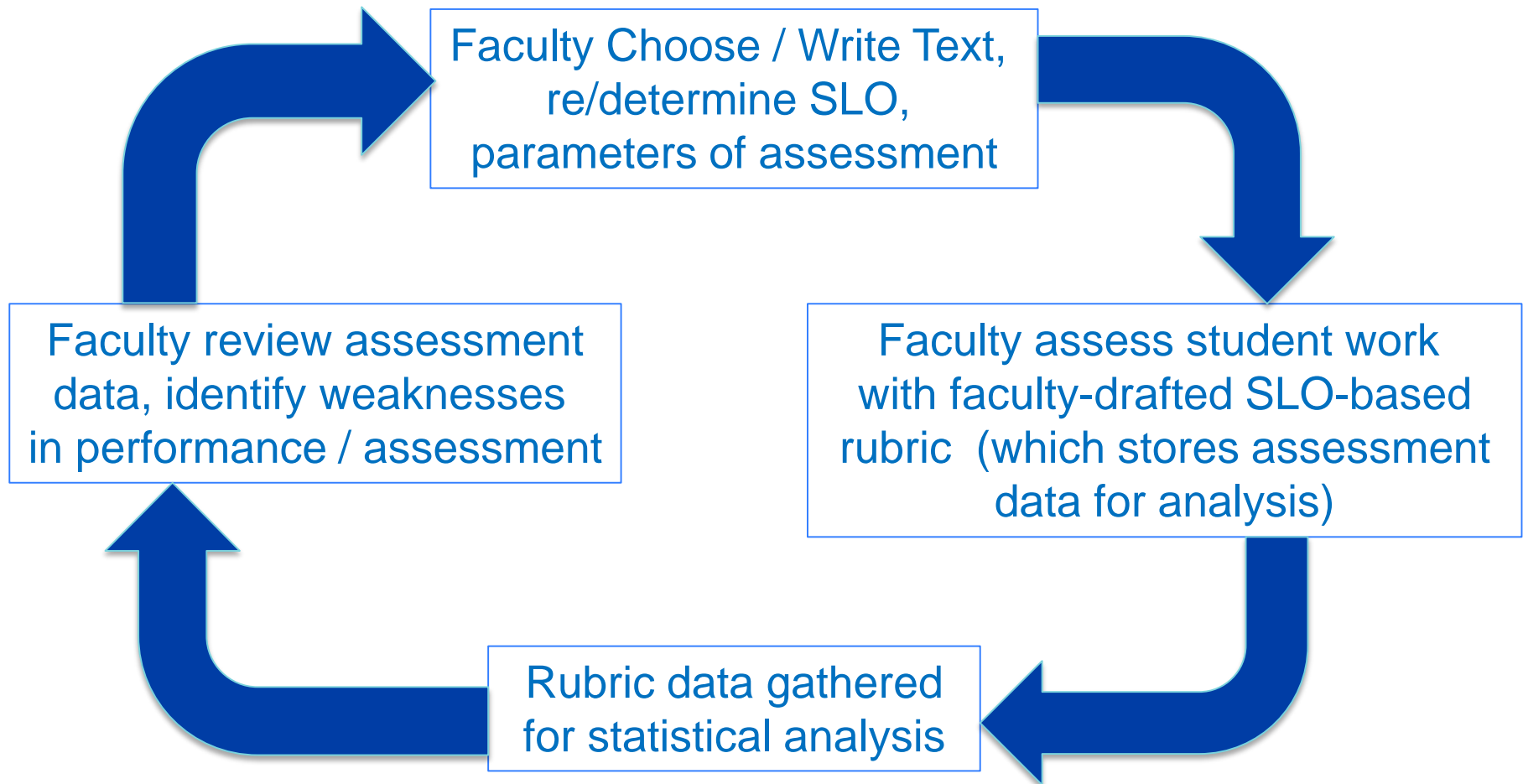
## In with the new:

- Evolution of the process and goals: administration relinquished control and allowed faculty to focus on institutional, department, and course goals. Assessment served to affirm that our collective faculty were teaching to student learning objectives that we agreed upon and affirmed in our program review. To this end, there are three typical levels of assessment: the institutional level, the program or department level, and the course level (Hutchings, 2011, p. 1).

# Why do we Assess now?

- Pride.
- Ownership.
- Integrity.
- Standards.
- Insights & understanding.
- Improvement & development.
- *Evidence-based teaching & learning.*

# Opening and Closing Our Loop



# Sources

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (n.d.) What is assessment? What isn't assessment? Retrieved from <http://www.acjs.org/?page=WhatIsAssessment>, citing / quoting:

Hutchings, P. (2011). What new faculty need to know about assessment. (NILOA Assessment Brief). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes and Assessment. Retrieved from [www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/assessmentbriefs.htm](http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/assessmentbriefs.htm)

Stassen, M., Doherty, K., & Poe, M. (2001). Program-based review and assessment: Tools and techniques for program improvement. Office of Academic Planning and Assessment (OAPA), University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Retrieved from [http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/online\\_handbooks/program\\_based.pdf](http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/online_handbooks/program_based.pdf)

Terenzini, P.T. (1993, Spring). Assessment: What it is and what it isn't [Electronic version]. ADE Bulletin, 104, 14-17. Retrieved from <http://web2.ade.org/ade/bulletin/n104/104014.htm>



*Thank You!*

Dr. Paul R. Gormley  
College of Arts & Sciences  
Criminal Justice  
Lynn University  
3601 South Military Trail  
Boca Raton FL 33486  
pgormley@lynn.edu