



"Cultivating a Culture of Evidence"

Presenter: Melissa Brown, Ph.D.

Director of Student Life Assessment and Strategic Initiatives

Co-Presenter: Noelia Pacheco Diaz M.A.

Graduate Research Assistant for Student Life Assessment and Strategic Initiatives

Moderator: Sean Basso, Ph.D.

Associate Director of RecSports



- Joined the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2017 as inaugural director of OASI.
- Over a decade of experience teaching and working in higher education assessment and accreditation.
- Prior to working in higher education, public school teacher for 10 years.
- Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of Texas at Arlington in 2019.

Melissa A. Brown, PhD

University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Director of Student Life Assessment
&
Strategic Initiatives

Melissa loves camping, kayaking, and hiking. She loathes consistent tardiness.



Noelia Pacheco-Diaz

University of Tennessee
Graduate Research Assistant at Student
Life Assessment

&

Strategic Initiatives

- Noelia is a doctoral student working towards her PhD in Evaluation Statistics and Measurement (ESM) in the Educational Psychology and Counseling Department.
- She has been working as a graduate research assistant for OASI since 2019.
- Noelia has experience analyzing quantitative and qualitative data and creating reports to present assessment results in a meaningful way.

Noelia enjoys running, listening to podcasts and spending time with her family. She does not like loud eaters.

Session's Learning Outcomes

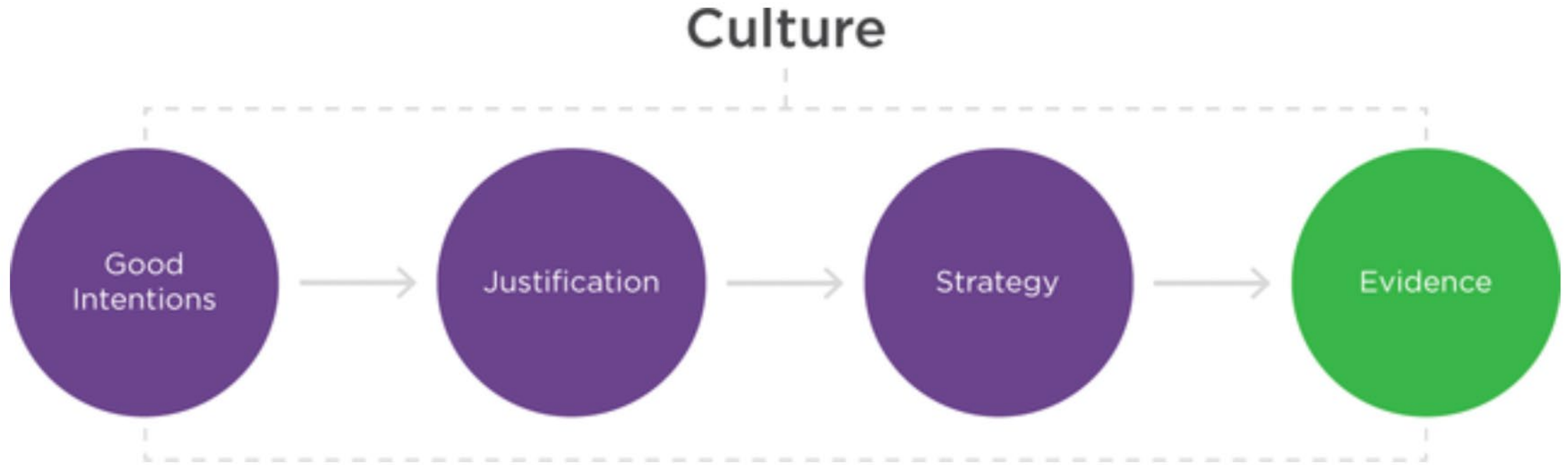
Attendees of this session will:

1. use the Culture of Evidence rubric to identify the current status of their department, division or institution.
2. identify at least one new strategy to implement to cultivate a culture of evidence.
3. outline at least one action step that can be implemented in the immediate future.

What is a culture of evidence?

Culture of evidence: “A commitment among student affairs professionals to use hard data to show how the programs they offer, the processes they implement, and the services they provide are effective and contribute significantly to an institution’s ability to reach its stated goals and fulfill its mission.” (Culp & Dungy, 2012, p.5)

From Good Intentions to Evidence



Source: <https://www.anthology.com/blog/from-good-intentions-to-evidence-based-success-a-better-way-for-student-affairs>

Spurlock and Johnston (2012) Rubric

Measuring a Culture of Evidence for _____

	A Culture of Good Intentions	A Culture of Justification	A Culture of Strategy	A Culture of Evidence
Intentionality (Thoughtfulness in action or decision)	People have a sense that they are doing good things.	People can describe what they are <u>doing</u> (i.e. operational or procedural specificity).	People can describe what they are <u>accomplishing</u> (i.e. strategic pertinence, how what they are doing relates to mission and goals).	People know that they are doing the right things and can describe why they are doing them, and what they are accomplishing through them.
Perspective (Relative to position, institutional role and general point of view)	Incidental / Opportunistic. Recognize data is important, but do not make any particular efforts to collect it.	After-the-Fact. Data is used retroactively as justification for predetermined positions or prior decisions.	Before-the-fact. Assessment is designed with an end in mind. (e.g. Identification of learning outcomes, how the data will be used)	Real Time / Continuous. Data is collected and regularly used to inform processes. Data helps us <u>close the loop</u> on improvement processes and educational outcomes.
Critical Linkages (Connections that manage movement and relationships)	Unclear / Opaque. Data, when collected, is not shared beyond assessors, so connections cannot be made.	Cloudy. Assessment conducted from a defensive posture, especially related to questions of budgetary and operational efficiency.	Translucent. Assessment understood and shared, but only with allies or key partners. Scope is limited to mid-managers.	Clear / Transparent. Outsiders can see and understand contributions to student and institutional success. Assessment is shared with all stakeholders.
Initiatives and Directions (Goals, programs, projects, and plans)	Determined by whim, interest, opportunity.	Administration initiates assessment and it is done only when asked for or required.	Directors own and initiate assessment. Data describe the current situation.	All stakeholders own assessment. Success is operationalized, concretely described, and evaluated based on evidence.
Planning Processes (Strategic planning, goal setting, measuring outcomes)	Vague and individualized. Success is vague or interpretive, and evaluated based on "feel," intent and effort. Collective or strategic planning does not exist.	Sporadic and limited to immediate question or application. Data linked retroactively to strategic context, goals, expectations, etc. but <u>not planning-oriented</u> .	Organized, routinized, and localized. Data informs deliberate <u>cyclical or episodic strategic planning</u> exercises.	Ongoing, strategic and clearly linked to past and future. Triangulation of findings through multiple/established assessments. Data incorporated into <u>continuous strategic thinking</u> .

Spurlock, R.S. & Johnston, A.J. (2012). Measuring a Culture of Evidence. In M. Culp & G. Dugny (Eds.), Building a Culture of Evidence (p. 65). Washington, DC: NASPA.

A Culture of Good Intentions

Intentionality
(Thoughtfulness in action or decision)

People have a sense that they are doing good things.



- Feeling of accomplishment.

Perspective
(Relative to position, institutional role and general point of view)

Incidental / Opportunistic. Recognize data is important, but do not make any particular efforts to collect it.



- No one is collecting data.

Critical Linkages
(Connections that manage movement and relationships)

Unclear / Opaque. Data, when collected, is not shared beyond assessors, so connections cannot be made.



- No connections being made between data and improvements.

Initiatives and Directions
(Goals, programs, projects, and plans)

Determined by whim, interest, opportunity.



- There is no intentionality.

Planning Processes
(Strategic planning, goal setting, measuring outcomes)

Vague and individualized. Success is vague or interpretive, and evaluated based on "feel," intent and effort. Collective or strategic planning does not exist.



- Decisions based on "feelings."



A Culture of Justification

Intentionality (Thoughtfulness in action or decision)

People can describe what they are doing (i.e. operational or procedural specificity).



- Explanation/process.

Perspective (Relative to position, institutional role and general point of view)

After-the-Fact. Data is used retroactively as justification for predetermined positions or prior decisions.



- Data are used retroactively.

Critical Linkages (Connections that manage movement and relationships)

Cloudy. Assessment conducted from a defensive posture, especially related to questions of budgetary and operational efficiency.



- Defensive use of assessment.

Initiatives and Directions (Goals, programs, projects, and plans)

Administration initiates assessment and it is done only when asked for or required.



- Only requested assessment.

Planning Processes (Strategic planning, goal setting, measuring outcomes)

Sporadic and limited to immediate question or application. Data linked retroactively to strategic context, goals, expectations, etc. but not planning-oriented.



- Used sporadically and retroactively.



A Culture of Strategy

<p>Intentionality (Thoughtfulness in action or decision)</p>	<p>People can describe what they are <u>accomplishing</u> (i.e. strategic pertinence, how what they are doing relates to mission and goals).</p>
<p>Perspective (Relative to position, institutional role and general point of view)</p>	<p>Before-the-fact. Assessment is designed with an end in mind. (e.g. Identification of learning outcomes, how the data will be used)</p>
<p>Critical Linkages (Connections that manage movement and relationships)</p>	<p>Translucent. Assessment understood and shared, but only with allies or key partners. Scope is limited to mid-managers.</p>
<p>Initiatives and Directions (Goals, programs, projects, and plans)</p>	<p>Directors own and initiate assessment. Data describe the current situation.</p>
<p>Planning Processes (Strategic planning, goal setting, measuring outcomes)</p>	<p>Organized, routinized, and localized. Data informs deliberate <u>cyclical or episodic strategic planning</u> exercises.</p>

- Actions linked to mission and goals.
- Assessment is targeted.
- Assessment is done well but not shared widely.
- Directors initiate assessment.
- Organized and cyclical.





A Culture of Evidence

Intentionality (Thoughtfulness in action or decision)

People know that they are doing the right things and can describe why they are doing them, and what they are accomplishing through them.

- Explain what they are doing.

Perspective (Relative to position, institutional role and general point of view)

Real Time / Continuous.
Data is collected and regularly used to inform processes. Data helps us close the loop on improvement processes and educational outcomes.

- Data informs processes.

Critical Linkages (Connections that manage movement and relationships)

Clear / Transparent.
Outsiders can see and understand contributions to student and institutional success. Assessment is shared with all stakeholders.

- Assessment is clear to everyone.

Initiatives and Directions (Goals, programs, projects, and plans)

All stakeholders own assessment.
Success is operationalized, concretely described, and evaluated based on evidence.

- Clear measurement of success.

Planning Processes (Strategic planning, goal setting, measuring outcomes)

Ongoing, strategic and clearly linked to past and future. Triangulation of findings through multiple/established assessments. Data incorporated into continuous strategic thinking.

- Assessment is linked to strategic planning.

Activity 1: Rubric in Action!

Please open a new browser window and type srs.campuslabs.com
use Connect ID: 44304

Measuring a Culture of Evidence for _____

	A Culture of Good Intentions	A Culture of Justification	A Culture of Strategy	A Culture of Evidence
Intentionality (Thoughtfulness in action or decision)	People have a sense that they are doing good things.	People can describe what they are <u>doing</u> (i.e. operational or procedural specificity).	People can describe what they are <u>accomplishing</u> (i.e. strategic pertinence, how what they are doing relates to mission and goals).	People know that they are doing the right things and can describe why they are doing them, and what they are accomplishing through them.

➔ How thoughtful is the department/division about the work and its impact?

Activity 1: Rubric in Action!

Please open a new browser window and type srs.campuslabs.com use Connect ID: 44304

Measuring a Culture of Evidence for _____

	A Culture of Good Intentions	A Culture of Justification	A Culture of Strategy	A Culture of Evidence
Perspective (Relative to position, institutional role and general point of view)	Incidental / Opportunistic. Recognize data is important, but do not make any particular efforts to collect it.	After-the-Fact. Data is used retroactively as justification for predetermined positions or prior decisions.	Before-the-fact. Assessment is designed with an end in mind. (e.g. Identification of learning outcomes, how the data will be used)	Real Time / Continuous. Data is collected and regularly used to inform processes. Data helps us <u>close the loop</u> on improvement processes and educational outcomes.



How is data used by the department/division and when?

Activity 1: Rubric in Action!

Please open a new browser window and type srs.campuslabs.com use Connect ID: 44304

Measuring a Culture of Evidence for _____

	A Culture of Good Intentions	A Culture of Justification	A Culture of Strategy	A Culture of Evidence
Critical Linkages (Connections that manage movement and relationships)	Unclear / Opaque. Data, when collected, is not shared beyond assessors, so connections cannot be made.	Cloudy. Assessment conducted from a defensive posture, especially related to questions of budgetary and operational efficiency.	Translucent. Assessment understood and shared, but only with allies or key partners. Scope is limited to mid-managers.	Clear / Transparent. Outsiders can see and understand contributions to student and institutional success. Assessment is shared with all stakeholders.

➔ How clear are assessment findings made to stakeholders by the department/division?

Activity 1: Rubric in Action!

Please open a new browser window and type srs.campuslabs.com use Connect ID: 44304

Measuring a Culture of Evidence for _____

	A Culture of Good Intentions	A Culture of Justification	A Culture of Strategy	A Culture of Evidence
Initiatives and Directions (Goals, programs, projects, and plans)	Determined by whim, interest, opportunity.	Administration initiates assessment and it is done only when asked for or required.	Directors own and initiate assessment. Data describe the current situation.	All stakeholders own assessment. Success is operationalized, concretely described, and evaluated based on evidence.



How valuable is data to the department/division in decision making?

Activity 1: Rubric in Action!

Please open a new browser window and type srs.campuslabs.com use Connect ID: 44304

Measuring a Culture of Evidence for _____

	A Culture of Good Intentions	A Culture of Justification	A Culture of Strategy	A Culture of Evidence
Planning Processes (Strategic planning, goal setting, measuring outcomes)	Vague and individualized. Success is vague or interpretive, and evaluated based on "feel," intent and effort. Collective or strategic planning does not exist.	Sporadic and limited to immediate question or application. Data linked retroactively to strategic context, goals, expectations, etc. but <u>not planning-oriented</u> .	Organized, routinized, and localized. Data informs deliberate <u>cyclical or episodic strategic planning</u> exercises.	Ongoing, strategic and clearly linked to past and future. Triangulation of findings through multiple/established assessments. Data incorporated into <u>continuous strategic thinking</u> .



How invested is the department/division with planning and outcomes?

Strategies to develop a culture of evidence

1) Create a Division wide vision for assessment

- This vision should include mission, plans and goals.
- This vision would avoid focusing on the problems at hand, but it would help focusing on the bigger picture. (avoid having a reactionary attitude).

2) Use existing structures to increase the culture of assessment

- Staff from student life should be part of campus wide assessment initiative and committees.
- Make sure to use the software that is already used for reporting and accreditation.

Strategies to develop a culture of evidence

3) Cultivate positive relationship with staff who are interested in assessment

- Promote and support assessment collaboration efforts among staff.
- Include faculty and other relevant stakeholders in the conversation.

4) Share assessment efforts Division wide

- Disseminate assessment activities and results within the division but also with campus wide partners.
- Use newsletters, websites, campus presentations, mini conferences, or press releases to share assessment information.

Strategies to develop a culture of evidence

5) Offer professional development focused on assessment.

- These professional development opportunities do not need to be complicated (e.g., brown bag lunch, workshops, or bimonthly open meetings).

6) Identify and involve assessment champions.

- Find staff who are interested in assessment and who are willing to bring those assessment efforts to their departments.

Strategies to develop a culture of evidence

7) Eliminate assessment-related anxiety.

- Reduce the anxiety that a program or initiative might be eliminated because of an assessment. Separate assessment from personnel review.
- It is important to offer clear and constant communication from leadership regarding the importance of assessment.

Activity 2: Strategies

Now, that you have familiarized with possible strategies, please, **identify one new strategy to implement for improvement, and barriers to execute them.**

- 1) Create a Division wide vision for assessment
- 2) Use existing structures to increase the culture of assessment
- 3) Cultivate positive relationship with staff who are interested in assessment
- 4) Share assessment efforts Division wide
- 5) Offer professional development focused on assessment.
- 6) Identify and involve assessment champions.
- 7) Eliminate assessment-related anxiety.



Barriers?

Table 3.1

Culture of Evidence: Barriers and Opportunities

Barriers	Opportunities
Campus culture	Campus culture
Lack of leadership support to provide direction and resources	Leaders who support assessment with time, infrastructure, and resources
Lack of assessment expertise and training	Professional development
Resistance to change	Leaders who can manage change
Disconnect between units and purposes of assessment	Staff who value assessment and can use results
Lack of reward for assessment efforts	Honors and rewards for assessment activities
Unrealistic expectations for assessment activities	Opportunities to build on past and current successes
Belief that assessment is for accountability, not improvement	Institution takes a proactive approach to gathering and using data
Budget and resource constraints	Assessment is taking place elsewhere on campus; collaboration is possible

Activity #3: Actions!

*Please identify **one action step** that can be implemented immediately and type it into the chat.

Conclusion

- You used the Culture of Evidence rubric to identify the current status of your division or institution.
- You identified at least one new strategy to implement on your home campus to cultivate a culture of evidence.
- You outline at least one action step that can be implemented in the immediate future.

- Building a "culture" of evidence takes time and intentionality.
- Pick a strategy
- Start educating your team(s) and offering actions steps

Questions?

Presenter: Melissa Brown, Ph.D.

Director of Student Life Assessment and Strategic Initiatives

Mabrown@utk.edu

Co-Presenter: Noelia Pacheco Diaz M.A.

Graduate Research Assistant for Student Life Assessment and Strategic Initiatives

Npacheco@utk.edu

Moderator: Sean Basso, Ph.D.

Associate Director of RecSports

Resources

Additionally, consider the works of others:

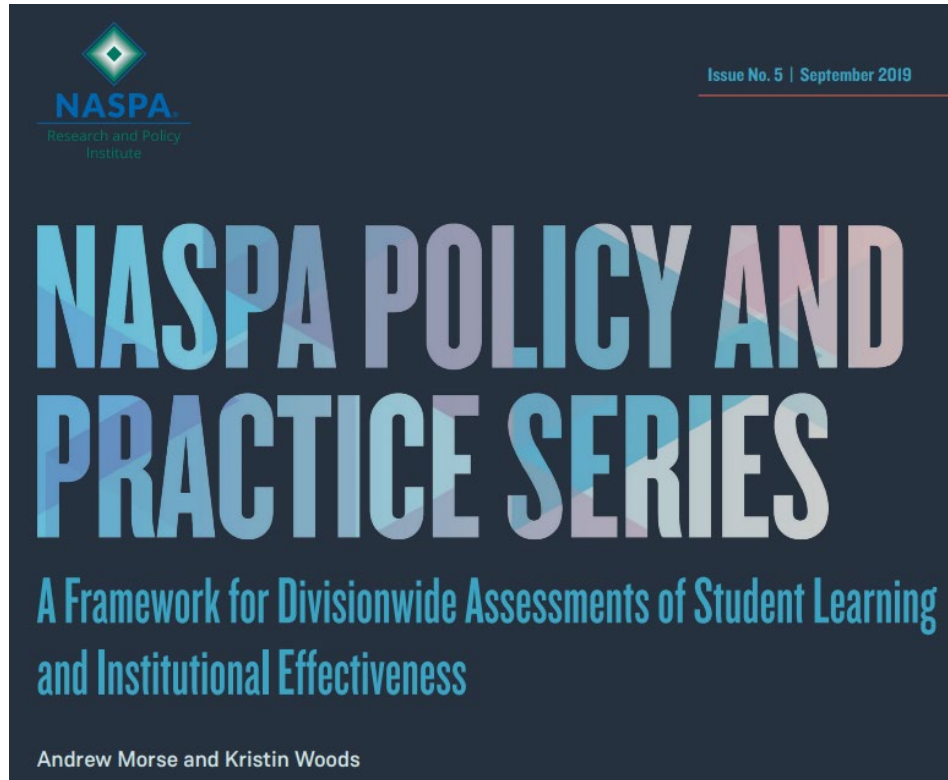
Using the CAS Standards to build a culture of assessment (2020) by Alice Mitchell

Table 1
3 x 5 Model of Culture of Assessment

Foundation	Implementation	Support
Mission centered	Accountability combined with improvement	Vocal and unyielding leadership
Goal grounded	Embedded	Championed across the division
Outcome directed	Collaborative	Strong infrastructure
Culture specific	Transparent	Continuous development of skill and knowledge
Literature based	Ongoing & never ending	Robust resources

Resources

Additionally, consider the works of others:



https://conference2018.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/NASPA_Policy_and_Practice_Issue_5_Divisionwide_Assessment_DOWNLOAD.pdf

Resources

Additionally, consider the works of others:

PHASE 4: BROADENING AND DEEPENING ASSESSMENT CULTURE

Learning Opportunity 6: Student Development Theory and Assessment 101 for New and Returning Student Affairs Professionals. Lead facilitators can broaden and deepen assessment culture across the division by engaging new or returning professionals in the fundamentals of student development theory and assessment, and walking them through the division's learning goals and PSA-level assessment expectations. The session should include components of the learning opportunities described throughout Phase 2, including (a) fundamentals of student development theory; (b) the purposes of assessment; and (c) writing SLOs and IELs, developing appropriate assessment methods and measures, action planning, and closing the loop. Professionals can integrate these skills into their practice and may—depending on their current or eventual roles in the division—be or become stewards of the division's assessment process. Offering this type of learning opportunity on a regular basis helps ensure continuity of divisionwide assessment culture.

Facilitators should consider reaching out to colleagues from other university divisions who facilitate cocurricular programs for students. Inviting staff and faculty across divisions to collaborate on assessment workshops will create opportunities to share resources and discuss potential collaborative assessment projects. Out-of-classroom learning programs such as academic advising and academic support services are often housed in

academic affairs divisions, although their approach to PSAs align well with those offered in many student affairs departments. Although the divisional learning goals that PSAs nest under will vary across divisions, all of those working to support students outside of the classroom will benefit from conversation about the cocurricular assessment process, including ongoing results sharing and improvement planning.

CONCLUSION

This brief focused on guiding VPSAs toward developing high-quality, sustainable assessment processes that support divisionwide goals for student learning and resource stewardship. It showcased the broad latitude colleges and universities possess to devise divisionwide assessment processes in the midst of a persistent call for evidence of student learning and resource stewardship from a wide internal and external stakeholder audience. Creating divisionwide assessment structures builds on efforts already underway at many institutions. The LOOP framework, as presented in this brief, offers guidance to ensure quality, cohesion, and sustainability in divisionwide assessment processes, while showcasing examples from colleges and universities from various sectors, sizes, and geographic regions.

https://conference2018.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/NASPA_Policy_and_Practice_Issue_5_Divisionwide_Assessment_DOWNLOAD.pdf