Alignment — Process of assuring that learning outcomes, curriculum and assessment practices all support each other.

Action Plan – A sequence of activities that must be performed for well for a desired outcome/strategy to be achieved. In the case of assessment, for closing the loop/maintenance of desired performance to be achieved. Action plans typically consist of what needs to be done, by when and by whom, what resources are needed, and when a review of the impact of the change will be conducted.

Artifact: Any item used to demonstrate competency.

Assessment — “an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. Assessment helps us create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education” (Angelo, 1995, p.7).

"Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development” (Palomba & Banta, 1999).

Assessment for Accountability – Summative in nature. Is assessment of a department, program or entire institution to satisfy external stakeholders (Leskes, 2002).

Assessment for Continuous Improvement – Can be formative and/or summative. Directly used for revising the course, program, major, or institution to improve student learning opportunities, environment, and performance results. (Leskes, 2002)

Assessment Cycle – The timeframe during which assessment activities will take place. A round of assessment typically includes: measurement of learning outcome, identification of areas that need attention, and development strategies to address the issues. There may be multiple rounds of design, implementation, evaluation, and revision during an assessment cycle. For example, the campus or program adopts a three year cycle for reporting out aggregate assessment results but each major/program/or option engages in select assessment activities each year.

Assessment Plan — a written statement of agreement about the measures and processes to be used in examining educational programs [majors, options, emphasis as well as institutional performance] (Palomba & Banta, 1999).

Assessment Report — Document that shows a program’s assessment activities, results, and changes for a specific time period.

Assessment Venue — A method, instrument or tool through which evidence is gathered which indicates the degree to which learning has occurred [project, case analysis, exam, field or service project, internship, research, artistic performance, lab, professional competition, etc.]

Assurance of Learning [AoL] — An ongoing process designed to monitor and improve student learning. Closing the Loop — the demonstration of the use of assessment results to improve the educational program. Is another term for assessment, especially used by AACSB.

Course Map — A 2-dimensional grid showing in which courses the knowledge and skills are developed to help students achieve each program learning outcome. The assessment artifact can also be included in the matrix. [also called course alignment matrix or curriculum mapping]

Benchmark – A predetermined standard against which an outcome is measured. An expected level of performance/achievement.
Course-embedded Assessment [embedded assessment] — Using student work that is already part of a course to measure major/program/option or emphasis learning outcomes. Involves taking a second look at course assignments and activities that are primarily for grading students and using them also as a means of assessing student learning and program effectiveness (Palomba & Banta, 1999). A means of gathering information about student learning is built into and a natural part of the teaching-learning process. Can assess individual student performance or aggregate the information to provide information about the course or program. Can be formative or summative, quantitative or qualitative. Example: as part of a course, expecting each senior to complete a research paper that is graded for content and style, but is also assessed for advanced ability to locate and evaluate web-based information (as part of a college-wide outcome to demonstrate information literacy) (Leskes, 2002, p.43).

Direct measure — Performance demonstrated directly by the student. Direct Assessment of learning gathers evidence, based on student performance, which demonstrates the learning itself. Can be value added, related to standards, qualitative or quantitative, embedded or not, using local or external criteria. Examples: exams, projects, musical compositions, art projects, lab assignment, standardized test. (Leskes, 2002).

Documentation — “If it isn’t written down, it didn’t happen” Focuses on how documents, processes, assessment discussions, meeting minutes, reports, etc. are maintained.

Enhancements to Assessment Plan or Report – Any narrative that is in addition to what is requested. Examples: learning environment goals, mission of the major/option/emphasis, professional trends, links between course objectives and major/option/emphasis learning outcomes.

Formative Assessment — Assessing student learning over time; provides information about how well students are progressing toward the program’s expectations. Provides feedback that can be used to modify, shape, and improve the program (or performance)” (Palomba & Banta, 1999).

Indicators -- Specifically identifies how knowledge and skills identified in an outcome statement will be demonstrated. They are the criteria established to assist in the specific measurement of learning.

Indirect measure — Assessment of learning/performance that is based on reflection by stakeholders [students, alumni, profession]. Used alone, it is not an adequate assessment of individual student learning. Examples: surveys, interviews, focus groups.

Learning Outcomes -- Identify the knowledge, skills, competencies that graduates will be able to demonstrate. "To be most useful, outcome statements should describe, using action verbs, student learning or behavior rather than teacher behavior; use simple language; and describe an intended outcome rather than subject matter coverage. Care should be used to choose words that are not open to interpretation. Words like identify, solve, and construct are better than vague words such as understand and appreciate” (Palomba & Banta, 1999). "Statements of intended learning outcomes are descriptions of what academic departments intend for graduates to know (cognitive), think (attitudinal) or do (behavioral) when they have completed their degree programs (Nichols & Nichols, 2000). Learning outcomes can be very specific to a single area OR be stated broadly with subsequent delineator, e.g.

Graduates will be able to make effective decisions.
- Develop and implement effective decisions that address organizational opportunities and challenges.
- Include ethical consideration in decision making.
- Engage in creativity, innovation and design.
- Identify relevant information and effectively use it to solve management and organizational problems,
- Use multiple decision making tools/processes to make effective decisions as individuals and as part of a team,
- Address global business dynamics

Means of or process for Assessment — The ‘when,’ ‘how,’ & ‘how well’ of assessment activities. When will assessment activities take place? Where will the program find information that will reflect accomplishment of an objective? How will assessment be accomplished? Who will be involved in assessment? How well should the program be performing on the objects selected [targets or benchmarks]? When will the program discuss process and results? How will the program document accountability for action to be taken?
Meeting External Stakeholder Expectations – Focuses on how a program knows that its learning outcomes or out-of-classroom experiences meet the expectations of others. The later can be documented through external organization stated expectations for and review of post internship/practicum/field placements/consultation project performance. Learning outcomes links can be met though professional association expectations, credentialing bodies, employer feedback, etc.

Out-of-classroom experience – Learning/application that occurs in non-classroom environments. Examples: internships, field projects/consultation activities, service to community groups, international travel experiences.

Performance Assessment — process of using student activities or products, as opposed to tests or surveys, to evaluate students’ knowledge, skills, or development.

Portfolio — Collection of student work. Can be paper or electronic. Artifacts can be identified by the instructor, the student or both. Frequently includes student learning reflections related to each artifact/experience [or a cluster of experiences]. May include a student developed profile of their integrated learning/skills from their course of study.

Program Mission — A holistic vision of the values & philosophy of the program.

Program Learning Outcomes — Concise, measurable statements of what a graduate should know, be able to do, or behave as a result of their course work & educational experience. Can be the major and/or the option/emphasis within a major

Rubric — "a matrix that explicitly states the criteria and standards for student work. It identifies the traits that are important and describes levels of performance within each of the traits" (Walvoord, 2004, 81). It translates informed professional judgment into numerical [or hierarchical] ratings on a scale" (Walvoord, 2004, 19)

SMART Outcomes -- Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound outcomes.

Standardized test — Assessment where conditions of administration & scoring are constant. Normed standardized test allow for comparison to the performance of other schools administering the exam.

Strategic Assessment — Linking AoL to long term goals

Summative Assessment — Measurement of student learning at the end of a program or course of study. Used to improve learning or to meet accountability demands. When used for improvement, changes impact the next cohort of students.(Leskes, 2002, p.42). Frequently takes place in closure courses or field placements.

Qualitative Means of Assessment — Based on individual OR group of faculty’s professional evaluation.

Quantitative Means of Assessment — Those evaluations characterized by identification of individual components & provision of quantitative scores.

Quartile — The breakdown of an aggregate of percentile rankings into four categories [0-25th, 26th—50th, etc.]

Value added Assessment -- Is conducted to find out the increase in learning that occurs during a course, program, or undergraduate education. Can either focus on the individual student (how much better a student can write, for example, at the end than at the beginning) or on a cohort of students (whether senior papers demonstrate more sophisticated writing skills-in the aggregate-than freshmen papers). Requires a baseline measurement for comparison (Leskes, 2002, p.42).

Venue – Any location in which assessment will take place, e.g.: course, virtual, dairy operation, simulation, local school or hospital, professional competition, theater, art exhibit, vet clinic, research project, company.

References: