OPERATION IMPACT GLOSSARY

A

AAC - Academic Affairs Committee. The AAC is a GCU-working committee comprised of academic leadership and faculty that recommend and approve new policies and procedures affecting the delivery of academic services and curricula. It is a key component of faculty governance on campus.

Accreditation - The designation that an institution earns indicating that it functions appropriately with respect to its resources, programs and services. The accrediting association, often comprised of peers, is recognized as the external monitor. Maintaining fully accredited status ensures that the university remains in compliance with federal expectations and continues to receive federal funding.

Alignment - The logical connection between learning outcomes and the curriculum. Curriculum mapping is an example of the alignment process because it shows the specific course activities tied to the expected results of the students.

ALT - Academic Leadership Team. The ALT is a GCU academic body comprised of individuals representing the highest levels of leadership from each college and academic service. This group oversees the policies, procedures and processes that ensure academic and institutional integrity.

AM&T Report - Academic Metrics and Trends Report. The AM&T Report is a quantitative report generated by the Office of Budget and Financial Analysis several times a month. The report contains key student performance data disaggregated at the course level, tracking student pass rates, withdraw rates, failure rates, persistence, retention and a number of other statistics.

Analytic Rubric - A rubric that articulates and measures levels of performance or competencies for a set of criteria. Each criterion is scored individually. An analytical rubric is in contrast to a holistic rubric.

Anchor - A student artifact that represents a specific level of performance. An anchor is used by raters to score student work, usually comparing the student's performance to the anchor.

Artifact - A student work product that is assessed to evaluate the level of competency mastery.

ASL - Assessment of Student Learning. The ASL is GCU's campus-wide assessment of student learning process. It is conducted by the Office of Assessment, applied to all levels and covers key mission-based competencies.

Assessment - The collection and analysis of information about student learning and institutional effectiveness.
1. Assessment is best accomplished through multiple means. No single measure can adequately capture complex constructs such as teaching, student learning or institutional effectiveness.
2. Assessment of student learning can be quantitative or qualitative but is most often a combination of both.
3. Assessment of institutional effectiveness is most often quantitative, although at times qualitative data might be collected.
4. Assessment is an essential component of the continuous improvement process and is undertaken at GCU for two reasons: first and most importantly, to improve student learning; and second, to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of institutional systems and processes (most often referred to as "institutional effectiveness").

Assessment Findings - Data that have been collected to serve as evidence of student learning.

Assessment Instrument - A tool used to evaluate assignments, activities, artifacts or events that support outcomes or objectives. These can be measurement tools such as standardized tests, locally designed tests, exit interviews or student, alumni or staff surveys.

Assessment Methods - Tools or instruments used for measuring student learning. Direct measures demonstrate student performance of objectives and can include research essays, oral presentations, projects, performances, portfolios, examinations, case study analyses and internships. Indirect methods, from which student perception is assessed, include surveys and interviews.

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Assessment Plan - A document that outlines and describes student assessment activities, including identifying learning outcomes or program competencies, benchmarks, findings, improvement action plans and status reports.

Authentic Assessment - A form of assessment that measures a student's ability to demonstrate meaningful application of skills and knowledge. Authentic student assessment usually consists of a task that students perform, as opposed to taking an exam. This form of assessment can take place repeatedly in order to measure the ability to apply knowledge and skills and meet learning outcomes. Authentic assessment most often utilizes a rubric to measure a student's performance level associated with a learning outcome. Authentic assessment is also called performance-based assessment.

Automated Rubric - This analytic rubric makes use of an LMS feature (either ANGEL or LoudCloud) to create a system-generated rubric that allows faculty to score the work product. The LMS stores these scores in a database. They are important pieces of data in most college assessment plans.

B

Benchmark - A defined standard or measure that serves as a point of reference by which performance is measured. It identifies a specific level of performance.

Benchmark Assessment - Assessments or measurements that evaluate student performance, knowledge or skills relative to a defined, explicit set of learning outcomes or goals.

Benchmark Assignment - An assignment that is used to measure a specific level of proficiency or mastery.

Blind Review - A method for review and assessment of artifacts after all identifiers have been removed. This technique is used in GCU's annual ASL process.

Bloom's Taxonomy - A classification of levels of thinking or learning that range from a basic level of thinking to a more sophisticated level of thinking (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating). Bloom identified three domains of learning: cognitive, or knowledge; affective, or attitude; and psychomotor, or skills. The cognitive domain involves levels of learning and intellectual outcomes. Within this domain are categories that are arranged in order of increasing complexity from the foundational level of thinking to the highest level of creating new ideas. These include:
- Remembering: Exhibiting memory of previously learned information by recognizing and recalling terms, facts and concepts.
- Understanding: Constructing meaning of facts and ideas through interpreting, organizing, comparing, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing and explaining main ideas.
- Applying: Solving problems to new situations by applying acquired knowledge, facts, skills and rules in a different way.
- Analyzing: Examining and breaking information into parts by determining motives or causes. Making inferences and identifying evidence to support generalizations.
- Evaluating: Presenting and defending opinions based on judgments about information, validity of ideas or quality of work based on a set of criteria or standard.
- Synthesizing: Compiling information in a different way by organizing elements into a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions. **celt.iastate.edu/teaching/RevisedBlooms1.html**

C

CD - Curriculum Developer. At GCU, CDs are part of curriculum design and development (CDD) and work on course revisions and new course development.

CDD - Curriculum Design and Development. CDD is a professional services group at GCU that assists the colleges in the development of programs of study and in course development.

CLA - Collegiate Learning Assessment. A national web-based assessment designed to assess critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving and written communication. The CLA is offered in the fall to freshmen and in the spring to seniors. Both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies are available. Over 500 institutions have participated in the CLA. **collegiatelearningassessment.org**

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Cohort - A group of students that begin a program together.

Competencies - The specific skills developed within a program of study, or what students should be able to do after completing the program. In GCU program maps, domains are associated with specific competencies developed in individual courses.

Course Assessment - A method of evaluating student learning through course assignments, quizzes or projects that are designed to demonstrate the achievement of the articulated goals of learning outcomes at the course level.

Cross-Sectional Study - A study in which the performance of a specified individual or group is observed at one point in time. The CLA test conducts a cross-sectional study of freshmen in the fall and seniors in the spring of every year.

CRT - Criterion-Referenced Test. A testing method by which scores are based on specific, articulated criteria. The CRT, also called standards-based assessment, is in contrast to norm-referenced tests that compare an individual score against a group.

Culture of Assessment - An institutional characteristic that shows evidence for valuing and engaging in student assessment for ongoing improvement.

Curriculum Map - A matrix that documents the connection between outcomes (what students will be able to do or demonstrate as a result of their studies) and where the curriculum addresses those outcomes. A curriculum map can be an analytic tool for tracking and aligning curriculum content to learning outcomes. GCU uses the curriculum map feature in TaskStream to track the benchmark assignments in college programs and align them to learning competencies.

D

DCO - Detailed Course Outline. A document created by CDD and the colleges that works as an outline or a framework for the development of a new course. DCOs are started during the program design process, where they bridge programmatic competencies and course objectives. Later, the subject matter expert (SME) and the CD flesh out the DCO with content suggestions, lecture summaries, benchmark info and student assessment summaries.

Direct Measure - An assessment method that utilizes student work to demonstrate competency in specific student learning outcomes. Direct measures include:
- Student writing (e.g., essays or papers)
- Capstone course projects
- Supervisor observations
- Portfolios
- Standardized or local examinations

Disaggregate - To divide a whole into parts or groupings.

Domains - The educational tracks, themes and expectations in a particular course or set of courses. Specifically, a domain is a key thematic element that runs throughout a program, including domains derived from the mission statement. Domains are used at GCU primarily in the program designs and maps that are produced for each program/program of study through CDD.

E

Effectiveness - The degree to which programs, events, activities or institutions achieve intended results and purposes.

Embedded Assessment - A form of assessment that gathers information on proficiency through regular activities. When assessment is embedded, it is routine, unobtrusive and an ongoing part of the teaching-learning or operational process.

EOCS - End of Course Survey. EOCS are offered to all GCU students at the end of a course. A survey is an indirect student assessment measure.

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EOPS - End of Program Survey. EOPS are offered to GCU students at the end of a program. A survey is an indirect student assessment measure.

ETSPP - Educational Testing Services Proficiency Profile. The ETSPP assesses four core skill areas—critical thinking, reading, writing and mathematics—in a single test to gauge general education outcomes for improvements in the quality of instruction and learning. **ets.org/proficiencyprofile/about**

E

FEOCS - Faculty End of Course Survey. FEOCS are offered to all GCU faculty at the end of each course. A survey is an indirect student assessment measure.

Formative Assessment - An assessment method that uses student assessment information as immediate feedback to improve instruction and student performance and is therefore used by individual faculty members in ongoing activities.

G

Goals - The educational expectations of a planned program or set of programs, such as the goals of a particular college or the overall GCU goals. The term is associated primarily with program- and institutional-level assessment.

H

HLC Assessment Academy - The Academy for Assessment of Student Learning offers HLC member institutions a four-year sequence of events and interactions that are focused on student learning, targeted at accelerating and advancing efforts to assess and improve student learning, and designed to build institution-wide commitment to assessment of student learning. GCU's membership, called Operation Impact, began in June 2013. **ncahlc.org/Information-for-Institutions/assessment-academy.html**

Holistic Rubric - A rubric that assigns a level of performance by measuring performance across multiple criteria as a whole. It does not give single scores for each criterion. A holistic rubric is in contrast to an analytic rubric.

Holistic Scoring - A method of obtaining a score that results from an overall judgment of performance using specified criteria.

I

ICS - Initial Course Survey. The ICS is a survey offered to all GCU students in the middle of their first course. A survey is an indirect student assessment measure.

ID - Instructional Designer. At GCU, instructional designers are part of CDD and work on program revisions and new program development.

Indirect Measure - A method that assesses learning student opinion or perception rather than knowledge, skills or abilities. Indirect measures include:
- Exit interviews
- Course grades
- Focus groups
- Participation rates
- Surveys

Institutional Effectiveness - The measure of an organization's achievement of articulated goals.

Inter-Reader Agreement - The extent to which two or more scorers or readers reach agreement in assessment.

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L

LC - LoudCloud. LC has been GCU's primary learning management system (LMS) since 2012.

Learning Outcomes or Student Learning Outcomes - The expected learning outcomes of an educational experience or a series of educational experiences (assignment outcomes, course outcomes and program outcomes). Learning outcomes are most often associated with course- and program-level student assessment.

Likert Scale - A method used in questionnaires and surveys to prompt a respondent to express a view on a statement being presented, thereby signaling his or her level of agreement or disagreement with the statement presented.

LMS - Learning Management System. The online web-based interface that facilitates online classes and the web-enhanced components of hybrid classes. Content is presented, forums are used for asynchronous communication and assignments and quizzes are collected and completed.

Longitudinal Study - A study in which a specified individual or group is followed over a period of time to discover changes that may be attributable to the influence of the educational experience.

M

Measurement Tool - Any standardized method used to collect data for assessing outcomes.

Mission Statement - A statement that articulates an organization's essential nature, its values and its work.

N

Norming - The process by which assessment readers learn to apply rubric criteria consistently to student work products and align their scoring.

NRT - Norm-Referenced Test. A testing method by which an individual's score is compared to peer scores. It contrasts with criterion-referenced tests, where scores are based on specific criteria.

NSSE - National Survey of Student Engagement. The NSSE is a survey instrument that collects information at hundreds of four-year colleges and universities about student participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college. More than 1,400 different colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada have participated in NSSE since it was first administered in 2000. **nsse.iub.edu**

O

Objective Measure - Data that avoid bias from observers' feelings, interpretations or other extraneous factors.

Operation Impact - GCU's HLC Academy for Assessment of Student Learning project, Operation Impact, is a three-year plan involving institution-wide initiatives and stakeholders at all levels. Operation Impact will help transition GCU from current practice to best practice, and optimize people, processes and systems for the improvement of student learning and the overall student experience. The project involves multiple and ongoing initiatives addressed in four phases over three years.

OPs - Refers to the operations side of GCU rather than the academic side. OPs generally encompass enrollment, academic counseling, financial aid, campus operations and marketing.

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Objectives - The educational expectations of a planned course of learning experiences, or the skills and knowledge that students develop within a specific course, expressed in terms of Bloom's taxonomy. The term "objectives" is thus primarily associated with course-level student assessment and is generally used as synonymous with "expected learning outcomes."

Outcome Based Education - An educational approach or philosophy focusing on student learning that is achieved and assessed utilizing a system of established goals or learning outcomes.

P

PDD - Program Design Document. The PDD is a summary of programmatic outcomes using domains and competencies developed by GCU and CDD.

Pedagogy - The art and science of how something is taught and how students learn it. Pedagogy refers to the approach to teaching and learning, the way the content is delivered and what the students learn as a result of the process.

Performance-based Assessment - Also called authentic assessment, performance-based assessment uses real-life tasks to measure performance.

Portfolios - A systematic and organized collection of a student's work that exhibits to others the direct evidence of a student's efforts, achievements and progress over a period of time.

POS - Program of Study.

Programmatic Assessment - An ongoing process of measuring the extent to which students are learning specific knowledge and skills determined by the faculty within programs. The results are then used by faculty to substantiate curriculum and pedagogical changes needed to enhance student learning.

Program Design - A summary of programmatic outcomes using domains and competencies, developed by the college and CDD. The final documentation is the PDD (Program Design Document).

Program Outcome - The specific, measureable knowledge, skill or ability that students should be able to demonstrate as a result of their program of study.

Program Review - An in-depth process of reviewing aspects of a college's program and assessing the efficacy and validity of a program on a three- or five-year cycle.

Q

Qualitative Data - Non-numeric information, such as conversation, text, audio or video.

Quantitative Data - Numeric information including quantities, percentages and statistics.

R

Reliability - The extent to which a set of results can be generalized and repeated over time, across tasks and among interpreters. Reliability indicates how consistently student assessment procedures measure their specified target with high levels of agreement.

Rubric - A scoring and instructional tool used to assess student performance using a task-specific range or set of criteria. A rubric is used to measure student performance against this predetermined set of criteria and contains the essential criteria for the task and levels of performance (i.e., from low to high) for each criterion.

S

Sample - A defined subset of the population based on defined criteria.

Scaffolding - An instructional technique in which a complex task is divided into smaller tasks to accomplish the desired learning strategy.

SE – Simulation Event. An SE is an experiential-based learning activity that uses real-life scenarios to provide learners the necessary opportunities to develop clinical reasoning and clinical judgment in providing safe, patient-centered care. **INACSL (2013, June). Standards of Best Practice: Simulation. Clinical Simulation in Nursing, 9(6), DOI: 10.1016/j.ecns.2013.04.001**

Standard of Performance - A specific expectation of student performance that shows progress toward a criterion.

Student Artifact - A written sample of a student assignment, such as an essay or subject paper.

Student Learning Outcomes or Learning Outcomes - The expected learning outcomes of an educational experience or a series of educational experiences (assignment outcomes, course outcomes, program outcomes). Learning outcomes are most often associated with course and program-level student assessment.

Subjective Measure - A score, grade or evaluation that relies on opinion or judgment.

Summative Assessment - An assessment method that is culminating and does not inform the immediate learning experience. The goal of summative assessment is to make a judgment of student competency after an instructional phase is complete. A department or program would conduct summative assessment at the completion of the major or the end of the program to ensure students have met the major or program goals and objectives.

T

Target - The level of student performance expected for an outcome. GCU uses acceptable and ideal target performance in programmatic assessment. Targets identify the percentage of students who will achieve a specified score.

Taskstream AMS (Accountability Management System) - GCU's web-based system for managing and tracking programmatic assessment. Used by each college, Taskstream AMS provides a means for curriculum mapping, recording assessment plans and findings and tracking improvement actions plans and status reports. In addition, GCU's Assessment of Student Learning (ASL) benchmarks and result reports are in Taskstream.

Taskstream LAT (Learning Achievement Tools) - GCU's web-based e-portfolio system, used by the College of Education. Taskstream LAT assists students in building a portfolio of key benchmark assignments related to programmatic requirements and outcomes, and is used by faculty to evaluate artifacts.

TEAS - Test of Essential Academic Skills. TEAS addresses reading, mathematics, science and English and language usage. TEAS test are used for entry exam into the nursing program in many programs. **atitesting.com/Solutions/PreNursingSchool/TEAS.aspx**

TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language. TOEFL is one of several nationally recognized tests that assesses the level of English competency for non-native speakers who wish to apply to a U.S. institution of higher education.

Triangulation - A method of data collection using multiple methods in order to determine if the results show a consistent outcome.

U

UAC - University Assessment Committee. The UAC identifies assessment goals for the university, provides discussion and assistance in the development of assessment tools and assists with creating a culture of assessment at GCU.

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UBD - Understanding by Design. UBD is an instructional design model based on backwards design that focuses on student understanding by beginning with desired outcomes and working backwards through curriculum design, student assessment development and classroom instruction.

University Mission Critical Competencies - The mission critical competencies are an articulation of the core skills GCU expects of all students, regardless of college, program or major, upon completion of a degree. These expectations reflect the Christian liberal arts nature of GCU's educational experience and demonstrate the connection of all university programs of study, and the courses that make up those programs, to a Christian liberal arts heritage. These competencies include:

- Christian worldview
- Critical thinking
- Effective communication
- Global awareness and perspectives
- Leadership
- Value and ethics

V

Validity - The degree to which evidence or results support a specific interpretation of test scores or results. Validity is a concept that defines quality in student assessment. It addresses the extent to which assessment methods actually measure what is intended and provide accurate information that supports its intended purpose.

Value Added - The increase in learning that occurs during a course, program or by the completion of a degree. Measurement of value added can 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 (i.e., senior papers that contain more sophisticated writing skills than freshmen papers). A baseline measurement is required for comparison.

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