

# Transforming Assessment: From Make-Work to Mission

Offices of Assessment/APR and Institutional Analytics Data Day

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# The problem

- Assessment is imposed on us
- Top-down
- Arbitrary
- Changing rules
- “Make-Work”

The challenge is to harness it for the good

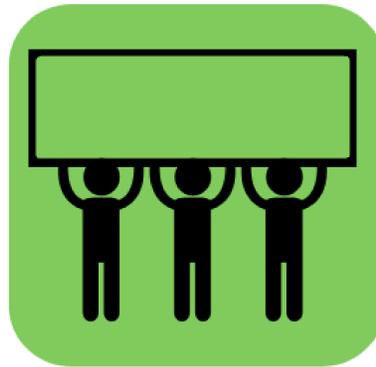
# My background

- Undergraduate director 2008-2013, beginning of sustained assessment process
- Founder, Evaluation Lab [evallab.unm.edu](http://evallab.unm.edu)
  - Mission is to build internal evaluation capacity for community organizations in New Mexico
  - Two programs:
    - 2-semester course and practicum for MPP and other graduate students
    - Summer Institute: 1-week course for community organization and government (and UNM departments can use tuition remission)

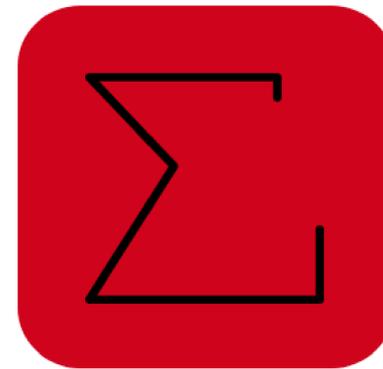
# Evaluation Lab Principles



Measuring  
What Matters



Participatory



Embedded

# Mission



Measuring  
What Matters

Do your student learning outcomes reflect what you really care about? What is left out?



Participatory  
Evaluation

Do they reflect the values of your faculty?



Embedding  
Evaluation

Do they inform programmatic decisions?

# What distinguishes your program?

- Useful to have a story for funding requests, grants, alumni giving, student recruitment and engagement

# UNM MPP

Our program is unique in the country for its emphasis on the fundamental understanding that policy is most effective when it is grounded in community and context.

Whereas other programs train analysts to be the experts who “move the chess pieces,” we promote a bottom-up approach.

Our Student Learning Outcomes detail practices that make community voice and experiences central to policy making and our core curriculum requires a course on diversity and inclusion.

## **A-1 Policy Analysis**

Students conduct systematic and original analysis that:

- offers policy options reflecting a variety of approaches and mechanisms;
- makes appropriate use of the evidence base;
- **incorporates community knowledge;**
- **recognizes context, including history, and power dynamics that arise from race, gender and class;**
- considers political feasibility; and
- acknowledges institutional constraints and opportunities.

## **A-2 Program Evaluation**

- Students plan and implement developmental, process and outcomes evaluations **according to the articulated criteria and priorities of program stakeholders.**
- Students tailor data collection activities to answer evaluation questions and **collaborate with program stakeholders in interpreting the data.**
- Students benchmark outcomes to the evidence base.

## **D-1 Professional standards**

Students involve **stakeholders**, including **those involved with administering policies and programs** and those who are the **intended beneficiaries**, as **informants and collaborators**.

# What is left out when we focus on learning outcomes?

- Student engagement
- Student diversity
- Student success

# What options would open to us if we looked at our programs more holistically?

# Participation

# MPP Participation

- Program committee
- Community Advisory Board

# Econ Department Participation

- Undergraduate committee
- Annual workshop (attendance isn't great)
- Quick item in faculty meeting

# Challenge to get faculty involvement

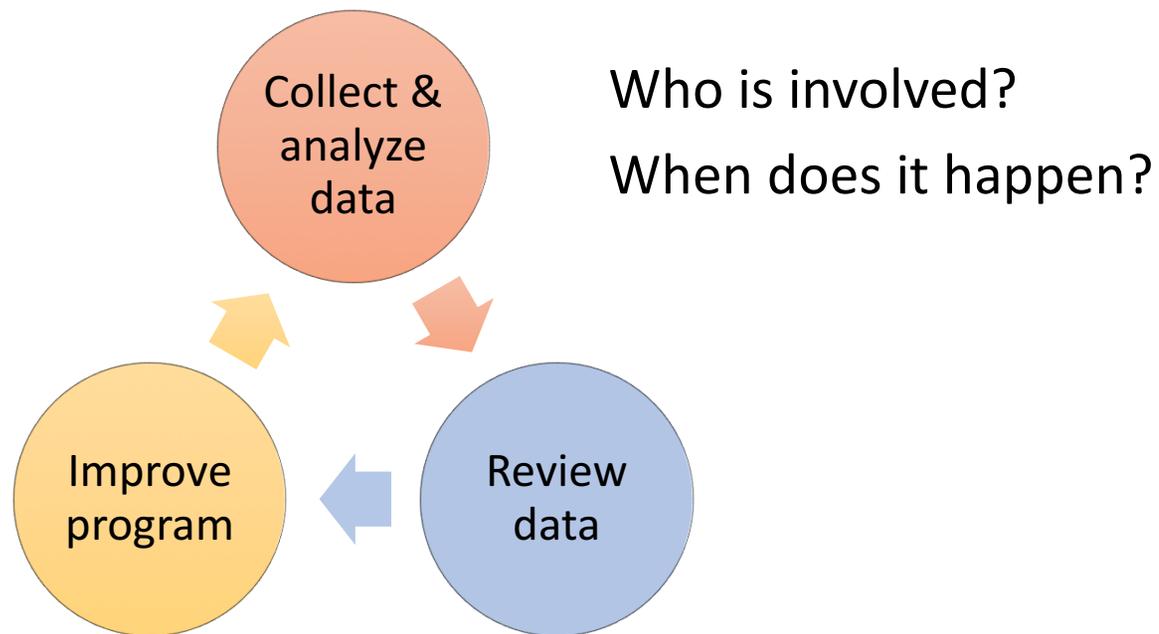
- TIME
- Competing / conflicting goals (research valued more than teaching)
- Fear of coming up short
- Cynicism

# Ideas

- Is chair promoting?
- Is assessment integrated with salary process?
- Are students, alumni, employers and other stakeholders involved?
- Do faculty see value? (Does chair see value?!)

# Embedding

# Embedding: Feedback loop



# MPP Embedding

## DATA COLLECTION

- Rubric associated with MA Exam (direct)
- Student self-assessment (indirect)

## DATA REVIEW

- Program Committee
- Community Advisory Board

# Ideas

- Can staff help / coordinate?
- Course release for assessment coordinator?
- Is there compensation for assessment coordinator?
- Are students, alumni, employers and other stakeholders involved?
- Is innovation rewarded?

# Questions, comments