Exhibit 16.1. A Tally of Results for the Rating Scale Rubric in Exhibit 9.2

The presenter . . .	*Strongly Agree*	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly Disagree*
Clearly stated the purpose of the presentation.	16	2	1	1
Was well organized.	8	5	4	4
Was knowledgeable about the subject.	13	4	0	3
Answered questions authoritatively.	10	4	3	3
Spoke clearly and loudly.	18	1	1	0
Maintained eye contact with the audience.	15	3	1	1
Appeared confident.	13	2	2	3
Adhered to time constraints.	17	1	1	1
Had main points that were appropriate to the central topic.	12	6	1	1
Accomplished the stated objectives.	13	3	3	1

Exhibit 16.2. Results in Exhibit 16.1 Presented as Percentages

The presenter . . .	*Strongly Agree*	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly Disagree*
Clearly stated the purpose of the presentation.	80%	10%	5%	5%
Was well organized.	40%	25%	20%	20%
Was knowledgeable about the subject.	65%	20%	0%	15%
Answered questions authoritatively.	50%	20%	15%	15%
Spoke clearly and loudly.	90%	5%	5%	0%
Maintained eye contact with the audience.	75%	15%	5%	5%
Appeared confident.	65%	10%	10%	15%
Adhered to time constraints.	85%	5%	5%	5%
Had main points that were appropriate to the central topic.	60%	30%	5%	5%
Accomplished the stated objectives.	65%	15%	15%	5%

of a peer comparison. Or you might want to compare students' answers to question 5 on a test with their answers to question 12 (the strengths and weaknesses benchmark). Percentages help you easily view such differences.

Help Your Audiences See the Big Picture

Again remind yourself why you undertook this assessment. Then think about the big message you want to convey and the big things you want to accomplish by sharing the results. Perhaps you want to convince state officials of the quality of your college. Perhaps you want to initiate conversations across your campus on how best to improve the general education curriculum. Then help your audience clearly see your main message.

Tell a Story with a Meaningful Point

Assessment results should tell an important, coherent, interesting story. To give your results the most impact, try the following.

Make sure everything you include tells an important, interesting part of your story. Consider this paragraph from a hypothetical report on one fictitious college's participation in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program's annual Freshman Survey (2008):

> Between 78 percent and 80 percent of Lawndale College first-year students rely on family financial support. Lawndale first-year students are more likely to have student loans (48 percent) than first-year students nationally. Only 57 percent were dependent on grants, compared to 62 percent nationally.

What's the point of this paragraph? I don't know, and if I don't, the report's readers probably don't either, and they aren't going to spend time puzzling it out. Now consider these paragraphs on different results from the same survey at another fictitious college:

> First-year women at Kensington College have a stronger preparation for college than men. First-year women have, on average, earned higher grades in high school and have spent more time volunteering, studying, and participating in student clubs and groups. They are more likely attending college to "gain a general education," "learn more about things that interest me," "become a more cultured person," and "prepare for graduate study." It is more important to them to help others in difficulty, influence social values, and promote racial understanding.
>
> First-year men, on the other hand, are less likely than women to have completed high school homework on time and to have come to class on time. They have spent more time in high school playing sports, watching television, and working. Men are more likely attending to "make more money" and it is more important to men to

"be very well off financially." Despite their weaker preparation for college, men rate themselves higher in intellectual self-confidence, mathematics ability, competitiveness, originality, popularity, social self-confidence, physical health, and emotional health.

First-year men and women at this school both need help adjusting to college, but of vastly different kinds. Women need more self-confidence, while men need more help building academic skills and an appreciation of the broader benefits of a college education.

Because the Kensington report has a clearer point, people will probably pay more attention to it than to the Lawndale one, even though it's longer.

Use an engaging, meaningful title and headings. These help convince your audiences to read, view, or listen to your results. Headings should describe the point of an analysis ("Factors Affecting Grade Point Average") rather than the analysis itself ("Results of Multiple Regression Analysis"). Questions ("Why Do Students Drop Out?") can pique audience members' curiosity. Try writing your title and headlines like newspaper headlines that condense your principal findings. "Women Are Generally More Satisfied than Men" conveys more than "Differences Between Men and Women."

Open with something intriguing. Make your first statement or visual interesting and intriguing, like the lead sentence in a newspaper article.

Cascade from major points to details. Begin with an overall descriptive summary of the results. A simple table may be more effective than text. Include the error margin (Chapter Sixteen), which will help audience members judge which differences are truly meaningful.

Provide a context for your results. Explain very briefly why the assessment was done and what it was designed to find out. Summarize other information related to your assessment that's available from your campus or in research literature. If you are sharing results of a survey related to student retention, for example, give a brief summary of the research literature on student retention. If you are repeating an assessment conducted three years ago, compare past results with current findings. Explain how and

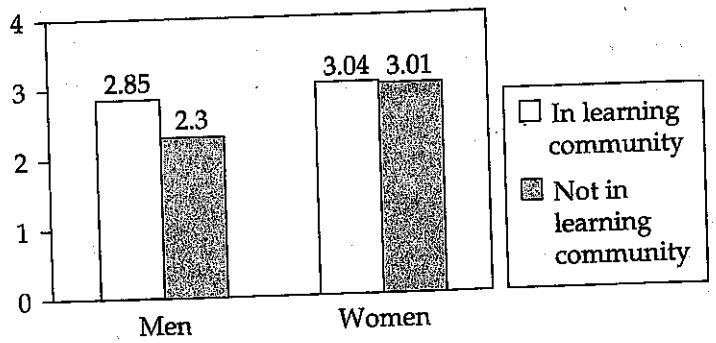
Exhibit 17.1. A Brief Assessment Report: The Effect of Learning Community Participation on First-Year Grade Point Averages

Does learning community participation compare first-year students' grades? The Office of Assessment compared the grade point averages (GPAs) of 177 learning community students against those of a random sample of 199 other first-year students. As shown in the graph below, the mean GPAs for *men* were 2.85 for those in learning communities and 2.30 for those not in learning communities, a statistically significant difference. The mean GPAs for *women* were 3.04 for those in learning communities and 3.01 for those not in learning communities, an insignificant difference.

Because students self-selected into the learning communities, we looked at some other possible factors. When we accounted for differences in high school GPA, our findings remained the same. Variations in SAT Verbal and Math scores and in student majors also did not affect our overall conclusions. Please let us know if you would like any details on these analyses.

Our overall conclusions are that, on average, (1) participating in a learning community improves the grade point averages of men and (2) women do well academically regardless of whether or not they're in a learning community.

Grade Point Averages of Men and Women In and Out of Learning Communities



	Men		*Women*	
	In Learning Community	*Not in Learning Community (Random Sample)*	*In Learning Community*	*Not in Learning Community (Random Sample)*
Total number of students	58	75	119	124
Average GPA	2.85	2.30	3.04	3.01
Undecided major	31%	41%	22%	29%
Average high school GPA	3.28	3.20	3.49	3.49
Average SAT–Verbal	574	524	559	534
Average SAT–Math	582	564	536	541

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Exhibit 17.2. A Poorly Designed Table

Percentage of first-year students saying chances are very good that they will:	*St. Stephen's University*			*All Universities*			*All Private Universities*		
	Men	*Women*	*All*	*Men*	*Women*	*All*	*Men*	*Women*	*All*
Change major field	13.4%	13.2%	13.3%	11.7%	12.7%	12.2%	13.0%	13.4%	13.3%
Change career choice	10.9%	11.9%	11.5%	10.8%	12.8%	11.9%	11.4%	12.6%	12.1%
Get a job to help pay for college expenses	32.5%	42.1%	38.3%	35.2%	41.9%	38.8%	33.0%	41.1%	37.5%
Make at least a B average	48.3%	53.5%	51.4%	42.3%	44.3%	43.3%	40.8%	43.3%	42.2%
Need extra time to complete your degree requirements	7.9%	8.3%	8.1%	8.3%	9.7%	9.0%	9.6%	10.3%	10.0%
Get a bachelor's degree	72.5%	81.1%	77.7%	63.7%	69.0%	66.6%	70.5%	76.1%	73.6%
Be satisfied with your college	61.2%	75.2%	69.7%	44.2%	55.6%	50.4%	43.1%	53.2%	48.8%

Exhibit 17.3. An Improved Version of Exhibit 17.2

Percentage of first-year students saying chances are very good that they will:	*St. Stephen's University*	*All Private Universities*	*Difference*
Get a bachelor's degree	78%	74%	+4%
Be satisfied with your college	70%	49%	+21%
Make at least a B average	51%	42%	+9%
Get a job to help pay for college expenses	38%	38%	—
Change major field	13%	13%	—
Change career choice	12%	12%	—
Need extra time to complete your degree requirements	8%	10%	22%

Table 17.5. Key Information to Share with Public Audiences

How do we define a successful student? What knowledge, skills, and competencies does he or she have? Why do we think these are important?
What evidence do we have that students meet our definition of success?
How effective are we in ensuring that students are achieving their goals (for example, earning a degree or a promotion at work) in a timely fashion?
Are we satisfied with our results? Why or why not? If not, what are we doing about it?
How else do we define institutional success? What else is in our mission? What evidence do we have of institutional success? Are we satisfied with the results? Why or why not? If not, what are we doing about it?

Possible additional questions for prospective students and their families:
What makes our college distinctive?
What kinds of students do we aim to serve? What kinds do we actually enroll?
What are we doing to provide students with optimal learning experiences? To what extent do we engage in research-based teaching-learning practices?

Possible additional questions for policymakers, as appropriate to the college's mission:
How effective are we in making our college affordable? Being efficient and cost-effective? Ensuring access to the disadvantaged? Meeting local, regional, and national needs?

Table 17.6. Tips for Telling the Story of Your College's Effectiveness

Justify why this story is appropriate for your college.
Provide a brief narrative and analysis, as well as numbers and facts.
Make the story easy to find. This usually means a Web page that's easy to find and reach from the college's home page.
Make the story easy to understand. Use very short, simple charts and graphics rather than long tables and lengthy text.
Keep the story succinct. Many audiences want the story in twenty-five words or less!
Resist calls to use particular prescribed measures—such as particular retention or graduation rates, particular published instruments, comparable measures, and value-added measures—without considering how appropriate they are for your circumstances. Remember that every measure of effectiveness is imperfect, as discussed in Chapter Three.
Feel free to direct audiences to public information resources on your college if you think the information is appropriate and helpful. Table 15.3 lists some public information resources that may include information on your college. Generally, though, these resources won't be sufficient to tell the story of your college. You will need to provide additional information germane to your college's distinctive mission, goals, student body, and culture.

your audience is especially interested in the cost of an education at your college, tell the story of what students learn in terms of "return on investment."

Sharing Positive Results with Public Audiences

Surprisingly, this may be easier said than done! The higher education community has a long-standing culture of keeping its light under the proverbial bushel basket and not sharing the story of its successes with its public audiences. Because of this culture, it can

- Support services such as tutoring
- Cocurricular activities

It may also be helpful to review the transcripts of your best- and worst-performing students. Are there any patterns in the order in which they took required courses? In the grades they earned in those courses? In the elective courses they chose? Chapter Seven offers additional suggestions for curriculum review.

Most curricula are already packed to the gills, so how can faculty add more intensive study of a particular goal? Table 18.2 offers some suggestions.

Consider Your Teaching Methods

Sometimes we have to own up to a cruel fact: despite our best efforts, we simply didn't teach a particular skill or concept well. Improving teaching methods can be difficult because few faculty and staff have received formal instruction in contemporary

Table 18.2. Strategies to Add More Intensive Study of a Key Learning Goal

Make some tough choices regarding your priorities for student learning goals. Reduce attention to some less important goals to make room for more coverage for more important ones. Drop a less critical course requirement, or scale back coverage of less important concepts in some courses.

Increase the credit value of a key course, or spread its curriculum over two courses. Some students may be more successful in Calculus I, for example, if they can study it in two three-credit courses rather than in one four-credit course.

Replace a program elective with a required capstone course that reteaches a key learning goal.

Require students in their final semester to complete an independent project that emphasizes this goal. If you want to help students learn how to make oral presentations, require graduating students to make oral presentations on their projects at a department research conference.

Ask faculty to review—and assess—the skill or concept in several courses.

Require students to take an appropriate course in another department as a cognate or general education requirement if the goal is a generic skill, such as conducting statistical analyses or making oral presentations. If you elect this approach, you still need to build attention to these skills within your own curriculum so students learn the nuances of applying the skill to your discipline.

Give students more responsibility for learning on their own. Have students learn basic content knowledge outside class, perhaps by reading the textbook or working with peers, freeing up class time to focus on key learning goals. If students need to strengthen their writing skills but you don't have the time to read every draft, periodically ask students to read and comment on each other's drafts. Or have students strengthen their writing skills by composing summaries of concepts that the class can use as supplemental reading or study guides.

Look for ways to use class time more effectively. If students need to strengthen their oral presentation skills but you don't have time to hear individual oral presentations, have them hone their skills by teaching key topics to the class so your curriculum doesn't fall behind. Or have students make group rather than individual presentations.

Table 18.3. Strategies That Promote Deep, Lasting Learning

A growing body of research evidence indicates that students learn most effectively when:

They understand course and program goals and the characteristics of excellent work.
They are academically challenged and given high but attainable expectations.
They are graded on important goals. While students do pick up some things through faculty and staff modeling, discussions, and the like, they focus their time and energy learning what they'll be graded on and therefore learn those things more effectively than ungraded concepts.
They are taught with enthusiasm.
New learning is related to their prior experiences.
They spend significant time studying and practicing.
They use or apply memorized facts in some way, because facts memorized in isolation are quickly forgotten.
The diversity of their learning styles is respected. They are given a variety of ways to learn and to demonstrate what they've learned.
They spend more time actively involved in learning through hands-on practice and receiving information visually. They spend less time listening to lectures and reading long texts.
They engage in multidimensional real-world tasks in which they explore, analyze, justify, evaluate, use other thinking skills, and arrive at multiple solutions. Such tasks may include realistic class assignments, field experiences, and service-learning opportunities.
They spend more time interacting with others—either face-to-face or online. They receive individual attention from faculty and work collaboratively with fellow students.
They participate in cocurricular activities that build on what they are learning in class.
They reflect on what and how they have learned and see coherence in their learning.
They have a synthesizing experience such as a capstone course, independent study, or research project.
Assessments are learning activities in their own right.
They receive prompt, concrete feedback on their work.
They have opportunities to revise their work.

graduate. The 50 percent rule discussed in Chapter Sixteen is a good way to identify whether responsibility for poor performance lies with the student or elsewhere.

If the fault is with us—our goals, our curriculum (including placement), our teaching methods, or our assessment strategies and tools—students shouldn't be penalized. Throw out or give everyone credit for the part of the assessment that didn't work as it should have.

Use Assessment Results to Inform Planning and Resource Allocation

Sometimes assessment results suggest fairly simple, low-cost quick fixes:

- Faculty who realize that they're trying to cover too many learning goals in a course or program can agree to drop attention to some of them.

Exhibit 19.3. A Rubric for Providing Feedback on Assessment Plans and Reports

Key Learning Goals

- ☐ *Best Practice:* In addition to meeting the standard described below, key program learning goals are clearly and actively communicated to students and faculty in the program.
- ☐ *Meets Standard:* Learning goals describe in explicit, observable terms, using action words, how students will be able to use their knowledge, what thinking skills and disciplinary dispositions they will have, and/or what else they will be able to do on completion of the program.
- ☐ *Needs Attention:* Learning goals do not meet the standard described above.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

- ☐ *Best Practice:* In addition to meeting the standard described below, it is clear that every student in the major has ample opportunity to master the learning outcome through multiple courses or intensive study in one course.
- ☐ *Meets Standard:* Every student has sufficient opportunity to master each learning outcome. Every student in the major takes at least one course that addresses the learning outcome.
- ☐ *Needs Attention:* Does not meet the standard described above.

Assessment Methods

- ☐ *Best Practice:* In addition to meeting the standard described below, evidence is provided that the assessment methods yield truthful, fair information that can be used with confidence.
- ☐ *Meets Standard:* Each assessment method clearly matches the learning outcome being assessed, and multiple assessments are used systematically (repeatedly, on a schedule) over time.
- ☐ *Needs Attention:* Does not meet the standard described above.

Use of Results

- ☐ *Best Practice:* In addition to meeting the standard described below, standards have been established that clearly describe performance levels considered minimally adequate for students completing the program, and positive assessment results are shared with faculty, students, academic administrators, prospective students, and other audiences as appropriate.
- ☐ *Meets Standard:* Assessment results are shared and discussed with faculty teaching in the program and are used to modify learning outcomes, teaching methods, curriculum, and/or assessment strategies, as appropriate.
- ☐ *Needs Attention:* Does not meet the standard described above.
- ☐ *Not Applicable:* This is a plan that is not yet implemented.

Periodically Sit Back and Reflect

As discussed in Chapter Three, assessment is best considered a perpetual work in progress. It requires "a commitment to working out the kinks in the process. . . . It is important to implement and refine as you go" (Bresciani, 2007, p. 233). There's no point in continuing assessment strategies that aren't providing useful information or consume time and resources disproportionate to the value of the

information they provide. So perhaps once every year or two, sit back and reflect on your efforts to date.

Inform these conversations by preparing a snapshot of where your campus or program is with assessment and where it's going. Exhibits 19.4 and 19.5 provide examples of charts that provide such snapshots. These kinds of charts may also be helpful in giving campus leaders, accreditors, state agencies, and other audiences an overview of the general state of your assessment efforts (Chapter Seventeen).

Another possibility is to develop some performance indicators (Chapter One): measurable outcomes of assessment efforts that can help faculty and staff can see how far they've come. Such measures might include:

Exhibit 19.4. An Example of a Completed Chart for Monitoring Assessment Progress Across an Institution

Program or General Education Requirement	*Learning Goals Articulated? If Not, by When?*	*Assessment Strategies Identified and Developed? If Not, by When?*	*Assessments Implemented? When? Frequency?*	*Assessment Results Compiled and Shared? When? Frequency?*	*Assessment Results Used for Planning, Budgeting, and Decision Making? When? Frequency?*
Academic Programs					
Accounting B.S.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes. Every spring, starting 2006.	Yes. Every fall, starting 2006.	Yes. Every spring, starting 2007.
Biology B.S.	Yes.	No. By 3/1/10.	No. Every year, starting 3/1/10.	No. Every year, starting 9/1/10.	No. Every year, starting 11/1/10.
History B.A.	No. By 4/30/09.	No. By 9/15/09.	No. Every fall, starting 2009.	No. Every spring, starting 2/1/10.	No. Every year, starting 4/1/10.
General Education Requirements					
Writing	Yes.	Yes.	Yes. Every semester starting 2007.	Yes. Every year, by 9/1.	Yes. Every year, by 12/1.
Social sciences	Yes.	Yes.	Yes. Every course once every three years, on a rotating schedule, starting fall 2008.	Yes. Even-numbered years, by 3/1.	Yes. Even-numbered years, by 9/1.

Exhibit 19.5. A Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Student Learning Assessment Processes

No plans = The institution has no plans to do this.
No evidence = The institution is aware that it should do this, but this is not yet happening.
A few areas = This is happening in just a few areas (for example, only in programs with specialized accreditation).
Some areas = This is happening in some but not most areas (for example, in a number of academic programs but not yet in general education).
Most areas = This is happening in most but not all areas.
Everywhere = This is happening everywhere.

For academic programs, the general education curriculum, and institutional goals articulated in the mission statement, vision statement, or elsewhere:	*No plans*	*No evidence*	*A few areas*	*Some areas*	*Most areas*	*Every-where*
Institutional leaders demonstrate sustained support for promoting an ongoing culture of assessment and for efforts to improve teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Clear statements of expected learning outcomes have been developed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Standards or benchmarks for determining whether student learning outcomes have been achieved have been established.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Multiple measures of student achievement of expected learning outcomes, including direct evidence, have been collected.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The evidence of student learning that has been collected is clearly linked to expected learning outcomes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student learning assessment results have been shared in useful forms.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student learning assessment results have been used to improve teaching and inform planning and budgeting decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In any areas in which the above are not yet happening, concrete, feasible, and timely plans are in place.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There is sufficient momentum to provide assurance that assessment processes will be sustained indefinitely.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

community college earlier in this chapter. Alternately, adjuncts or full-time faculty who live or teach at distant sites can participate in discussion by the same technology used for online learning or conference calls.

Preparing Data for the Department Meeting

To achieve maximum effectiveness for the meeting, whether of a committee or of the entire department or program, it may be helpful to organize the data ahead of time. Case Study 2 (biology) discussed earlier showed a table of rubric scores that had been prepared ahead of time (Table 3.1). A wider array of data was organized by a department of economics, whose data consisted of (1) faculty analysis of student senior projects (done with a list of learning goals but not a formal rubric); (2) focus groups of students; and (3) an alumni survey, asking alumni two questions: first, which of the department's learning goals the alumni thought were most important to them in their careers, and second, how well they believed they had achieved those goals during their course of study in the major. Exhibit 3.1 shows how data from these three sources might be prepared, prior to the department meeting, so that faculty can more easily analyze the data and take action.

EXHIBIT 3.1

Organization of Assessment Data for Departmental Discussion

Department: Economics

Measures

- *Analysis of the senior capstone research projects* (written papers plus oral presentations). Three faculty examined a sample of written papers and attended oral presentations for a sample of senior students. These faculty produced written analyses of the student work, using the learning goals as criteria. These analyses were submitted to the assistant chair.
- *Focus groups of current students*, who met for an hour with the assistant chair.
- *Alumni Survey*, conducted by the department under the leadership of the assistant chair, asking alumni to
  - Rate how important each of the learning goals were to them in their careers. 5 = essential; 4 = very important; 3 = important; 2 = slightly important; 1 = not important. The ratings were averaged to produce scores for the group as a whole.
  - Rank how well they had achieved this goal during their major. Respondents were to arrange all seven learning goals in ranked order, giving a 7 to the highest and a 1 to the lowest. These rankings were averaged to produce a ranking for the group as a whole: 7th = highest; 1st = lowest.

Goals, Assessment Methods, and Findings

Goal: Critical thinking (analytical) and communication skills, to enable undergraduate students to think and communicate like economists (in other words, to become skilled in the logic and rhetoric of economics)

(continued)

Subgoals/ Objectives	Alumni Survey: Importance 5 = Essential; 1 = not important	Alumni Survey: Achievement (7 = highest)	Analysis of Capstone Student Projects	Focus Groups of Current Students
A. Mathematical Methods: To use mathematical methods to represent economic concepts and to analyze economic issues	4.33. Very important	2nd of 7 objectives. Low	None included math.	Amount of math varies among classes. Maybe calculus should be required.
B. Theoretical Models: To represent economic relationships in terms of theoretical models	4.33. Very important	3rd of 7 objectives. Low	Models used in papers and presentations with reasonable success	Achievement is enhanced by having TA sessions. Theory course is good foundation if taken before other courses.
C. Gather Data: To gather economic data pertinent to economic theories in order to analyze economic questions	4.17. Very important	5th of 7 objectives. High	Students showed an ability to collect data but over-relied on the Web.	Library research used in a few classes only.
D. Statistics: To use statistical methods to analyze economic questions	3.83. Very important	6th of 7 objectives. High	Little evidence of statistical methods	Limited exposure. Complaint about book used.
E. Software: To use statistical computer software to analyze economic issues	3.33. Important	7th of 7 objectives. Highest	Little evidence of use	Concern that software used in career will be different.
F. Writing: To express economic ideas succinctly and professionally in writing	4.17. Very important	4th of 7 objectives. Medium	Writing skills of students generally acceptable, but not "very good" or "excellent"	Writing is required more than speaking. In particular, research papers are required in 400 and 426.
G. Oral: To express economic ideas succinctly and professionally	4.5. Very important/ essential	1st of 7 objectives. Lowest	Presentations revealed a lack of training in how to present as well as nervousness.	Most courses do not involve oral communication, although it would be useful after graduation in the workforce. One idea was a sequence of courses in communication as part of the Arts and Sciences college requirements. More discussion and presentations were advised.

they need from your assessment effort? Is their most pressing need for more resources, more attention, or more respect? Do they want support for the status quo or for initiating change?

Are your audiences' needs and expectations changing? Many accreditors, for example, have far more rigorous expectations for assessment than they did just a few years ago.

What Decisions Will Your Assessment Results Inform?

One of the most important things to learn about assessment audiences is the decisions they need to make and the information they need in order to make those decisions. Table 4.2 lists examples of questions that may be of interest to your audiences. Tables 15.1 and Table 17.2 provide additional questions.

Table 4.2. Questions and Decisions That Assessment Results Might Inform

Audience	*Questions of Particular Interest*
Internal Audiences Largely Interested in Improvement	
You (an individual faculty or staff member)	Are my students learning the most important things I want them to learn? Are they learning what they need to succeed in their future endeavors? If they're not learning some important things, what are the stumbling points? How might I change my curriculum or teaching strategies to help them learn more effectively? Might new pedagogies or new technologies lead to improved student learning?
Faculty and staff	Are our students learning the most important things we want them to learn in this course or program? Are they learning what they need to succeed in their future endeavors? Are we getting better at helping our students learn? Do recent innovations, such as moves to online learning or learning communities, help students learn more effectively? If our students are not learning some important things, what are the stumbling points? How might we change what we're doing to help them learn more effectively? Might new pedagogies or new technologies lead to improved student learning? Would new or increased resources help students learn more effectively? Where and how would those resources have the greatest impact on student learning? Is this program of appropriate quality and value? Should we support proposed changes to it?

(*Continued*)

Table 4.2. (*Continued*)

Audience	*Questions of Particular Interest*
Audiences Interested in Both Improvement and Accountability (Validation)	
Campus leaders	Is this program of appropriate quality and value? Is it effective in achieving its goals? Are students successful? Is it operating efficiently? Might new pedagogies or new technologies lead to improved student learning? Would new or increased resources help students learn more effectively? Where and how would those resources have the greatest impact on student learning? Should we support proposed changes to this program?
Governing board members	Is this program or college of appropriate quality and value? Is it operating efficiently? Should we support proposed changes to it?
Accreditation organizations	Is this program or college of appropriate quality and value? Is it effective in achieving its goals? Are students successful?
Alumni	Is this program or college worthy of our investment and support?
Public Audiences Largely Interested in Accountability (Validation)	
Government officials and policymakers	Is this college worthy of our investment and support? How much does an education here cost to students and their families? Is it affordable to them? Are students successful in graduating, transferring to other colleges, and finding appropriate jobs? Is this college operating efficiently? Is it meeting regional or national needs? Do underrepresented students have sufficient access to an education at this college? Are they successful here?
Prospective students and their families	How much will this education cost? Is it affordable to me? Will this college be a good fit with my background, interests, and needs? What kinds of students enroll here? Are students successful in graduating, transferring to other colleges, and finding appropriate jobs?
Foundations and other donors	Is this program or college worthy of our investment or support? Is it effective in achieving its goals? Are students successful? Is it operating efficiently?
Prospective employers	Are this college's students graduating with the knowledge and skills we need in our employees?
Taxpayers and the public at large	Is this college worthy of our investment and support? Is this college operating efficiently?

Responding to External Pressures to Use a Particular Assessment

In the United States, recent public conversations on accountability have resulted in pressures and mandates on some colleges to adopt a particular assessment measure or strategy. Public colleges