Assessment, the ongoing process of:

- Establishing clear, measurable expected outcomes of student learning.
- Ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve those outcomes.
- Systematically gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches expectations.
- Using the resulting information to understand and improve student learning.
  (Suskie, 2009)*

Assessment, serves the following functions:

- Helps faculty and staff make better decisions and use limited resources more wisely.
- Helps students learn more effectively.
- Provides feedback for improvement.
- Brings faculty and staff together to discuss important issues.
- Helps faculty and staff see how courses link together.
- Brings neglected information to the forefront.
  (Suskie, 2009)*

SACSCOC Core Requirement 2.5 (Institutional Effectiveness)**
The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.

SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 (Institutional Effectiveness)**
The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas:

3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
3.3.1.2 administrative support services
3.3.1.3 academic and student support services
3.3.1.4 research within its mission, if appropriate
3.3.1.5 community/public service within its mission, if appropriate

Steps in the Assessment Process

1. Develop program mission that aligns to the College’s Mission.
   A mission statement should tell the reader what the organizational unit is about and why the unit exists.

2. Identify goals for the program.
   ALL program goals and student learning outcomes should be measurable and assessed within a single five-year assessment cycle.

3. Map the outcomes through the program.
   The curriculum map tells where in the curriculum the students obtain the knowledge and skills associated with the goal or learning outcome.

4. Identify useful and feasible methods of measurement.
   Programs should have an assessment criterion for each assessment measure; acceptable levels of performance need to be established for aggregate performance for each measure.

5. Communicate the assessment plan via the College’s assessment template.
   Program coordinators or their designees enter plans into ComplianceAssist! for review by their unit director/college dean, OIEP, the Provost and the President.

6. Develop and implement the method of assessment process.
   Detailing the assessment implementation process involves answering the following basic questions: Who will be involved in each aspect of the assessment? When will specific tasks be completed?

7. Tabulate, analyze, and report assessment results.
   Patterns, predictions, problems, and questions should become apparent while summarizing the data.

8. Use assessment results for continuous improvement – close the loop.
   Participants should discuss the results of the assessment, review original goals and outcomes, and make programmatic decisions based on the findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Closing the Loop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Changes to Assessment Plan** | • Revise intended outcomes.  
  • Revise assessment measurement (performance expectations, rubric, or survey instrument).  
  • Collect additional data to support and align with institutional outcomes. |
| **Changes to Curricula, Pedagogy, or Programming** | • Revise course content.  
  • Revise course objectives.  
  • Revise course sequence.  
  • Modify program offerings. |
| **Changes to Processes** | • Modify frequency or schedule of course/program offerings.  
  • Revise advising processes.  
  • Create co-curricular activities.  
  • Implement training or workshops. |

*** See the College of Charleston Assessment Guide for more detailed information and examples.