



## A Letter from the Chair of the Assessment Institute

### Organization Endorsement for ACCELERATE: Assessment Principles for Best Practice

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## **ACCELERATE: Building Momentum, Powering Purposes, and Charting Directions**

As a sector, U.S. higher education is currently facing a host of challenges, including messaging our relevance and value to a sometimes-skeptical public; educating increasingly diverse students, many of whom have been historically under-served, under-represented, and under-resourced by our campuses; refreshing our learning experiences to be better aligned with changing economic and workforce priorities; addressing changes brought about by increased global competition and rapid technological advancements, including the growth of Artificial Intelligence; and responding to political influences that seek to define, alter, and, in some cases, dismantle longstanding aspects of our institutional identities and the work we perform.

Against this turbulent backdrop, there is a need to ensure we offer high-quality, student-centered educational experiences in a variety of contexts: in courses and programs, through co-curricular opportunities, and alongside partners in our communities—wherever or however “community” is defined. Included here is the need to develop or update goals for learning, implement evidence-informed interventions aligned with those goals, assess and evaluate progress and outcomes related to the achievement of those goals, and make ongoing improvements to sustain and scale institutional cultures focused on student learning and success. How befitting, therefore, that a new set of principles promoting best practices in assessment—ACCELERATE—has been developed to help us in building momentum, powering purposes, and charting directions.

### ***Building Momentum***

The “9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning” were originally developed in 1992 by the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE). One key contributor to these principles was my now-retired Indiana University colleague Trudy W. Banta, founding chair of the Assessment Institute in Indianapolis and founding editor of *Assessment Update*. Trudy and other prominent assessment leaders and scholars provided a strong foundation upon which the ACCELERATE principles have been built. Collectively, the initial AAHE work and the more recent ACCELERATE framework encapsulates enduring and emerging perspectives to inform and inspire us.

### ***Powering Purposes***

Higher education assessment and improvement endeavors have expanded considerably over the last thirty-plus years, with greater attention now being paid to the importance of student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness in a range of contexts. The ACCELERATE principles articulate the “what,” “why,” “who,” “when,” “how,” and “where” we need to direct our efforts. In doing so, the ACCELERATE authors offer all of us the opportunity to reaffirm our individual and collective purposes to power thriving assessment cultures and practices.

### ***Charting Directions***

Threaded throughout the ACCELERATE principles are important evaluative questions each of us should ask ourselves about how we are implementing these principles in our respective contexts. Thus, the ACCELERATE framework serves not only as an informative resource, but also as a tool we can use to periodically take stock of our current assessment activities, determine our strengths and challenges, and chart future directions in an intentional and thoughtful manner.

ACCELERATE clearly offers salient insights for contemporary assessment practice. I look forward to seeing how these principles make a positive difference for our students, colleagues, and campuses.

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