



A Letter from the Student Affairs Assessment Leaders (SAAL)

Organization Endorsement for ACCELERATE: Assessment Principles for Best Practice

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From Academic Principles to Holistic Assessment Practice: Student Affairs Assessment Leaders' Affirmation of ACCELERATE's Vision for Holistic Assessment

The Student Affairs Assessment Leaders (SAAL) were excited to hear about, contribute to, and endorse the *ACCELERATE: Assessment Principles of Best Practice* (Samuga_Gyaanam+Bheda et al., 2025). SAAL represents a host of assessment professionals who have used the *Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning* (Astin et al., 1992; 1996) since their inception as a guiding framework in teaching assessment practice and implementing assessment in the co-curricular space, though their original intent was curricular learning. These stakeholders appreciate that the ACCELERATE authors intentionally worked to honor and build off those foundational principles. The concerted effort for the ACCELERATE framework to cover and be inclusive of student affairs and co-curricular assessment efforts represents just how far our field has come since the Nine Principles. SAAL is proud to have had several of our board members and leaders from the organization directly participate in offering feedback or authoring the ACCELERATE framework; we wish to celebrate the publishing of this work as it affords a resource and reference for educators to align their practice.

It is important to call out the alignment of purpose and process of the ACCELERATE effort in relation to SAAL's mission. The SAAL organization exists to create a robust, active, and inclusive community committed to supporting and advancing critical conversations with resources and scholarly endeavors related to student affairs assessment. Having brought together a host of assessment perspectives from a variety of institutions and professional organizations, the ACCELERATE effort embodies the form of community and commitment to create, support, and advance assessment-related resources and formally elevate conversation around practice through documentation.

The ACCELERATE framework reflects constraints, challenges, successful practices, and the promise of assessment in today's higher education climate. With explicit language and references to a more holistic approach to student learning – inside and outside of the classroom – this framework will enable cross-campus dialog between faculty, staff, administrators, and students alike, with all on equal footing and focus on student success. This intentional inclusion of student affairs staff and inviting students as key constituents and co-collaborators in their learning journey is a necessary shift in perspective and approach. We are especially encouraged by the ACCELERATE framework's emphasis on equity, inclusion, and the evolving needs of today's students. These priorities reflect the realities of contemporary student affairs practice and underscore the importance of assessment approaches that are culturally responsive, justice-oriented, and grounded in the lived experiences of students. By centering students as partners in the assessment process and encouraging cross-functional dialogue, the framework advances assessment as a tool not only for accountability, but also for institutional learning, equity, and continuous improvement.

Just as the Nine Principles have in many ways remained relevant truths for good assessment practice, we hope the *ACCELERATE* framework proves a timely and relevant beacon for assessment of student learning practice for decades to come. As a community dedicated to advancing the practice and scholarship of student affairs assessment, SAAL looks forward to continued collaboration in applying these principles to improve student experiences and outcomes.

Student Affairs Assessment Leaders Board

References

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<https://doi.org/10.61669/001c.145101>