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## Employing Faith-Contextualized Assessment to Develop Diverse Stakeholder Communities of Assessment

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### Author Note

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**Abstract:** Effective assessment relies on comprehensive and inclusive stakeholder community building. However, developing such communities of judgement is a challenge that institutions regularly face. This argument presents faith-contextualized assessment as a powerful methodology for building robust assessment communities respecting of, and even stimulating, diversity. “Faith” is understood here to indicate an intellectual assent complemented by an act of trust, and is thereby suitable for persons of diverse beliefs, including and especially those committed to faith in the value of education. Though faith-contextualization does not refer here exclusively to religious institutions, research from the Roman Catholic higher education tradition is used to illustrate key points. This presentation has four key objectives: defining faith-contextualized assessment, identifying theoretical links between faith and assessment, applying faith-contextualized assessment as a hermeneutic (i.e., interpretive lens) to understanding stakeholder buy-in to assessment processes, and identifying strategies for applying faith-contextualized assessment to develop communities of assessment rooted in diversity.

**Keywords:** *Assessment, Faith, Diversity, Institutional Mission*

## Introduction

Effective assessment, throughout the assessment cycle, relies on comprehensive stakeholder community-building from its inception in developing the shared institutional values from which measurable outcomes are drawn, through the participatory process of collecting evidence, and including the process of making assessment evidence meaningful for driving institutional improvements (Astin et al., 1992; Blohm, 2021; Appendix, Slide 3). The assessment cycle itself fundamentally relies on the development of what Harris and Sansom (2000) call “communities of judgement” who can encounter the “randomness of data” (Banta & Palomba, 2015, p. 23), and draw from it meaning that is actionable for positive institutional change. That is, as much as assessment experts may speak of “data-driven decision making,” without assessment communities to make that data meaningful, such evidence becomes ineffectual for meaningful change. As Harris and Sansom (2000) so poignantly communicate in titling their argument, “discerning is more than counting.”


'Data' only becomes 'evidence,' that is, data only takes on meaning, when it is interpreted through a human lens. Because education is a social good, this human lens occurs best within the context of an educational community. As the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) argue in their *Principles of Student Practice for Assessing Student Learning*, "assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved" because assessment "is not a task for small groups of experts but a collaborative activity" among "all parties with a stake in its improvement" (Astin et al., 1992, Principle 6).

Furthermore, to be successful, communities of assessment must be inclusive of institutional stakeholders of diversity. Contemporary research on equity and assessment is clear that quality assessment is equitable assessment (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017). Nevertheless, community-building among diverse stakeholders is a perennial challenge that institutions regularly face. This argument examines the question of how administrators develop a unified assessment community while honoring stakeholder diversity. The argument proposes one resolution to this dilemma by presenting faith-contextualized assessment as a powerful methodology for building robust assessment communities respecting of, and even stimulating, diversity.

Four key objectives are central to this argument. First, to define the scope of the argument, I will define the term "faith" as it is used in this context, as well as the phrase "faith-contextualized assessment." This definition seeks to demonstrate that faith is not the sole prerogative of religious belief and that all educational institutions, regardless of whether an institution is religiously affiliated, can form communities of faith. Second, I identify philosophical links between faith and assessment. These theoretical ties shared by faith and assessment reveal assessment to be a form of institutional discernment that is supported by faith in its pursuit for continuous quality improvement. Faith not only gives meaning to a process that might otherwise present itself as futile, but it also stimulates the growth and development of the assessment community, especially by means of strengthening both the unity and diversity of mission expression. Third, I will apply "faith-contextualized assessment" as a hermeneutic, that is as an interpretive lens, for understanding stakeholder buy-in to the assessment process. This is to show that, even though faith-contextualized assessment may be underappreciated and thereby underutilized, its methodology is quite prevalent in assessment circles. Fourth and finally, using this foundation, I delineate strategies for applying faith-contextualized assessment to develop communities of assessment rooted in diversity. Here, I assert that, contrary to stifling diversity, faith that is alive, complex, and active can in fact support diverse communities in forming vibrant communities of assessment (Appendix, Slide 4).

## Defining Faith

Defining faith in this context can be challenging as the term is often associated with religious faith, which some but not all communities of assessment share. What I hope to introduce here is the idea that assessment communities are also communities of faith. Often, the phrase "communities of faith," is used to refer to religious faith, that is, faith in a God, or gods, or some powerful force in the universe. While this can truly and richly be said of religions such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or



many of the other countless world religions, the human phenomenon of faith is not exclusively bound to religion.

“Faith,” as this term is understood here, indicates an intellectual assent complemented by an act of trust. Let me say that again, an intellectual assent complemented by an act of trust. Faith in this sense could but need not refer to a religious phenomenon. For example, when I park my car in the university parking lot and go to work, I have faith that my car will still be exactly where I parked it when I return. The intellectual assent in this case is my belief that that car will still be there. That belief is not irrational, because it is supported by my trust in the university community. That trust can be supported by further evidence such as consistency in my finding my car in the same location I left it day after day. It could also be supported by the evidence that my institutional administrators care about the safety of my person and property while I am on campus. In this way, I know that my faith is not separable from reason because I have evidence for believing as I do. It is a rational faith (Appendix, Slide 5).

Likewise, when administrators, faculty, students, or other institutional stakeholders move to participate in the assessment of student learning, they are likewise asked to have faith. That is, they are asked to have faith in the idea that the assessment cycle will indeed result in the outcome of learning, and, more specifically, they are asked to have faith that assessment will lead to an outcome that will positively assist the institution in its development. For religiously affiliated higher education institutions, this might mean having faith that God or some other powerful force is guiding the institution towards a good end. For non-religiously affiliated institutions, this might mean that institutional stakeholders have faith in the human process of learning and faith that it could be done better. It might mean faith in the community who supports the learning experience or even faith in the ideal of learning itself. This faith, whether it is in a divine power, faith in a community, or even faith in an idea, can unite diverse stakeholder participants in the assessment community. Awareness and attentiveness to the uniting power of faith characterizes faith-contextualized assessment. Nevertheless, faith, to be rational, requires evidence and particularly evidence that stakeholder diversity will be honored. This is the assurance that the diversity of the community will not be swallowed up or overridden by its unity (Appendix, Slide 6).

## Faith and Assessment

To say that faith and assessment go hand in hand is also to say that faith and discernment are a complementary duo as well. This is because assessment, philosophically speaking, functions as a kind of institutional discernment. By ‘discernment,’ I mean a process of judgment and decision-making whereby the community aligns itself with its intended purpose, that is, its end or goal, as a community. In the process of discernment, an institution chooses who it is and where it intends to go as an academic community. Institutional discernment is accomplished best when it is associated with the mission and, more broadly, with mission assessment. It is ideally through its mission that the higher education institution articulates its vision of what it means to be an academic community, that is, its faith identity, in a way that is institutionally unique. It is through the lens of its mission that an

institution should choose among alternative approaches to development and improvement (Appendix, Slide 7).

Thus, discernment helps both form and develop the academic community of faith in its identity. It is through the process of discernment that one determines whether an act of intellectual assent and trust in an institution are reasonable in the given circumstances. For example, it is through discernment that institutional stakeholders determine whether to place faith in an institution's mission. It is also through discernment that institutions choose among reasonable paths for development or change. For example, the principal purpose of "closing the assessment loop" is to use assessment results for the purpose of achieving change. This change is not change for its own sake but change for the purpose of nurturing institutional growth and development. The action of decision-making, that is, the action of choosing among potential pathways for institutional growth and development, is a discernment process because each pathway for positive change presented through the assessment process affects the kind of academic community that the institution will become.

Discernment functions best when it occurs amidst a community. Discernment amidst a community recognizes the social nature of the human person. Discernment is improved in encountering diverse perspectives. Thus, faith is also stronger when it is expressed by a believing community that is appreciative of its diversity. The process of developing the vision articulated in mission elements such as the mission statement and strategic plan can serve as a catalyst for developing communities of faith, that is, faith in the ideals of the mission and faith in the community who believe in that mission. It is through a community of faith that diverse stakeholders are able to come together and share in an institutional mission and vision. The community that is truly built on a shared faith is not afraid of but rather honors the diversity of expressions of that shared faith. It is through faith that the continuous process of discernment via assessment becomes powerfully meaningful rather than futile. It is the unity in diversity of the community that offers an interpretive value for assessment evidence (Appendix, Slide 8).

### Faith-Informed Assessment


Having outlined what is meant by faith in the assessment process and identifying the assessment process itself as a form of discernment, I now turn towards defending the assertion that faith-contextualized assessment is not fundamentally new within assessment literature, but rather it is an assumed aspect of the assessment process. To accomplish this, I will use faith-contextualized assessment as a hermeneutic, that is, as an interpretive lens, to examine presuppositions about the assessment process.

In the second edition of their seminal work *Assessment Essentials*, Banta and Palomba (2015) re-examine their definition of assessment. Their first edition definition, which has been cited extensively, argues that "assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development" (Banta &

Palomba, 1999, p. 4). In reviewing this definition in the second edition of their work, they note that this original definition needs to be expanded so as to recognize the larger contexts within which assessment is applied. These larger assessment contexts include the level of measuring what the individual student knows, the level of measuring strengths and weaknesses of students as a collective group, and the level of measuring institutional effectiveness (Banta & Palomba, 2015). What is most notable about this re-examination of the definition of assessment is that while the scope of assessment has been expanded to include a wider community in the assessment process, its purpose-driven nature has not. Assessment is carried out for the sake of a purpose, a goal, an end. In the case of assessment, this goal or end is for improving institutional effectiveness. That is, it is about the institution manifesting its educational mission more effectively. This purpose-driven nature presupposes that a vision of what education is intended to achieve is not only possible but measurable. That is, it presupposes, at the minimum, that there is an intellectual assent to the idea that a greater effectiveness is possible and a trust that it is not only achievable but measurable. Thus, the purpose-driven nature of assessment presupposes a degree of faith that the purpose is achievable.

Not only is there a faith element assumed in Banta and Palomba's definitions of assessment, but Banta and Palomba also assume that that faith is distinctive to the faith community in which it occurs. Banta and Palomba themselves argue that a "first step" to assessment for an institution is "articulat[ing] a philosophy of assessment that [is] compatible with institutional culture" (Banta & Palomba, 2015, p. 10). That is, effective assessment begins with "academic introspection" around the institutional faith identity, who the institution is and who it aspires to be (Banta & Palomba, 2015, p. 10). Banta and Palomba (2015) also argue that while institutions often begin with an existing definition of assessment, more often institutions develop their own distinctive definitions reflecting the purposes and vision of their unique institutional culture. Thus, it is also unsurprising that institutions likewise "develop statements of values or guidelines for carrying out assessment" that, according to Banta and Palomba, "reveals a great deal about the particular campus approach to assessment" (Banta & Palomba, 2015, p. 11). These values or guidelines strive at framing assessment in a way that makes sense within the institutional faith context. The American Association for Higher Education agrees with this in asserting that "assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes" that are "derived from the institution's mission, from faculty intentions in program and course design, [and] from knowledge of student's own goals" (Astin et al., 1992, Principle 3; Appendix, Slide 9).

Moving from definitions to practice, in defending the role and value of assessment in the contemporary higher education landscape, assessment practitioners have been emphasizing the necessity that effective assessment must also be authentic assessment. Authentic assessment involves assessment that is not only true to measuring what it intends to measure, but also measures in a way appropriate to the diversity of the academic community in which the measurement occurs (Jankowski & Baker, 2019). The American Association for Higher Education's *Principles of Good Practice* reflects this in arguing that "assessment is most effective when it reflects and understanding of learning as



multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time” by “employing a diverse array of methods” (Astin et al., 1992, Principle 2).


Assessment that is conducted irrespective of an academic community’s diverse character fails to achieve its purpose of measuring what it intends to measure. For example, privileging certain means of knowledge demonstration, narrowing down what counts as demonstration in assessment, privileges certain groups over others.

Attentiveness to diversity requires attentiveness to equity in assessment, which in turn requires faith that authentic and equitable assessment is possible. Equitable assessment helps build the institutional faith community, whereas inequitable assessment inspires mistrust in an institution’s missional ideas. As Montenegro and Jankowski (2017) argue, “assessment, if not done with equity in mind, privileges and validates certain types of learning and evidence of learning over others...[It] can hinder the validation of multiple means of demonstration [of learning], and can reinforce within students the false notion that they do not belong in higher education” (p. 5).

Montenegro and Jankowski’s argument here highlights the communal dimension of learning. Assessment is not an individualistic practice, but it belongs within an academic community and can cause either belonging or exclusion from that community based on the assessment processes’ attention to the diversity of that community. In other words, when an institutional community neglects the extent to which its unified faith commitment is comprised of diverse persons and personal perspectives, the faith community lacks the resiliency needed to sustain itself as an integrated community. Assessment, then, as an act of discernment rooted in faith in the potentiality of learning within a given specific institutional context, must be attentive to the unity in diversity of its missional faith commitments (Appendix, Slide 10).

### Faith and Diversity in Assessment

In this final section I defend and expand upon the assertion that faith that is alive, complex, and active can in fact support diverse communities in forming vibrant communities of assessment. To accomplish this, I draw from the Roman Catholic educational context of teaching comparative religions. Teaching comparative religions within any confessional educational context can be challenging in that “teaching religions other than the one professed by the institution may be viewed as [a form of] competition [between those faiths] rather than [the] augmentation [of one faith by another]” (Bidlack et al., 2014, p. 370). This is experienced as no less true when teaching comparative religions within the Roman Catholic faith context. In a forum published as “Teaching Comparative Theology from an Institution’s Mission,” Bede Bidlack of Saint Anselm College, Mara Brecht of St. Norbert College, Christian Krokus of the University of Scranton, and Daniel Scheid of Duquesne University all seek to legitimize the value of the study of comparative religions within their respective Catholic institutional contexts by examining the relationship between their courses and the institutional mission (Bidlack et al., 2014). Bidlack who teaches on comparisons between the Daoist conception of Ultimate Reality, which is practiced as “internal alchemy” and Catholicism’s practice of *lectio divina*, which means “sacred reading,” finds common themes to discuss in terms of monasticism, prayer, and the role of the body. Bidlack, whose institutional mission surrounds the Benedictine Catholic tradition, which is a monastic Catholic




tradition, connects the monastic aspects of Daoism and Catholicism to the institutional mission (Bidlack et al., 2014). Brecht, whose institutional mission is rooted in the Norbertine Catholic tradition, draws from that tradition the concept of Norbertine hospitality, which she uses to encourage students to dialogue with faiths outside of their own. She does this by questioning “insider/outsider” paradigms and established power relationships (Bidlack et al., 2014). Krokus addresses teaching Islam and Christianity as comparative religions in the Jesuit Catholic tradition (Bidlack et al., 2014). The Jesuit tradition in Catholicism emphasizes what is called “*cura personalis*,” which means care of the person. This tradition emphasizes the themes of justice, service, and solidarity. Finally, Scheid from Duquesne University, which hails from a Spiritan Catholic tradition that emphasizes walking with persons of diversity in their concrete life situations, compares Christianity’s conception of “neighbor love” to Buddhism’s conception of “no-self” to develop different perspectives on relating to the concrete conditions of life (Bidlack et al., 2014).

What Reid Locklin, the forum’s respondent, notes in his reflection is that the ease at which Bidlack, Brecht, Krokus, and Scheid can identify their teaching methodologies with each of their institution’s missions relates to the fact that their institutions have what is called in Catholic theology a ‘charism’ (Bidlack et al., 2014). The Benedictine, Norbertine, Jesuit, and Spiritan identities of each of these institutions identifies their charism.

“Charism” is an arguably underappreciated term in Catholicism that has to do with how a community of diverse persons exist together in the unified community that is the Body of Christ. Thus, charism is essentially a diversity element in the Catholic faith. Locklin argues that a justification for teaching comparative religions at his own institution, which is Saint Michael’s College, University of Toronto, is more challenging than for Bidlack, Brecht, Krokus, and Scheid because his institution does not recognize itself as having an institutional charism. That is, the institutional faith-context does not have a self-identity in this diversity-sensitive faith element within Catholicism.

I would argue, nevertheless, that a diversity-sensitive faith element is possible within any institution regardless of faith identity. The community of faith developed just needs to be alive, complex, and active.

A faith community is alive when its identity is affected by its concrete lived experiences. This can be found in the theological concept of charism in that charisms are different depending on the real-life, concrete lived reality of community that each institution has. For example, while there are many Jesuit universities, each Jesuit university expresses its charism, that is, its faith identity, in a way unique to the historical and contemporary make-up of the institutional community of that specific Jesuit institution. The historical tradition of the institution gives a sense of where the institution has come from that has affected the lives of the institution’s present community and the contemporary make-up of the institution indicates the hands into which the institution has been entrusted for its future development. Thus, this stimulates diversity in terms of the concrete lived experience of present institutional stakeholders and can be brought into dialogue with what higher education has been in the past and is at present in order to bring about positive change and development according to the lessons of concrete lived experiences today. To concretize this, American higher education has been



mired in a system of privileging persons of certain races, genders, and socioeconomic statuses in its history; stakeholders of diverse races, genders, and socioeconomic statuses are now asking what this tradition of higher education means to them and how it could be developed into something that works for everyone, not just those who have been historically privileged to receive its bounty. In this way distinctive institutions, in encountering their own unique history and current life circumstances, are alive.

A faith community is complex when the faith matter with which the institution is dealing can allow for diverse interpretations. The theological concept of charism in the Roman Catholic faith gives room for a variety of interpretations. From the Benedictine emphasis on the inner self to the Norbertine charism of hospitality, from one Jesuit community's concrete lived commitment to social justice to a different Jesuit institution's commitment to that same value, there is room for different interpretations of these same values within each institution. The complexity of institutional faith can provide multiple avenues for diverse persons to interpret that faith according to their own lived experience and develop their own unique expression of that shared faith. To concretize this element of faith, one might consider the circumstances of neurodiversity, which is the idea that different persons encounter the world in different ways. When a person who experiences, for example, what is diagnosed as autism spectrum disorder, who participates in higher education according to their own way of interpreting and understanding the world, and when, because of the complexity of the institutional identity, that person can make their higher education experience meaningful to their own unique and distinctive experiences, this is a success for mission complexity.

Finally, a faith community that is active is one that involves broad representation in institutional identity determination from across its diverse stakeholders. That is, the faith community is engaged across stakeholder populations. A faith community that is active recognizes the capacity of its stakeholders to freely give authentic expression to the institution's wellspring of identity in the concrete circumstances of their engagement with that institution. This can be seen in the theological concept of charism in that a person's or institution's charism reflects the person's or institution's ability to embody the Catholic faith according to their unique, individual lived experience of the Catholic faith. By contrast, an example of when this does not happen in higher education is when administrators treat mission and identity as their own personal prerogative by not trusting other stakeholders to uphold and express the institutional identity. This can lead to a top-down vision of administrative authority that denies the diversity of possible mission expressions. The element of trust in faith is consequently pivotal to developing a faith community that stimulates diversity (Appendix, Slide 11).

## Conclusion

As can be seen through the foregoing reflection, though the idea of a faith-contextualized assessment might be in its early stages of development, the expression of faith-contextualized assessment can be located within the praxis of the assessment tradition. Developing communities of faith that are alive, complex, and active, may strengthen assessment communities to address the relationship of unity and diversity in assessment communities. Though this argument is developed according to the standards of the Liberal Arts tradition, specifically the philosophical disciplines, further research within the empirical sciences may assist in developing a better understanding of this phenomenon (Appendix, Slide 12).




## Author's Note

In presenting this argument, two issues have tended to arise in various forms from respondents. The first issue is what might be referred to as the “purity test” argument. This is the argument concerning how one might theoretically and practically address instances where the identified “faith” is given such strength and definition that, rather than including diverse persons, diverse persons are excluded in the name of said “faith.” To say that this does not happen in both religious and secular faith contexts would be foolish. Even the concepts of “diversity” and “equity” themselves can fall prey to “purity tests.” In my experience, these purity tests often arise from persons and groups who have rigidified their conception of the shared faith such that the faith of others must match their own. This fails to promote a faith that is alive (i.e., affected by concrete life experiences), complex (i.e., capable of nuance and able to handle diverse interpretations), and active (i.e., involves broad stakeholder participation). To some extent individuals and groups should always “challenge” their individual and collective faith experiences as part of a healthy expression of faith to counteract human tendencies towards rigidity. Another way of saying this is that faith-contextualized assessment must be itself regularly assessed to ensure movement beyond rigidity.

The second issue that arises is to question diversity that “goes too far” such that the shared faith identity becomes so broadly interpreted that it loses its core identity. For example, there is the classic question that, “if one highlights everything on a page, what is essentially highlighted?” Rather than a concern of too much rigidity, this concern might be one of too much permissiveness. Nevertheless, like the issue of rigidity, the issue of permissiveness also misses the mark. Shared faith commitments rely on trust, as expounded earlier. When there is not some level of trust and expressed goodwill towards the faith of faith-contextualized assessment, the commitment becomes no longer shared.

Philosophically speaking, for an expression to be “diverse” it must itself share something with that thing of which it is a diverse expression. There are many facets to a diamond, each giving off a diverse perspective of the diamond, but those facets still share unity with the diamond in order to be diverse expressions of that diamond. In other words, similarity implies difference, and difference implies similarity.

One might look at this argument and say that, in response, one should balance rigidity and permissiveness, but this is not the argument. This is because, as I hope to have shown, the circumstances that bring up questions of “rigidity” and “permissiveness” are themselves problematic because they arise from conceptions of the “faith” of the community that abandon the “unity in diversity” of a faith that is alive, complex, and active. Avoiding the stranglehold of balancing between rigidity and permissiveness requires the creativity to re-examine (i.e., re-assess) the faith context in a new light. It requires openness to institutional introspection where one might see the faith context anew.




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Employing  
Faith-Contextualized Assessment  
to Develop  
Diverse Stakeholder Communities of Assessment

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# Effective Assessment Relies on Community-Building

- Harris and Sansom - assessment communities are "communities of judgement."
- Assessment communities make the "randomness of data" (Banta and Polumba) meaningful.
- "Data" becomes "evidence" only when interpreted through a human lens
- Successful communities of assessment must be inclusive of diversity.

# Community-Building that Stimulates Diversity

- Faith-Contextualized assessment is a powerful method for building assessment communities that respect, and even stimulate, diversity.
- Four Objectives to Making this Argument:
  - Define “Faith” and “Faith-Contextualized Assessment”
  - Examine Philosophical Links Between Faith and Assessment
  - Reflect on Stakeholder Buy-In Through the Lens of “Faith-Contextualized Assessment”
  - Apply “Faith-Contextualized Assessment” as a Strategy for Developing Diverse Communities of Assessment.

# Faith as “Intellectual Assent Complemented by Trust”

- Faith ≠ Religious Faith
- Religious faith can be rich, but not all faith is religious.
- Parking my car and trusting in my community that it will be in the same place when I return is an act of faith.
- Faith is not separable from reason. It must be rational.

# Faith is a Cornerstone of Assessment

- Assessment requires faith that the process of assessment is effective.
- Examples of faith that unites the assessment community may include:
  - faith in a divine power,
  - faith in the institutional community,
  - faith in an idea such as faith in the idea of learning.
- Rational faith in the assessment community requires evidence that diversity will be honored.



# Assessment is a Form of Discernment

- “Discernment” is a process of judgement and decision-making whereby the community aligns itself with its intended purpose.
- Institutional assessment works best when aligned with mission, especially mission assessment.
- Mission is that through which an assessment community articulates its vision of what it means to be an academic community.

# Discernment Enables Communal Self-Determination

- Discernment enables choice among differing paths of action that might be equally worthy.
- Choices about the institutional community determine the kind of academic community the institution will become.
- Discernment amidst a community recognizes the social dimension of human persons.
- The community that is truly built on a shared faith is not afraid of but honors the diversity of expressions of that shared faith.

# “Faith” is not New in Assessment Literature

- Banta and Polumba pre-suppose faith by pre-supposing a purpose-driven community. This is faith that both assessment itself and the community’s purpose are achievable.
- The American Association for Higher Education agree in that “assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have ... purposes ... derived from the institution’s mission, from faculty intentions ..., [and] from knowledge of students’ own goals.”

# Effective Assessment is Authentic Assessment

- Authentic assessment is not just measuring validly but also measuring in a way appropriate to the diversity of the academic community.
- Equitable assessment builds the institutional faith community, whereas inequitable assessment inspires mistrust in the institutional mission and ideals.
- When an institutional community neglects the extent to which its unified faith commitment is situated in diversity, the faith community lacks resiliency.

# Faith-Contextualized Assessment Supports

## Diversity

- An alive, complex, and active faith is needed to support diverse, vibrant assessment communities.
- Faith that is “Alive” occurs when identity is affected by concrete lived experiences (e.g., recognizing the experiences of marginalized populations).
- Faith is “Complex” when capable of upholding diverse interpretations (e.g., meaning interpretations through the lens of neurodiversity).
- Faith is “Active” when trusting stakeholders to authentically develop mission and identity (e.g., as opposed to a top-down approach).

# Conclusions

- Faith-Contextualized assessment can help effect a unified, diverse assessment community.
- Though a concept of “faith-contextualized assessment” may be early in development, its expression is located in the praxis of the assessment tradition.
- Research according to the methods of the empirical science may strengthen this argument and add depth to understanding the phenomenon.