Indirect Sources of Evidence
for Assessing Student Learning

"Indirect evidence consists of proxy signs that students are probably learning. It is less clear and less convincing than direct evidence. " (Suskie, 2009) Student satisfaction, for example, is a clue that students may have learned important things, but not necessarily that which the curriculum prioritized. "Retention, graduation, and placement rates are also important outcomes, but they don't tell us exactly what students have and haven't learned." (Suskie) Nor do they tell us directly of the impact of any learning experiences, because there are so many mitigating factors. "Because indirect evidence is less convincing, it is especially important to use multiple measures to corroborate it." (Suskie) Consider the examples of indirect evidence below.

> For a full discussion about indirect sources of evidence, please refer to Chapter 2 of *Assessing Student Learning*, 2nd edition, authored by Linda Suskie, former Vice President of the Middle States Commission

- Course grades and grade distributions
- Assignment grades (if not accompanied by rubric analysis)
- Retention and graduation rates
- Admission rates into 4-year colleges
- Scores on tests required for further study
- Quality and reputation of 4-year programs into which alumni are accepted
- Placement rates into appropriate career positions and starting salaries
- Alumni perceptions of career readiness and satisfaction
- Student ratings of their knowledge and reflections on what they have learned
- Course evaluations
- Student, alumni, and employer satisfaction with learning, collected through surveys, exit interviews, or focus groups
- Voluntary gifts from alumni and employers
- Student participation rates
- Honors, awards, and scholarships earned by students and alumni[i]
- Reflective writing and journals
- Outside accreditor/advisory board findings
- Utilization of library/research resources within discipline
- Use of student support services
- Early alert response and tracking records
- Academic placement data
- Completion rates
- Satisfaction surveys
- Transfer rates