Very often what we need to document for assessment is the good work we are already doing. However, it can still be daunting deciding where to begin. Keeping in mind that the process should be meaningful and manageable can make all the difference.

**WHY Assess?**
- Internal desire to improve
- External factors such as accreditation and calls for accountability
- Fits with other initiatives:
  - Strategic Planning
  - General Education
  - Program Review
  - State Requirements
  - Grants
  - Faculty/Staff Self-assessment
  - Curriculum Mapping.

**Tips for Writing Mission Statements**
- Write to be specific and distinctive, address the purpose and significance of the entity's work
- Articulate alignment with division/institution mission
- Lead to the identification of the entity's goals/outcomes

**Tips for Writing Goals**
- Write broad statements about the desired ends to which a unit or program aspires – more about the destination than the path
- Provide a bridge between the mission/purpose statement and the specific outcomes/objectives

**Tips for Writing Outcomes**
- Align to the entity's mission
- Be aspirational—yet realistic and attainable
- Have the three “m”s: manageable in number, measurable and/or observable, and meaningful
- Identify knowledge, skills, and abilities students should gain or improve
- Detail what the end result will be, not the experience
- Indicate an observable, measurable manifestation of the outcome
- Do not include more than one item each (avoid using “and”)

**Tips for Writing Measures**
- Include both types (direct and indirect) and focus on direct measures
- Use multiple measures for each outcome
- Choose measures in your area of control
- Look at what’s already being done that you can use
- Be realistic so that collection is not a burden
- Write so they are easily distinguishable from outcomes and targets

**Tips for Writing Findings**
- Provide enough details and interpretation to illustrate to what degree the target has been met
- Touch on the significance of the results

**Tips for Writing Action Plans**
- Consider what can be improved, changed, or monitored
- Detail specific actions that can be taken for the next cycle (include details about what will be done, by whom, by when, etc.)
- Be relevant, appropriate, and manageable

**Assessing the Assessment**
- Is the assessment plan structured to yield information meaningful for improvement?
- Is the plan manageable? Are there adequate resources for accomplishing what it lays out?
- Does the plan account for how it will be carried out?
- Is the plan and report clear and easy to understand?

**General Tips**
- Remember Linda Suskie – good assessment is used, cost effective, accurate, and meaningful
- Start and end with genuine aspirations
- No need to reinvent the wheel – use what's there
- Be realistic regarding resources; prioritize and budget time wisely
- Be deliberate while writing (saves time later)
- Be flexible—there will be surprises along the way