Demonstrating Learning: a new accreditation requirement and how PMU is meeting it

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Lecture

In the past, accreditation agencies focused on the delivery of the product. They were satisfied if universities could present for each of their programs a comprehensive curriculum with clearly defined contents. But no longer. Accreditation agencies are now demanding that universities show not only that the product is being delivered, but also prove that it is being received - that the intended learning is actually taking place. It is expected that this assessment of student learning is carried out using independent and objective assessment tools.

As part of the assessment process, accreditation agencies also insist that universities implement a feedback loop to ensure that the results of the assessment step are used to improve academic programs.

The following three-step assessment process is being mandated to assure that universities shift their focus from teaching to learning and continually improve their effectiveness in delivering the product:

1. Define learning outcomes for each program and course,
2. Measure how well these outcomes are being achieved using independent and objective means of assessment, and
3. Use the feedback from the assessment step to continually improve the effectiveness of programs.

We describe the requirements of the assessment process as specified by three accrediting agencies: the American Higher Learning Commission, the American Liaison Committee on Medical Education, and the Austrian Accreditation Council. We also describe the student assessment mechanisms that PMU has implemented to meet this new accreditation requirement.

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