

Assessing student values gained through residential living



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**JOHN BROWN UNIVERSITY
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JOHN BROWN UNIVERSITY



John Brown University provides Christ-centered education that prepares people to honor God and serve others by developing their intellectual, spiritual, and professional lives.



- 1243 traditional undergrad students
- Residential Campus
- 878 students live on campus
- Students don't have to be Christian to attend, but it is a Christian University.

Background



Dr. Steve Beers
VP of Student
Development

- Saw Academic Affairs taking the lead on assessment
 - Student learning in the classroom
- Looking toward accreditation reviews and knew that Student Development needed to step its game up
- Wanted a more accurate assessment of the whole student. Head, Heart and Hand
- Prove to the larger institution that there was a need for Student Development
- Three current forms of assessment weren't adequately working



National Survey of Student Engagement



- **Assessing:**
 - Level of Academic Challenge
 - Active and Collaborative Learning
 - Enriching educational Experiences
 - Supportive Campus Environment
 - Student Faculty Engagement



National Survey of Student Engagement



- **Assessing:**
 - Level of Academic Challenge
 - Active and Collaborative Learning
 - ✦ Working with other students outside of class
 - Enriching educational Experiences
 - ✦ Primarily looked at senior projects and research but also included having conversations with those from a different cultural background
 - Supportive Campus Environment
 - ✦ Focuses in on academic and social development
 - Student Faculty Engagement

Student Satisfactory Inventory



Upside

- Tells us what we are doing well
- Gives us growth areas to work on
- Gives us the pulse of our student body – what will make them “happier”

Downside

- Essentially gives us a “happy face” review of our programs – “I like/I don’t like ...”
- Doesn’t tell us what students are learning
- Doesn’t help us transform students

Center for Relationship Enrichment



- 80% of the student body participates in the survey
- Relationship Survey
- Where are students coming from
 - Socially, spiritually, developmentally...
- We can track changes in the data
- Nationally normed based off of other CCCU schools

Need for a new Assessment Strategy

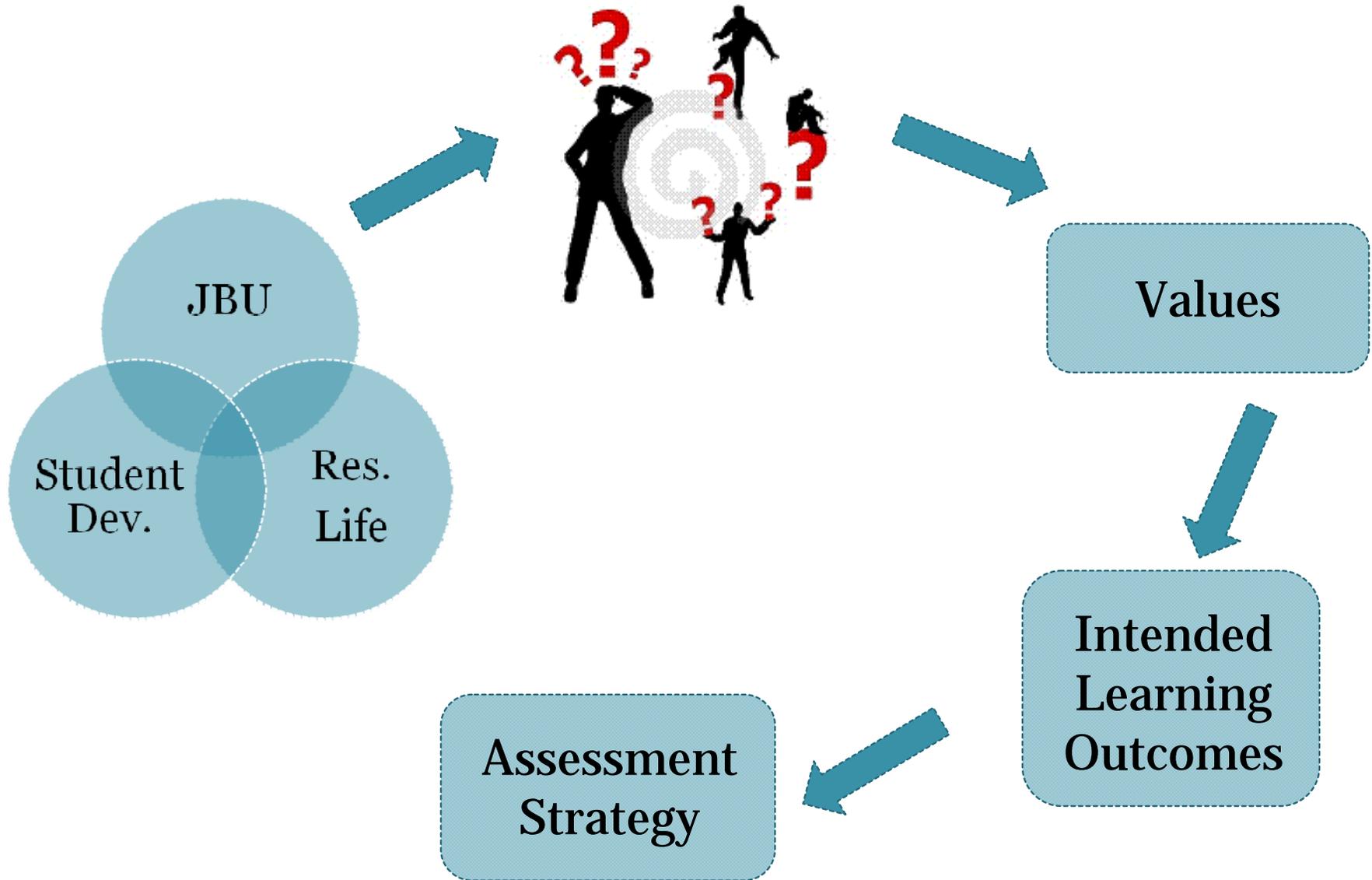


- Other assessment tools weren't working for us
- They weren't assessing our specific goals, objectives and vision for students
- Our assessment strategy had to come from inside the institution and not from the outside
- Individual departments needed to take ownership of the PROCESS and the need for assessment

Developing the Assessment tool

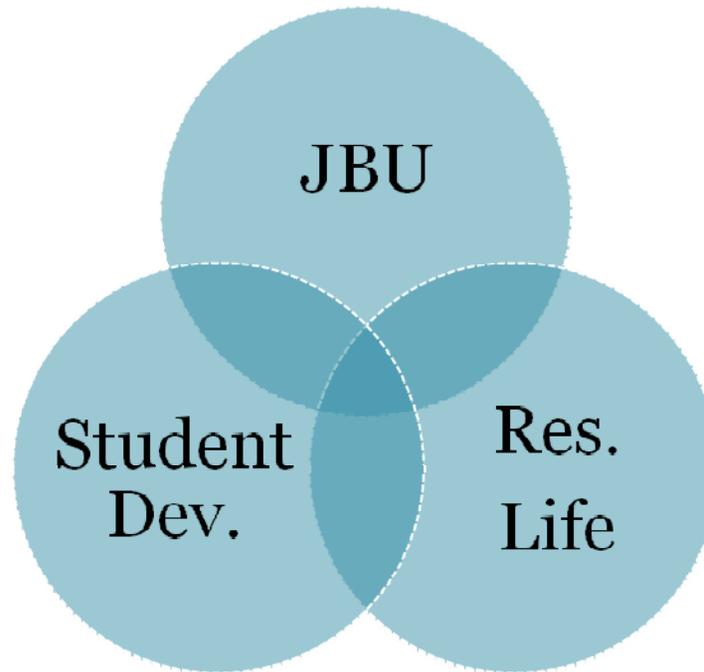


**NEED TO CUSTOMIZE
TO THE
INSTITUTION**



John Brown University provides Christ-centered education that prepares people to honor God and serve others by developing their intellectual, spiritual, and professional lives.

Develop Christ-centered students who actively pursue intellectual and spiritual excellence. We develop students through creating services, recourses, programs, intentional relationships and a positive campus environment



The Residence Life office exists to foster relationships that disciple, challenge and support, create learning experiences and develop a positive living environment.

Mission



- **Mission answers**
 - Who we are
 - Where we are going
 - What we are about institutionally



Who are we?



- Evangelical
- Head, Heart, Hand
- Christ over all
- Residential
- Faith and Learning
- Seamless living/Learning environment
- Relational
- Small Town

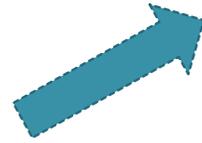
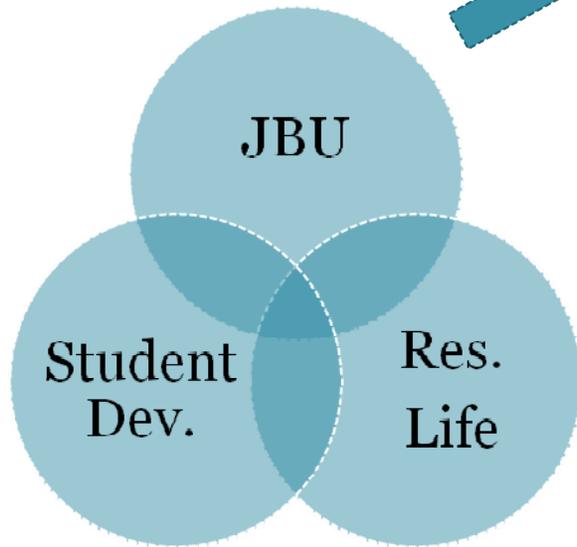
Who are you??



- **Mission?**
- **Institutional history?**
- **Campus ethos?**
- **What are words that describe your institution?**
- **How would alumni describe the institution?**
- **How would you describe your department?**

Theoretical Influences





Influences in Values Development



Student Development Theory

- **Psychosocial**
 - ✦ Erickson
 - ✦ Chickering
- **Cognitive**
 - ✦ Kohlberg
- **University Ethos – Influence of Faith**

Erickson's Stages



- **Identity:** Helping students process through their roles and integrating into self-image. Our desire is for the student to realize the role of community in their self-identity.
- **Intimacy:** Facilitating a healthy transition into intimacy and commitment. We interpret this not simply as a commitment to a partner.

Faith/Values Development in Community



- Community is essential to Christian Living
- Integration of faith and the living/learning environment.
- Engage learning in pursuit of faith development.
- Pursue a coherence between beliefs and behavior (integrity).

Our Student



- Residential
- 10% from Central & South America
- Stressed
- 83% come from a two parent home
- 40% come from public education
- Entitlement
- Helicopter parents
- Upper middle class
- Fairly prepared academically

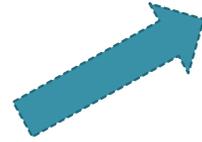
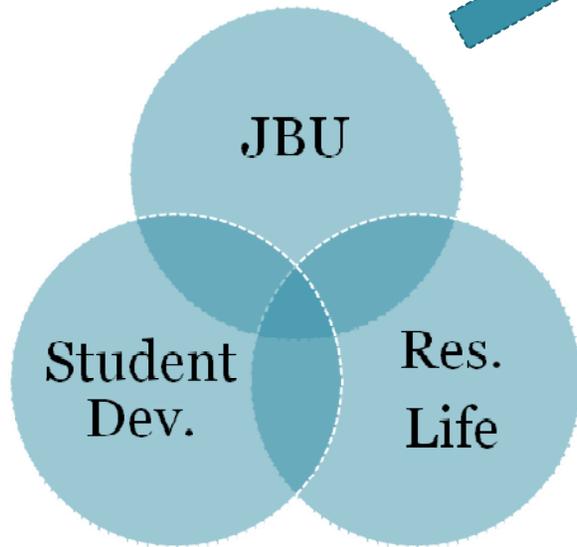
Who are your students?



- What are characteristics of your population?
- Commuter, residential, or combination?
- What are strengths?
- Weaknesses?
- What adjectives describe your students?
- How well prepared are your students to live on campus?
- What do your students value?

Values





Values

Values



- **Worth, merit, importance**
- **Ideal customs of an institution**
 - Different from the mission
 - The mission is what we are doing
 - Values tell us why we do things
- **Our values are found in the heart of our mission statements**
- **What we want our students to value**
 - How we want our students to be changed by coming in contact with us.

From Mission to Values



- The John Brown University Residence Life office exists to foster relationships that disciple, challenge and support, create learning experiences and develop a positive living environment.
 - Living in community is essential to the Christian life.
 - Student learning includes all student experiences in a seamless living/learning environment
 - Residential environment and design have a significant positive impact on the student experience

What do we value?



- Living in community is essential to Christian life
- Student learning happens in and out of the classroom
- Residential environment and design have an impact on the student experience
- Quality is important
- Christian formation

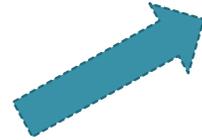
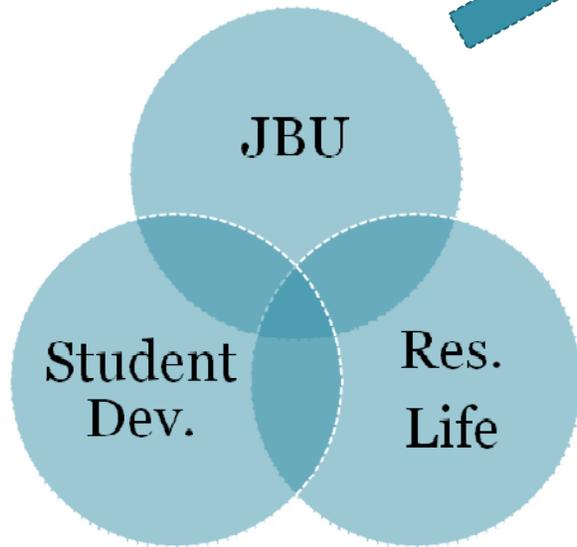
What do you value?



- What do you want your students to take away from their experience?
- What is important to you?
- Where do you want your students to “go” in life
- What is most important to you?
- What do your students have to learn because of being with you?

Intend Learning Outcomes (ILOs)





Values

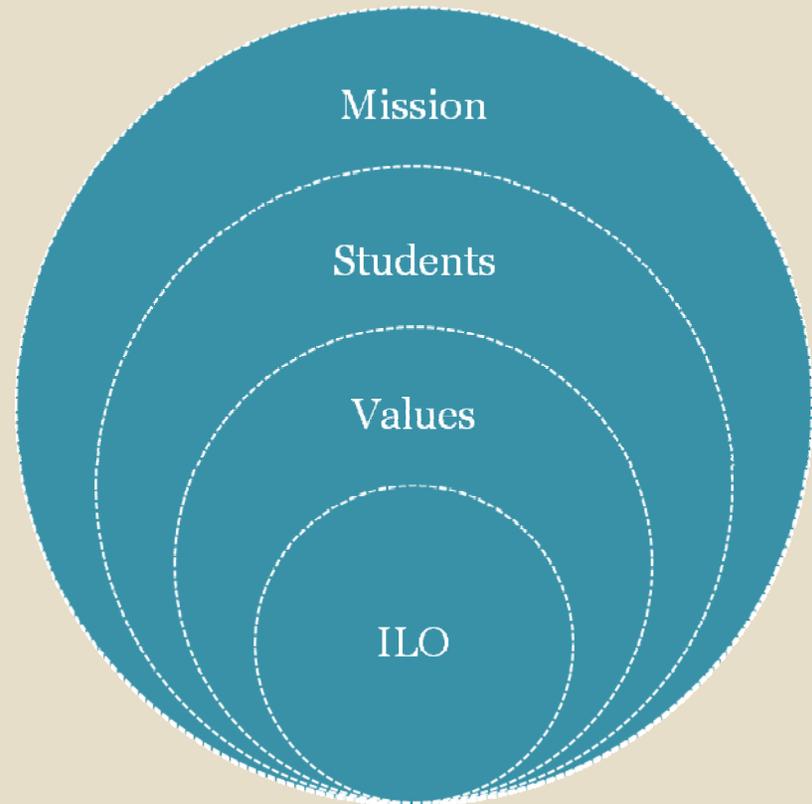


Intended Learning Outcomes

Intended Learning Outcomes



- This is the coming together of everything
 - Mission
 - Students
 - Values
- At the end of their time with us, this is what we want our students to be about



Intended Learning Outcomes



- **Learning/living objective**
 - We want students not only to learn something, but to be something
- **We want our students to have learned certain things**
- **Should be measurable to some degree**
- **This will be bases of everything that we do from staffing to programming**
 - If it doesn't fit within our Intend Learning Outcomes we have to evaluate if it is worth the investment

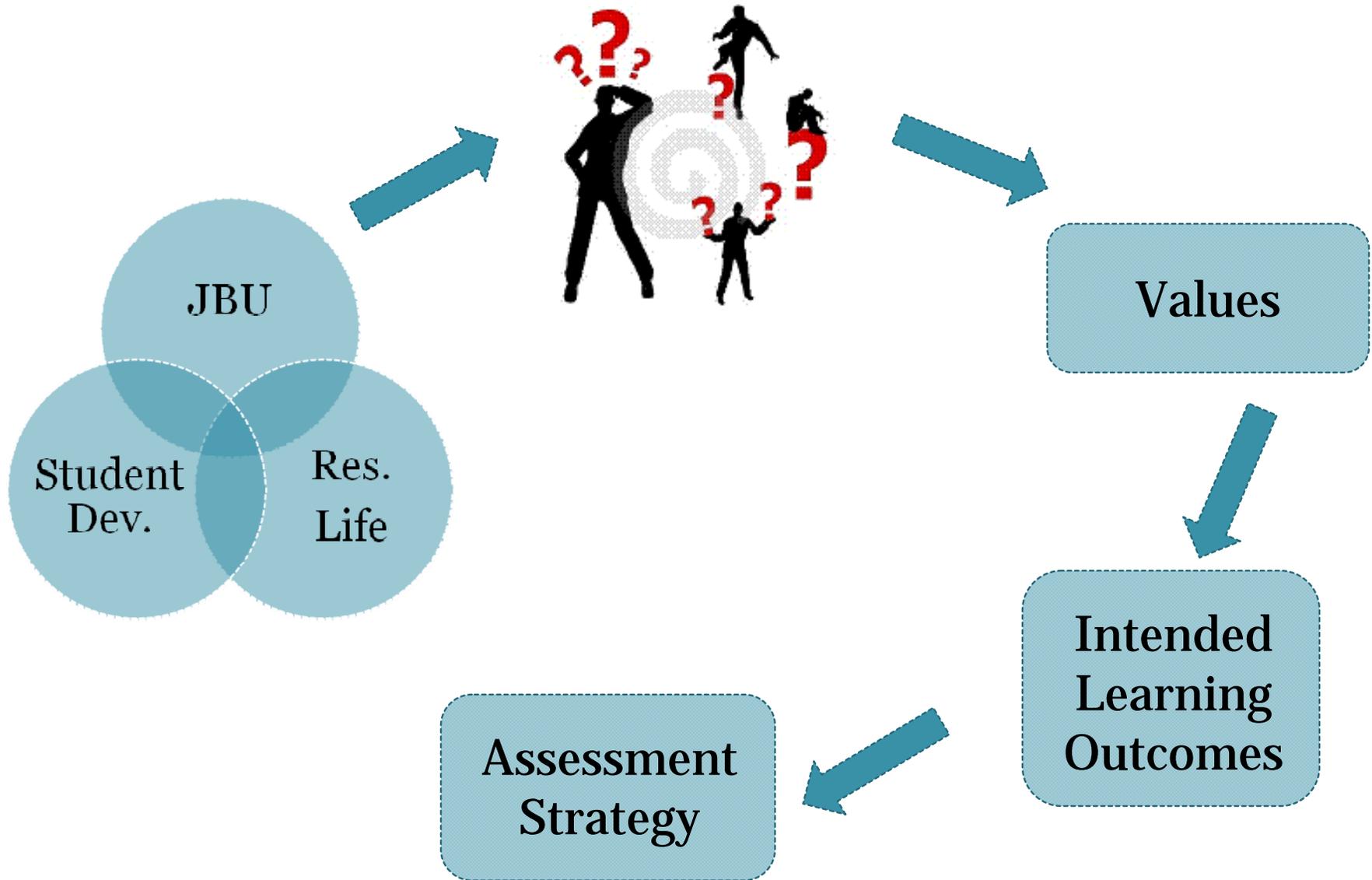
Transference of Values into ILOs



- From the mission statement of the department/university
 - The JBU Residence Life office exists to foster relationships that disciple, challenge and support, create learning experiences and develop a positive living environment.
- (*VALUE*) Student learning includes all student experiences in a seamless living/learning environment.
- (ILO) The student will recognize that learning has occurred outside of the classroom experience and can continue for a lifetime.

Assessing Values Transmission





Assessment Initiatives

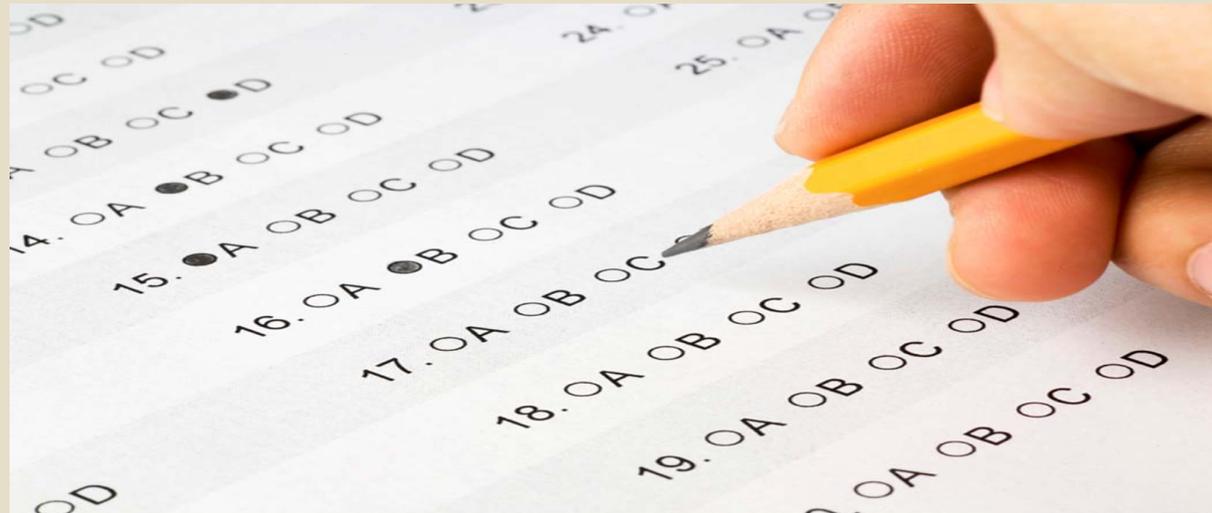


- **Three pronged assessment practice:**
 - Campus-wide survey
 - Individual interviews
 - Focus groups

Survey Limitations



- Other assessment tools give good information, but are limited
- Survey fatigue
 - Res life, academic affairs, student activities, ...
 - Participation rates go down



Current Res. Life survey



- We use Residence Life specific surveys
- Questions:
 - Does your RD know your name?
 - Does your RA enforce policies in a consistent way?
 - What do you think about the all hall programming?
- Downside of the survey
 - Often all quantitative results
 - ✦ No qualitative stories of life change
 - More about popularity and not a measure of life change
 - No one can ask a “follow-up” question
 - We don't know if they are internalizing our ILOs

Development of Interview based Assessment



- Developed questions from our ILOs

- *(VALUE)* Student learning includes all student experiences in a seamless living/learning environment.
- *(ILO)* The student will recognize that learning has occurred outside of the classroom experience and can continue for a lifetime.
 - When you think of this past year, what do you think you learned?
 - When you think about living on campus or living with your roommate, what do you think you have learned?
 - Was there a chapel experience that really stands out in your mind? If so, what was it?
 - Describe a significant learning experience that happened outside the walls of a classroom?

Development of Interview based Assessment



- Developed questions from our ILOs
- Interview is structured around our three core values
- The Interviews provide a way for students to share their life story in their own words
- Open ended questions

Structure



- All interviews are conducted by Resident Assistants
- RAs volunteer participation and have established relationships heading into interview
- RAs were trained
 - Career development
 - How to set up a room
 - How to ask an open ended question
 - Active listening
- RAs fill out the demographic information on the student, but don't share the name of the student

Structure



- Interviewees are randomly chosen from each living group and are not required to participate
 - Randomizer based off those RAs who volunteered for the project
- Focus groups were also conducted, contributing to diverse population sample
 - Invitation to about 20 students in the hope that 10 show up
- RAs write a summary for each interview conducted
- We compile all summaries and write executive summary for distribution.

What student reported



- “I believe that living in the dorms forced me to live and adjust with roommates and ultimately helps people to respect others, their space and needs”
- “I was surprised by the close friendships that I made with people and I think relationships have been the most influential in shaping my JBU experience”
- “I think it is great to stay on campus – you become more aware of other people and how they think.”

RA Response



- Initially it was difficult to recruit
- We were asking them to spend up to an hour with a student
- Feedback from the RAs –
 - You should do this more!
 - Gave me the chance to really process with one of my residents
 - It led us into a lot of different areas – I learned a lot about this student.
- Students who participated enjoyed the process

Use Throughout University



- **Shared information with other departments**
 - International office – re-connecting after study abroad
 - Office of Christian Formation – chapel program
- **Sent to the cabinet for the presidents review**
- **Contributes positively to the reputation of Student Development across campus**

Things we wished we had known before we started



- **This is a long and often difficult process**
 - Getting people on board is difficult
 - Getting buy-in is hard
 - It is a lot of work
- **Student interviews tended to give us better data**
- **Results are not wholly objective**
- **Most efficient on a bi-annual basis (utilize every 2-3 years)**



Contact Information

For a copy of our assessment tool and executive summary please feel free to contact one or both of us.

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- Further Discussion
- Questions