Our process ... so far ...

- work began with Dean, Associate Dean, and group of faculty “consultants” (volunteers) and directors of our LLM & MSL programs
- in early 2007, we surveyed faculty to identify most important SLOs – from 8, chose 5
- in late 2007/early 2008, we chose 1 SLO for assessment for each degree program (but ended up with 4 being assessed for JDS)
- in 2008-09, we are studying assessment in legal education & refining our philosophy/approach in response to . . .
Issues we’re facing

- a period of big changes in legal education – curricular reform and introduction of assessment of outcomes
- faculty skepticism
- faculty desire for greater involvement/input into assessment
- resource allocation – assessment is hard work!
SLOs for JD program

1) Legal Analysis and Reasoning *
2) Problem Solving *
3) Communication *
4) Knowledge of Substantive Law
5) Professionalism and Ethics

* = also chosen for MSL & LLM programs
Assessment methods used so far

• Pennsylvania bar examination – essay portion
  – external evaluation applying objective criteria
  – >70% of our graduates take as their 1st bar exam
  – examiners use a combined, scaled score; we used results to evaluate 4/5 SLOs

• Rubrics applied to assess student papers or exams (for LLM and MSL students) – based on UVa model; faculty librarians (who are JDs) applied the rubrics
Next steps and ideas
(under consideration by faculty)

• establish standing faculty committee on assessment
• integrate assessment and curriculum, curricular reform
• study developments in legal education research
• consider pre- and post-tests based on bar exam questions
• consider student surveys, evaluation of videotaped performances
Questions

• How to create incentives/rewards for faculty participation?
• Is IRB approval needed for use of some assessment methods?
• How to assess “soft” skills that are increasingly being recognized as important to professional development and success?