The Five Core Competencies of Undergraduate Education

What does WSCUC want?

Why? What? How?

CSU Fullerton

October 1, 2015

Melanie Booth, WSCUC Vice President

Session Roadmap . . .

- What's the context for the 5 CCs?
- What are the 5 CCs?
  - And why the focus on standards of performance?
- What does WSCUC expect?
  - And how much autonomy do institutions have?
- Resources

HIGHER ED: Is There a Quality Problem???

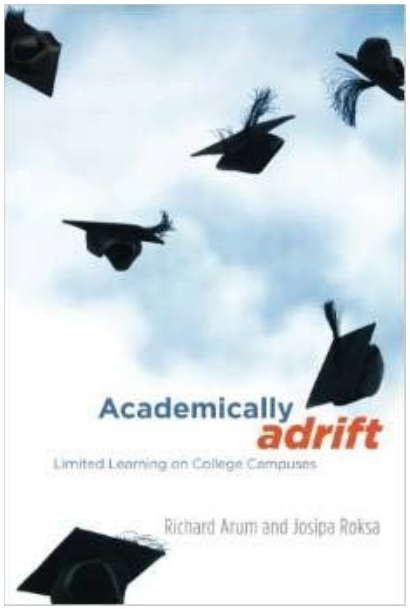
NSSE national survey of student engagement

Center of Inquiry
WABASH COLLEGE

INSIDE HIGHER ED

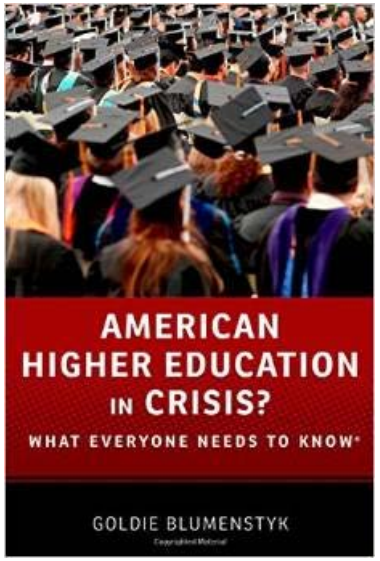
College Grads Unprepared For Workplace, Study Says

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS



OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

THE CHRONICLE of Higher Education



The Weekly Wonk

The New York Times

Is There an Accreditation Problem?

Is the focus on …

- Process?
- Inputs?
- Proxies for learning?
- Accountability?
- Rigorous review?
- Protect institutions?
- Stimulate innovation?

Or on …

- Results?
- Outcomes?
- Actual learning?
- Improvement?
- Club of peers?
- Protect consumers?
- Stifle innovation?

Preparing Students for 21st Century

NUMEROUS VOICES:

Employers

Higher Ed Media

Popular Books (e.g., *Academically Adrift*)

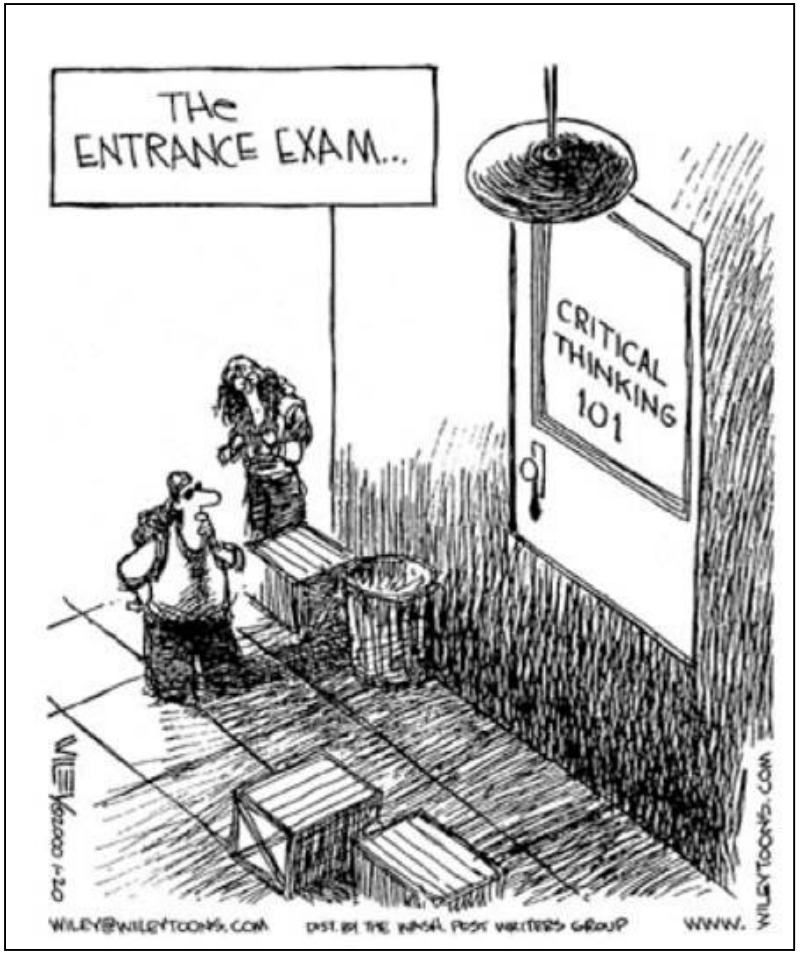
Graduate programs

Parents / The Public

Other Resources:

- DQP
- AAC&U VALUE RUBRICS
- AAC&U LEAP
- Etc.

AND OUR OWN REGION!



2013 Handbook of Accreditation

WASC Senior College and University Commission

1. **Adding UG 5 Core Competencies**
   - Written communication
   - Oral communication
   - Quantitative literacy
   - Information literacy
   - Critical thinking

2. **Moving Toward Learning Results**

WSCUC's Path Toward Learning Results

1996:

Invitation to Dialogue

2001:

Revised Standards

3-part accreditation review

2008:

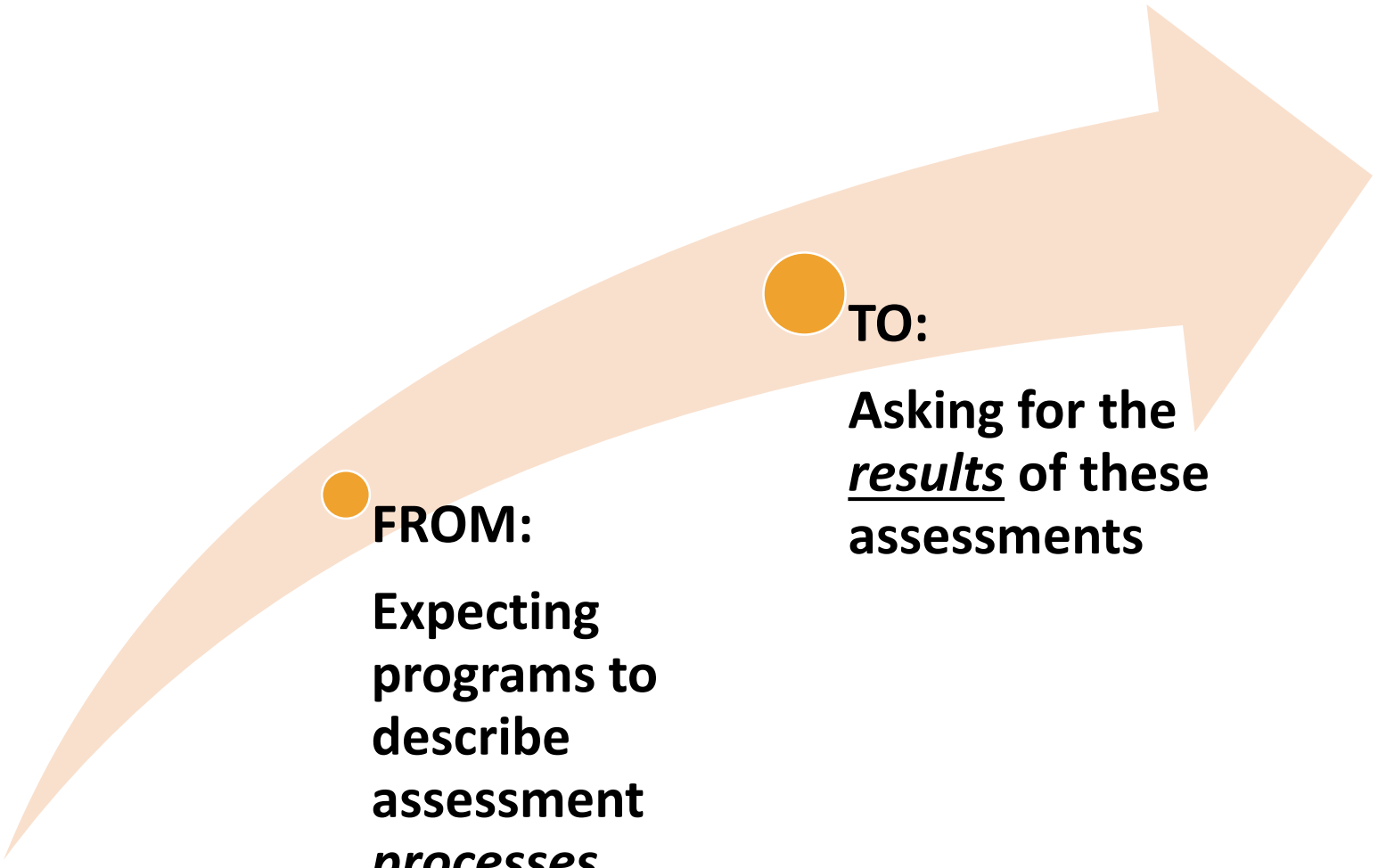
More emphasis / higher expectations for program review, program-level assessment

2013:

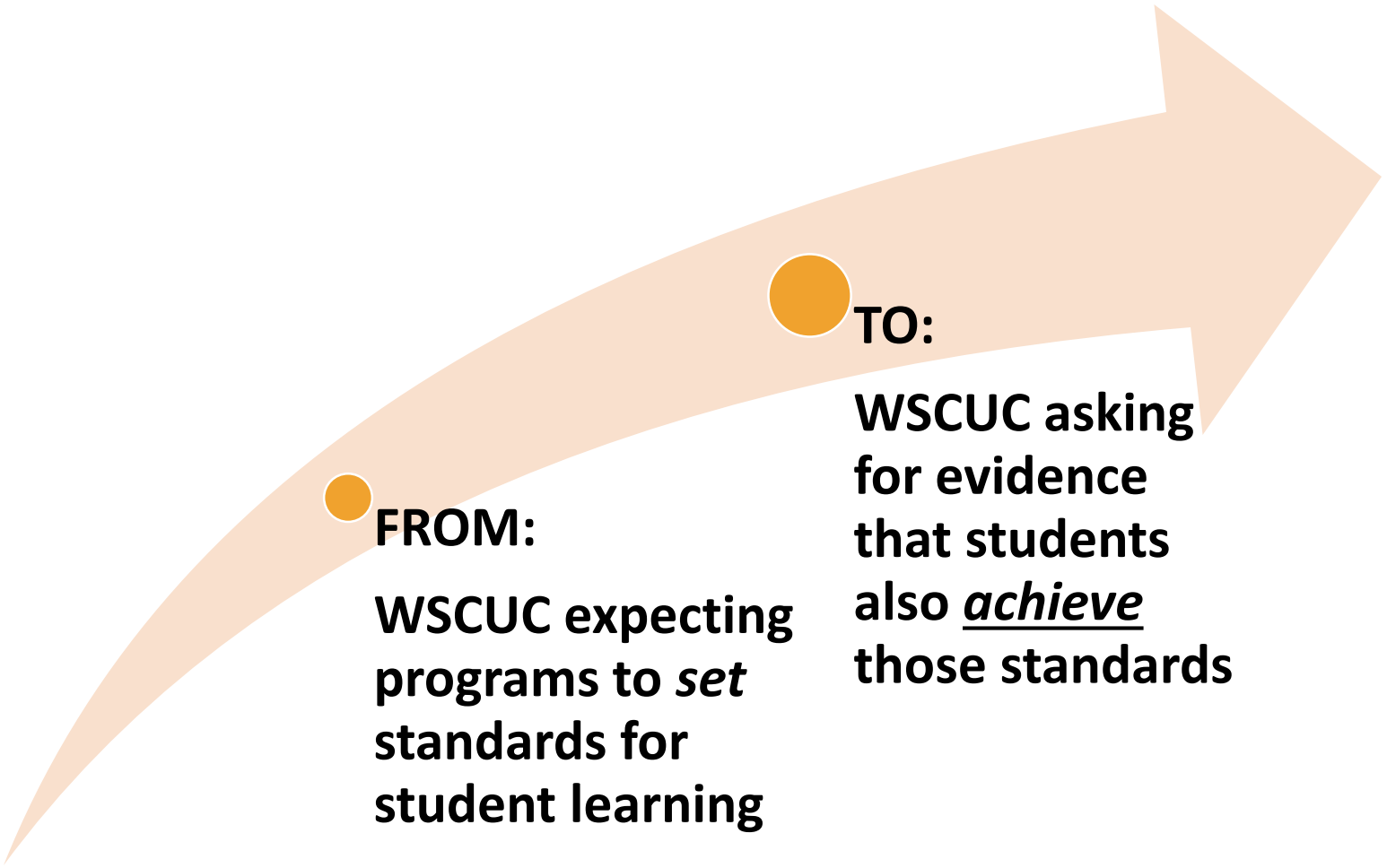
Lightly revised Standards

Significantly revised institutional review process

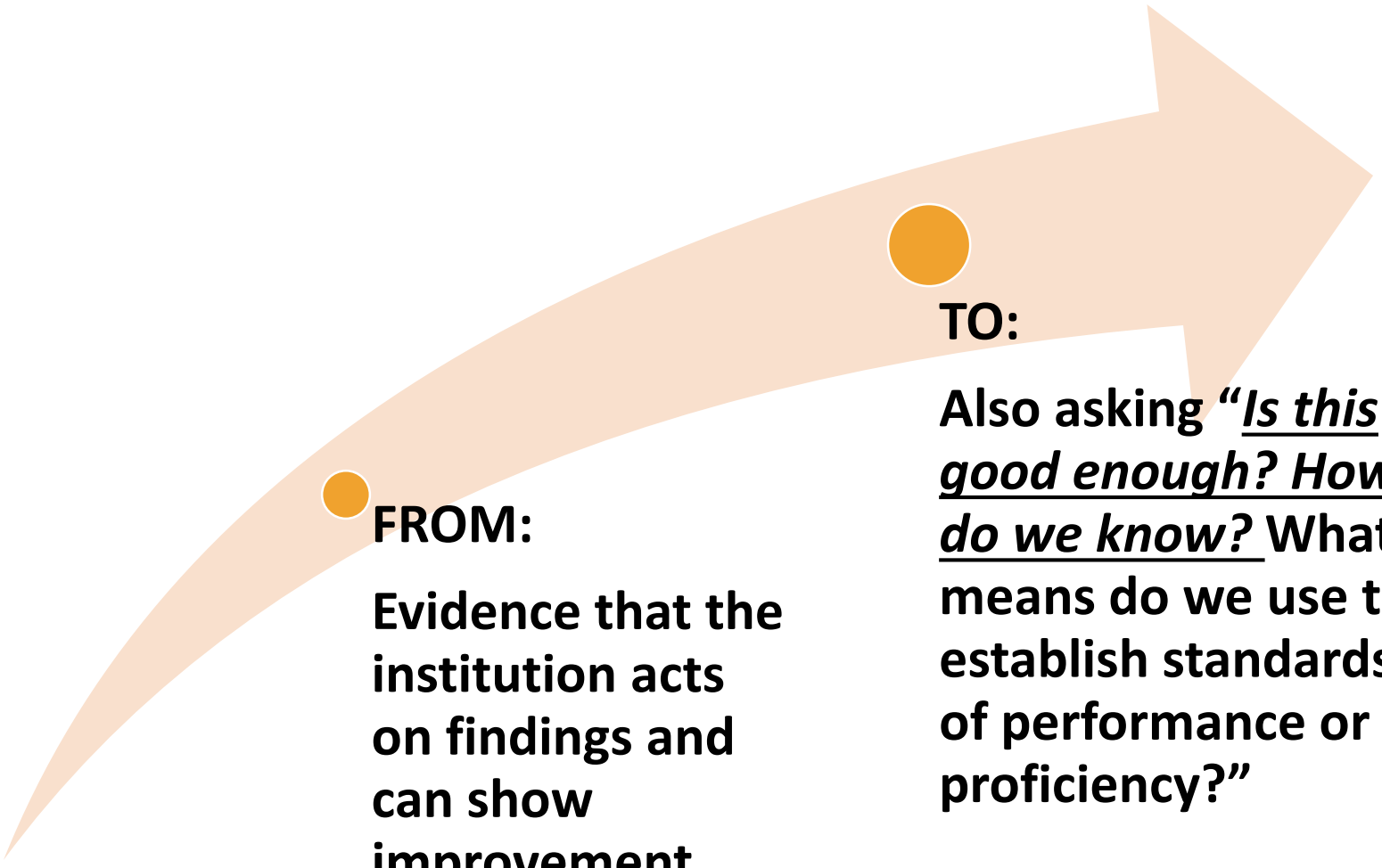
A Learning Curve



Another Learning Curve



Yet Another Learning Curve



FROM:

Evidence that the institution acts on findings and can show improvement

TO:

Also asking "*<u>Is this good enough? How do we know?</u>* What means do we use to establish standards of performance or proficiency?"

THE BIG 5!

In no particular order of importance:

Critical Thinking

Information Literacy

Oral Communication

Quantitative Literacy

Written Communication

What's the 2013 Handbook Say?

- 2.2 - All degrees—undergraduate and graduate—awarded by the institution are clearly defined in terms of entry-level requirements **and levels of student achievement necessary for graduation** that represent more than simply an accumulation of courses or credits.

What's the 2013 Handbook Say?

- 2.2a – Undergraduate programs … ensure the development of core competencies including, but not limited to, **written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking.**

What's the 2013 Handbook Say?

- 2.6 - The institution demonstrates that its **graduates consistently achieve** its stated learning outcomes and established standards of performance.

What's the 2013 Handbook Say?

- 4.1 - The institution employs a deliberate set of quality-assurance processes … including periodic program review, **assessment of student learning**, and other forms of ongoing evaluation. These processes include: collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data; tracking learning results over time; using comparative data from external sources; and improving structures, services, processes, curricula, pedagogy, and learning results.

Handbook – Component 4

- **Educational Quality: Student Learning, Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation**

The institutional review process calls upon institutions to describe how the curriculum addresses each of the five core competencies, explain their learning outcomes in relation to those core competencies, and demonstrate, **through evidence of student performance, the extent to which those outcomes are achieved**. . .

Standards Are About Expectations

Not only **WHAT** students should know or be able to do …

(outcomes)

BUT ALSO

HOW WELL they should be able to do it!

(level of performance / rigor you expect)

Good! Good *Enough*?

- Standards of performance can be a powerful tool.
  - Reflect on what's important for students
  - Reflect on what's important for instructors and institutions
- They are a means, not an end.
- They are the logical next step for assessment – and accreditation.
- Used thoughtfully, they can move our institutions and higher education into the 21st century

Institution's Responsibility:

- Define each competency or outcome
- Establish an institutional standard of performance at or near graduation: "appropriately ambitious"
- Assess, (dis)aggregate findings
- Show extent to which students' performance meets the institution's standard of performance
- If improvement is needed, create a plan, with criteria, timeline, metrics, for judging progress
- Report to WSCUC

WSCUC's Responsibility:

- Provide support, be a partner in the process

- WSCUC will accept . . .
  - Variations within and across institutions
  - Multiple methods and approaches
  - Gradual implementation
  - Innovation, experimentation

WSCUC's Approach

- Standards of performance are defined by the institution, not WSCUC;
- Assessment methods are chosen by the institution, not WSCUC; and
- Institutions are urged to contextualize results, data/evidence, relative to similar types of institutions and a larger universe.
- Benchmarking is encouraged, but not required.

WSCUC's Role: Trust and Verify

The WSCUC accreditation process verifies that the institution has:

- set its own standards of performance;
- calibrated its level of performance/proficiency in some way, e.g., internally, against peers, employer expectations
- generated data/evidence of learning results; and
- developed plans for improvement where needed

RESOURCES

- *2013 Handbook of Accreditation* – on WSCUC's website
- Core Competency FAQs – on WSCUC's website
- The Big 5 Retreat
  - November 19-20, 2015 - Pomona
- The WSCUC Academic Resource Conference (ARC)
  - April 6-8, 2016 – Garden Grove

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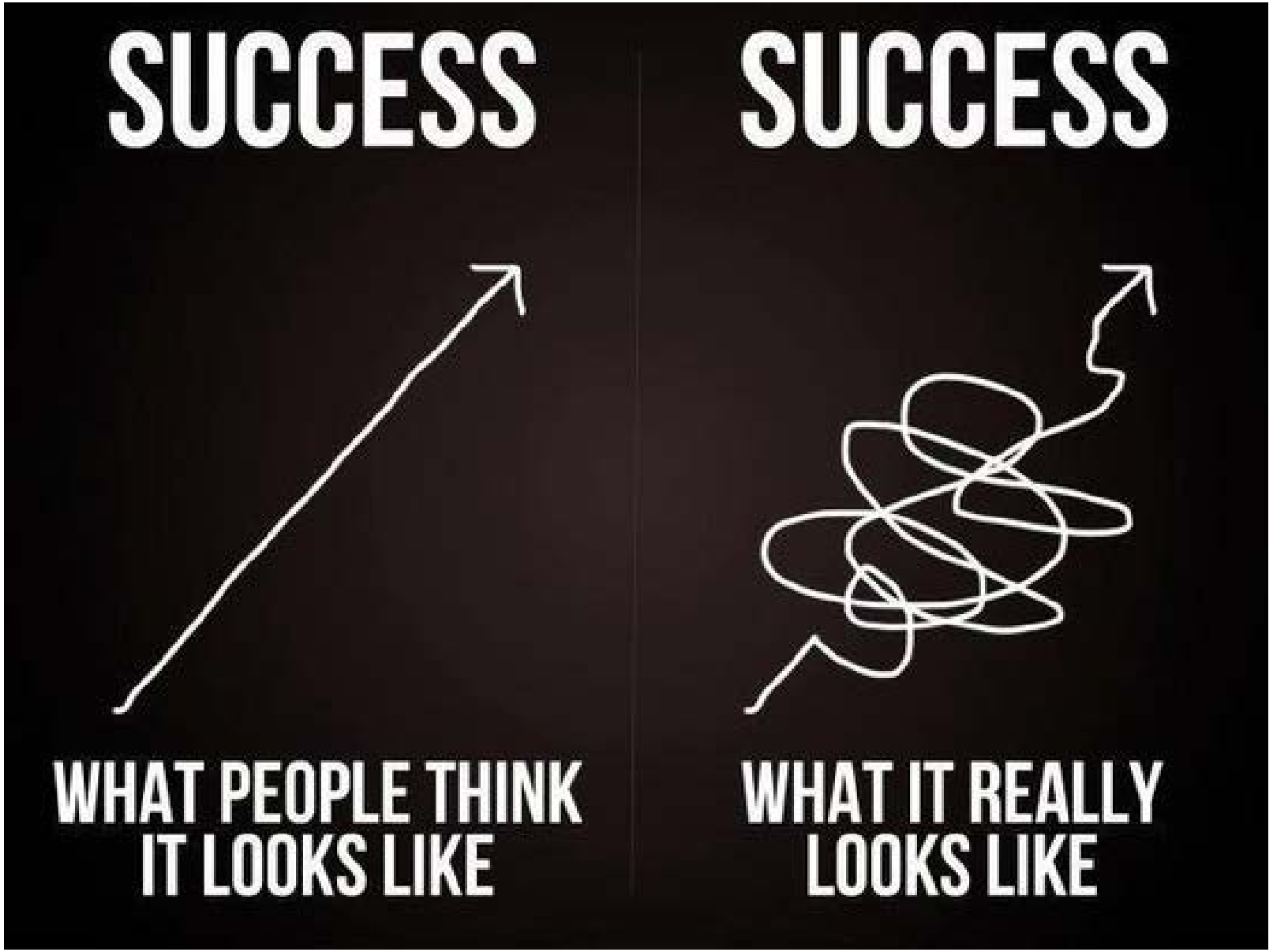
SUCCESS
WHAT PEOPLE THINK IT LOOKS LIKE
SUCCESS
WHAT IT REALLY LOOKS LIKE

Thank You!

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