If we focus on outcomes, do we really need courses?

- A student-centered institution
  - shifts the emphasis from teaching to learning
  - provides flexible timeframes, multiple pathways
  - aims for "mastery learning"

- Learning is the end, courses a means

- Other paths can lead to learning, too, e.g.,
  - Open courseware
  - Independent study
  - Job training
  - Avocations

- Assessment can validate learning from any source
Assessment becomes the key to

- Diagnosing students’ strengths, weaknesses, levels of proficiency
- Validating acquisition of knowledge and skills
- Confirming fulfillment of degree requirements defined as outcomes
- Safeguarding quality
The student’s role changes . . .

- Greater freedom of choice
- Prior knowledge validated
- Fewer courses needed
- Swifter degree completion
- Greater personal responsibility
- Discipline, engagement required
- New skills essential
The faculty’s work changes . . .

☐ Less focus on curriculum, courses
☐ Less classroom teaching
☐ More
  ■ Defining, refining outcomes of the major
  ■ Advising, creating degree blueprints
  ■ Diagnosing gaps in skills, knowledge
  ■ Guiding study groups
  ■ Devising tutorials, identifying resources
  ■ Developing, administering assessments
  ■ Faculty development
Cautions and questions . . .

- Can students assume this responsibility? Will some be left behind?

- Can faculty acquire new skills fast enough?

- Can assessment focus on *results*?

- Will institutions be willing, able to change?