ASSESSING ASSESSMENT

Revising and Advancing the Program-level Assessment Reporting and Reviewing Process
Assessing Assessment

Presenter:
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Hattiesburg, MS
University Assessment Committee

Academic Representation = 19
- 6 colleges
- Academic Council
- Graduate Council
- Faculty Senate
- Council of Chairs
- GEC committee

Administrative Representation = 8
- 5 divisions
- University Libraries
- Staff Council
- QEP Director

Ex Officio Members
- Associate Provost
- Director of IE
Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1:
The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: (Institutional Effectiveness)
3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
3.3.1.2 administrative support services
3.3.1.3 educational support services
3.3.1.4 research within its educational mission, if appropriate
3.3.1.5 community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate
Just this afternoon, we spent two hours in a faculty meeting in conversations about improving our PhD program--discussions that would never have taken place without the University's required assessment procedures. That's a good thing!

-Dick Conville
Communication Studies

(In response to the survey conducted by the UAC “Assessing the Culture of Assessment” subcommittee)
Office of Institutional Effectiveness

- Administrative support for the UAC
- Continuity
- Guidance
- Keeping up with SACS
UAC Responsibilities

- **Reviewing Plans**
  - Missions
  - Outcomes/Objectives
  - Measures/Targets

- **Reviewing Reports**
  - Findings
  - Analysis
  - Action Plans
  - Program Summaries
  - Continuous Improvement Initiatives
  - Closing the Loop

Fall 2012 = 183 Academic Program Reports reviewed
UAC Reviewing Process

One-Phase Review

- Both reviewers submit same instrument at same time
- Return both rubrics to departments or IE summarizes review

Two-Phase Review

- First reviewer submits instrument
- IE addresses any apparent issues or misunderstandings
- Second reviewer reviews report & instrument and prepares a summary of department’s reports
Academic Program Reporting Calendar

- Two-year cycle
- Plans in place for two years
- Reports submitted annually
- Action Plans developed every two years
- Multiple due dates for Findings
- Spring semester of second year – departments gather faculty to review and revisit assessment data
## Academic Program Reporting Calendar

### Two-year Assessment Cycle (2012-13 & 2013-14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2012</strong></td>
<td>Implement new Action Plans and Assessment Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 31, 2013</td>
<td>Record Fall 12 Findings (by site)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31, 2013</td>
<td>Record Spring 13 Findings (by site)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 30, 2013</td>
<td>Alternative Calendar Complete 2012-13 Report Due Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 1 – Dec. 2013</td>
<td>University Assessment Committee Review of Assessment Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. – Feb. 2014</td>
<td>UAC Reviews returned to Departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 31, 2014</td>
<td>Record Summer 13 and Fall 13 Findings (by site)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2014</strong></td>
<td>Department evaluates assessment documentation to date and develops Action Plans and Assessment Plan for 2014-15 &amp; 2015-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31, 2014</td>
<td>Record Spring 14 Findings (by site)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Programs offered at multiple campuses or by multiple modes MUST report findings by site.*
Toolkit for Effective Organization

- UAC Folder
- Assessment Policies & Guidelines
- Committee on Committees Annual Report
- SACSCOC Resource Manual – 3.3.1
- UAC Bylaws
- Review Instructions
- Dropbox
- Assessment Showcase Booklet
Carrots and Sticks

- Recognition of Commended Programs
- Showcase of Exemplary Plan & Reporting Elements
- Communication of Commended Programs with Deans and Provost
- Assessment Star of the Year Award

- Communication of the not-so-commended programs with Deans and Provost
- UAC Policy Regarding Academic Programs’ Participation in the University-Wide Assessment Process
- Prospect of Assessment Participation in Program Prioritization
Assessment Showcase

http://www.usm.edu/institutional-effectiveness/assessment-showcase

1. Write Outcomes
2. Establish criteria for success
3. View assessment results
4. Assess performance against criteria
5. Effect improvements through actions
CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY BS*
2011-2012 Program-level Student Learning Outcomes

1. BCT students will have an ability to select and apply the knowledge, techniques, skills, and modern tools of their disciplines to broadly-defined engineering technology activities. (ABET General Criteria 'a')

2. BCT students will have an ability to select and apply a knowledge of mathematics, science, engineering, and technology to engineering technology problems that require the application of principles and applied procedures or methodologies. (ABET General Criteria 'b')

3. BCT students will have an ability to conduct standard tests and measurements; to conduct, analyze, and interpret experiments; and to apply experimental results to improve processes. (ABET General Criteria 'c')

4. BCT students will have an ability to design systems, components, or processes for broadly-defined engineering technology problems appropriate to program educational objectives. (ABET General Criteria 'd')
A Student Learning Outcome (SLO) is a statement regarding knowledge, skills, and/or traits students should gain or enhance as a result of their engagement in an academic program. SLOs are the items that complete the sentence, “When they complete our program, students will be able to…..” A program does not need to state all possible student learning outcomes, but it should try to articulate those that are fundamental. A program may choose to rotate SLOs. Student learning outcomes should show progressive distinction between degree levels (BA, MA, PhD) in the same academic unit.
Measures, Targets, and Findings

- A measure identifies evidence and methods used to determine achievement of expected outcomes. Targets show criteria for success for each student learning outcome. The findings that result from these measures should be used to demonstrate student learning and provide direction for improving learning.

- Measures and Targets should show progressive distinction between degree levels (BA, MA, PhD) in the same academic unit. Simple rates, frequencies, or percentages of activities are not true measures of student learning outcomes.
CRIMINAL JUSTICE BA*
Program-level Direct Measure

M 2: Capstone Reflective Essay
Students shall submit, as part of the Senior Capstone Course Portfolio, a reflective essay evidencing knowledge and significance of the historical development, evolution, and structure of the contemporary criminal and juvenile justice systems. The students should include an explanation of how the portfolio materials contributed to the synthesis and analysis of their foundational knowledge. The essay will be divided into five sections: criminological theory, legal theory, juvenile justice, constitutional history, and ethics. Each section will be graded on four components (25% for each component: logic, structure, knowledge and persuasiveness).

Target: 80% of the students will achieve a score of 75 or better on the Theoretical (legal and criminological) and Ethics components of the reflective essay completed in the senior capstone course (CJ 435).

Findings (2011-2012) - Target: Met
On the Hattiesburg campus, 85% (17/20) of students during the Fall 2011 academic term and 83% (20/24) of students during the Spring 2012 academic term achieved a score of 75 or better on the Theoretical and Ethics components of the reflective essay completed in the senior capstone course (CJ 435). The senior capstone course (CJ 435) was not offered on the Gulf Park campus during the Fall 2011 academic term. In the Spring 2012 term, however, 100% (10/10) of students on the Gulf Park campus achieved an overall score of 75 or better on the Theoretical and Ethics components of the reflective essay completed in the senior capstone course (CJ 435).
Action Plans & Analysis

- An action is an organized activity undertaken to help programs more effectively achieve intended outcomes, or an activity developed by program faculty to improve and grow the program for the future.

- Analysis is the reflection of the program’s findings within/for the criteria set for success on the program's intended outcomes. The Analysis is a summary of strengths and areas in which improvement is needed.
Develop a plan for a year-long student teaching experience.

CISE faculty in conjunction with the Educational Field Experience office are collaborating to develop a plan to merge the CISE senior block experiences with the semester student teaching experience to allow for a student teaching experience that encompasses a full year in K-6 partnering schools.

- Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
- Implementation Status: Planned
- Priority: High

Implementation Description: Research for this project will be conducted in the schools involving USM didactic and clinical instructors and K-6 faculty beginning in the fall 2012. Additionally, planning meetings will be held to begin the implementation of the full-year clinical experience in fall 2013.

Projected Completion Date: 05/15/2013

Responsible Party: Dr. Janet Boyce, CISE elementary education faculty, Educational Field Experience staff
What specifically did your assessments show regarding any outcomes/objectives that will require continued attention?

It is apparent that the performance of our BSC students on the ETS Major Field Exam in Biology is not at the level we would like. On average, our students have consistently scored lower than the 50th percentile on the various sections of this exam. For those faculty that have taught the BSC 497 course, there is a feeling that students are not concerned with their performance on this exam and may not be preparing for the exam and completing the exam with the same attention that is given to other course work. The BSC Assessment Committee will address this issue in the next year to develop ways to improve student investment in the exam and hopefully student performance.

Another student learning outcome of interest is the development of technical skills consistent with the major. Though the entry level goal was not met this year, students are demonstrating acceptable technical skills in the upper level assessment (BSC 380 Microbiology). However, when students in the BSC 497 are surveyed, there seems to be a feeling that students are not gaining the technical skills consistent with their major. There seems to be a disconnect in what is evaluated by the faculty in coursework and what the students perceive. It may be useful to include an exercise in the BSC 497 course that focuses on technical skills consistent with the major and how these are appropriate for employment. Highlighting these factors may improve student perception of what they gained technically through the degree program.
Annual Reporting Fields

PROGRAM SUMMARY
 Programs are asked to summarize highlights of the past year for that particular academic program. The summary field is needed to provide context to an outside reviewer. Program contributions, activities, and accomplishments should be included in this field. Any data collected outside of the student learning outcome measures could be showcased in this field as well.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES (ADDITIONAL ACTION PLANS)
 Any department-level or program-level action plans for improvement that are not necessarily tied to a specific student learning outcome should be described in this field.

CLOSING THE LOOP (ACTION PLAN TRACKING)
 Programs are asked to summarize the results of previous action plan implementation. This is the opportunity for programs to close the assessment loop – to report on the success (or nonsuccess) of previously implemented action plans. It is very important for programs to respond to this section with thought and detail. This section is where programs provide evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results.
PUBLIC RELATIONS MS

The mission of the Masters in Public Relations degree program in the School of Mass Communication and Journalism is to provide students graduate-level preparation in communication management skills, communication and public relations theory, information gathering and analysis, as well as a sound knowledge of the role and function of professional communication in public and private organizations in order to prepare them for leadership positions in public relations and related fields and/or to continue their graduate education at a graduate school of their choice. The Master of Science degree in Public Relations requires 30 hours, with an option of a thesis, major project, or an internship. This is the only Master's program in Public Relations in the state of Mississippi. It is well-known throughout the region for quality education and outstanding alumni. Many of our graduates are leaders in their field and they maintain close ties with the School and the university. Last year, a few of them came back to either give guest lectures or help with portfolio review. To build on our success and make the program bigger and better, we have been considering the possibility of developing a hybrid program in the future when we have required resources.
Continuous Improvement Initiatives

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MBA**

During the 2011-2012 year there were several continuous improvement initiatives not directly linked to the assessment of learning outcomes in the MBA program.

- **Increase study abroad opportunities and participation by MBA students.** More students traveled to Panama in 2012 than in 2011; MBA students joined students in the MPA program, the Masters in Logistics, Trade and Transportation and the Masters in Economic Development. This globalizes our MBA students and provides the additional benefit of understanding diverse perspectives on the importance of Panama to world trade. Students learned from each other due to Panama research projects that crossed all areas.

- **As planned in 2010-2011, a more dynamic scheduling model was developed and implemented in 2011-2012.** The program was redesigned as a Professional MBA Program with a hybrid course delivery format. Student response to the new format has been very positive, particularly in the working professional cohort. Assessment results indicate no declines in learning outcomes due to the change. While this change required an adjustment on the part of students and faculty, both groups report positive results from the class delivery format change.

- **The 2011-2012 year also marked increased partnering with other programs on campus.** The MBA Director worked with graduate directors in Nursing, LTT and Economic Development to expand the scope of our MBA program while also providing graduate business electives to other graduate students on campus. The College now has a formal agreement with the Master’s degree in LTT; MBA students can choose their electives for an emphasis area and LTT students can choose MBA courses for a business elective emphasis. This work will continue during the 2012-2013 year with similar partnerships in Economic Development programs and graduate Nursing programs.
Closing the Loop

In the past two years the English department successfully completed a number of action plans that have now been reclassified as finished:

1. begin collecting data at the Gulf Park campus
2. develop a grading rubric (planned as 100-point scale but implemented on a 5-point scale)
3. establish departmental targets
4. reconcile learning outcomes and evaluation methods
5. review assessment criteria for ENG 400
6. develop better, more consistent outcomes for writing
7. develop a common assignment across curriculum
8. make curriculum changes to improve literary knowledge
9. implement new exit survey
10. collect data on and assess oral presentations for Gulf Park site

For the past several years we have been collecting data from the Gulf Park campus in order to complete our dual-site assessment. The department implemented a more manageable 5-point grading rubric rather than the 100-point rubric initially planned in order to develop more faculty consensus about student outcomes. We established departmental targets, reconciled learning outcomes with evaluation methods, identified consistent learning outcomes, and reorganized the curriculum as noted in the Program Summary. We now use the new rubric to assess the English capstone course and encourage faculty to incorporate standard assignment types in 300- and 400-level courses.

In 2011-2012 specifically, we implemented two important action plans. The department devised and circulated an exit survey for graduating seniors in all sections of the capstone course. The exit survey was designed to serve as an indirect measure, and the second measure, for all learning outcomes. It asked students to score themselves for the categories of thesis-argument, analysis, writing skills, research, oral communication skills, and literary content knowledge. The department also began gathering data on oral presentation skills at the Gulf Park campus in order to include these results on our annual report. Prior to 2011-2012, this data was only collected in Hattiesburg.
Questions

Thank you!