Increasing Faculty Involvement in Program Assessment

Assessment Office
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"My thoughts about the value of measuring outcomes have changed over time, but there has been no single “conversion moment.” Incrementally and cumulatively, I have begun truly to see the point of focusing on student learning, and that doing so has improved my teaching and my students’ learning.”

Andrew Fort, Professor of Religion
Liberal Education, Vol 97, No. 1, 2011

Today’s Agenda & Outcomes

Agenda
1. Program assessment overview
2. AO’s assumptions & beliefs
3. Strategies to increase participation

Outcome
• Participants will be able to state at least one strategy to increase faculty involvement in program assessment
PROGRAM ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

• **WHAT:** The collection, review, and use of information about student learning at the program level
• **WHY:** Results used for program evolution or improvement
• **IMPORTANT TO KNOW:** It’s not individual evaluation

Program Assessment Overview

AO’s Assumptions & Beliefs

• Faculty are in the best position to lead program assessment
• Faculty care about students & student learning
• Change takes time
AO’s Assumptions & Beliefs

• Have to use existing funds & resources
• Tenure & promotion will continue to value research productivity more than teaching

Strategies to Increase Participation

1. Acknowledge and address faculty concerns
2. Small & meaningful
3. Use existing structures
4. Get assessment support
5. “Thank you” and public recognition

Fear of Change & Use of Results

• Validate: Yes, change is hard
• Use of results: Faculty Senate resolution, Faculty Governance of Program Assessment
  – Results not used to evaluate personnel, close programs, or compare programs

Links to Faculty Senate resolution on the Faculty Governance of Program Assessment (approved December 8, 2011):

Faculty Gov. of Program Assessment (Faculty Senate site link)

Faculty Gov. of Program Assessment (Assessment Office site link)
Impinges on Academic Freedom

- No, it does not restrict faculty members’ freedom to discuss their subject
- UHM follows American Association of University Professors statements
  - Faculty should control all aspects of assessment
  - Assessment should focus on local goals & objectives

Links to the American Association of University Professors documents:

- Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure
- Mandated Assessment of Educational Outcomes (1991 committee report)

Overworked

- Validate: Yes, faculty are asked to do new things
- Assessment can be built into existing structures & activities
- Assessment as a communication tool to increase efficiency
- New priorities may be needed

“Why do it? Students graduate & go to graduate school or get jobs.”

- Program evolution may be needed
You (and a colleague)

• Do an assessment project yourself or with a like-minded colleague
  – Share results/recommendations with colleagues and the department; discuss next steps
  – Publish in a subject-area journal on teaching

Small Group of Faculty

• Find a few like-minded faculty
• Small project (or a pilot project)
  – Assess a small number of students
  – Assess 1 outcome
  – Discuss outcomes, curriculum alignment, barriers to student graduation, or post-graduation issues
• Present results to the faculty or curriculum committee & discuss next steps

Focus on Use of Results

• Choose a burning issue that many care about
  – Students cannot do X
  – Students enter course X unprepared
  – Students take too long to graduate
• Design a project that includes “voices”
  – Stories are compelling
Modify What You Have

- Integrate assessment into curriculum decision-making
- Evaluate departmental release time
- Use capstone experience: thesis, dissertation

Use Existing Structures

Get Assessment Support

Use Resources

- Assessment Office website, workshops, consultations
- Meeting facilitation by the Assessment Office
- Friendly competition
- Find like-minded faculty in other departments
- Find examples from peer institutions

"Thank You"

Public Recognition

- Ask Department Chairperson or Dean to publically recognize faculty involved in assessment
  - Spoken thank you in meetings
  - Letters of recognition
  - Notice of research publications related to program assessment
- Express your appreciation
WHICH STRATEGY IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Need to Know…</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge &amp; address faculty concerns</td>
<td>What is the faculty attitude toward assessment?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small and meaningful</td>
<td>What’s a burning issue in your program?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use existing structures</td>
<td>What’s happened before? What does the program have now?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Get assessment support</td>
<td>Who might motivate faculty members?</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Thank You”</td>
<td>Who can recognize efforts? What is meaningful recognition?</td>
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Acknowledge & Address Faculty Concerns

Strategies

- Informational discussions & short presentations
- Small & meaningful projects (self, partner, or small group)
- Form an Assessment Committee or a Curriculum + Assessment Committee
Small & Meaningful Assessment Project

[Winner image]

Use Existing Structures

- Curriculum Committee ➔ Curriculum + Assessment Committee
- Release Time ➔ Assessment Coordinator
- Capstone, Thesis, Dissertation ➔ Use existing products as program-level evidence
- Graduate Student Researcher ➔ Needs assessment or data collection

Get Assessment Support

- Who will the program faculty listen to?
- Respected faculty colleague
- Peers at another university
- Assessment Office
- Department Chairperson
- Dean, Assistant Dean
- Chancellor, Vice Chancellor
- Accreditation agency, federal government

Please cite appropriately and ask permission before distributing.
“Thank You” & Public Recognition

[Light bulb image]

always a brilliant idea

A Moment to Contemplate

- Can you use faculty attitude toward assessment to increase involvement?
- What burning program issue can be assessed?
- What existing structures can you use?
- Who do the faculty listen to?
- Who can thank the faculty?

Change takes time.

Thank You!

You’re not alone.
Call the Assessment Office.
We’re here to help!

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