



Assessment of Department (unit) and degree program (s) with a focus on use of results for program (s) improvement

Issue: The University is preparing for its reaccreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in 2014 and the department for its recertification/reaccreditation through the Institute of Food technologists. There was a need for a systematic process of outcome based assessment with a focus on use of results for program improvement.

What has been done:

- New department assessment coordinators were appointed (one for each degree program) and the committee has been formed with representation from faculty associated with both degree programs (Food Science and Animal Science).
- Regular meetings of the departmental assessment committee were held at the beginning, 2 in mid semester and 1 at the end to continuously evaluate and provide feedback based on assessment.
- All course syllabi were collected and evaluated for course objectives and learning outcomes and feedback has been provided to all departmental faculty
- All courses have been mapped for the curriculum map learning outcomes
- Program (BS, MS, and PhD degrees) outcomes for the Food Science have been established and are approved by the office of Institutional Research
- The BS program in Food Science curriculum and student learning outcomes have been completed IFT re-certification in Aug 2013.
- Department Chair/Project director evaluated all courses by using online survey/course exit survey and results for 2012 and 2013. A systematic process has been established.
- Individual meetings with faculty have been set up for early Spring semester to provide feedback and to discuss issues and to develop alternative strategies.
- Key departmental goals (based on our strategic plan) have been developed
 - o Specific actions to achieve these goals and outcomes have been outlined
 - o Year one data has been collected and assessment/review is in program
 - o Program/curricular modification are underway
- Programs vitality evaluation (PVE) for each degree program in the department has been completed (with special emphasis on retention, student engagement, student credit hours generated by each faculty/degree program) and graduation rates of placement of the graduation)
- The PVE is being reviewed by a university committee appointed by the President
 - o The results of the PVE will result in program mergers or losses based on the review/committee report.

- External program review are completed i
- Faculty were encouraged to attend assessment workshops organized by the CETL and Office of Institution Research.
- Organized meetings (faculty) with the Director of Office of retention and persistence to get faculty on board with issues surrounding advisement and retention.

Major challenges

- All departmental faculty are now engaged in the process/ active and consistent in collecting assessment data and using assessment activities outcome data for program improvement

Impacts/New Partnerships:

Faculty members are now “on-board” and aware of the need and process for curriculum assessment. They now realize the value and importance of continuous assessment and program improvements based on outcomes from courses. Various methods of assessment are now in place (direct and indirect) to enable faculty to conduct assessment on a regular basis. Partners, cooperators and mentors

Center for Teaching and Learning-Director-Dr. Juarine Stewart, Associate Provost

Institute of Food Technologists, Higher Education Review Board

Southern Association for Colleges and Schools AAMU Liaison-Dr. Virginia Caples

Director-Institutional research-Dr. Tom Coaxum

Drs. Jorge Vizcarra and Josh Herring-Departmental Assessment Coordinators

Outcome of Project (societal impact/ measure of increased quality of life)

Before this process many faculty in the department had a poorly developed process of assessment and the students and program suffered. Even those with considerable experience did not share a common view of the importance of learning outcomes or a common format for documenting their assessment activities or reporting their findings. The program has now improved due to the development of this systematic process and that is going to result in better trained and prepared students for the workforce.

How has your project been aided by your FSLI experience?

The FSLI experience aided me in engaging faculty at all different levels of the process. There were a number of difficult conversations and meetings as part of the process and the information received assisted in the process. Outlining clear expectations and holding them accountable for the tasks at hand in a systematic way was easier to complete.

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