



Assessment for Program Improvement Shiretta Ownbey

Issue: The project focused on engaging academic units in the assessment process for increased accountability and program improvement (rather than a report-writing exercise). There are increasing demands for greater accountability from higher education. Oversight groups also require more effective assessment efforts to document student learning. It is important that assessment informs faculty regarding needed instructional/curricular changes as well.

What has been done:

- Individual meetings with a team in each academic unit (unit head, graduate coordinator, and faculty representative to the College Assessment Committee) were held at which the group reviewed processes for developing assessment plans/reports and five-year Academic Program Reviews (APRs).
- New departmental Assessment Committee was formed in one academic unit.
- Units submitted new assessment plans in summer 2008 and reports in summer 2009 on student learning outcomes identified in new assessment plans.
- In February 2009, units submitted eight five-year APRs for review by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (focusing on undergraduate and graduate academic programs).
- Regular meetings of the College Assessment Committee were held; strategies and processes were discussed.
- A college-wide assessment project was conceptualized; the project involved collecting student papers in master's and doctoral research methods courses across the College. A "writing rubric" was developed.
- Funding was secured to pay four faculty reviewers to review 50+ artifacts. Writing assessment project was conducted in summers 2008 and 2009. Funding was secured to pay stipend for graduate research assistant for assessment.
- A joint meeting of the College Assessment Committee and the College Graduate Council was held in fall 2008 to review assessment data collected via the graduate writing project.
- Faculty representatives to the Assessment Committee led program faculty in reviews of existing Senior Exit Surveys; revisions were made to align with student learning outcomes and accreditation requirements.

Impacts:

- Much improved assessment plans and reports for five of the eight academic programs; some improvements we initiated in one additional program.
- Data were collected for two summers on graduate students' writing. Meeting will be held in fall 2009 at which faculty will formulate strategies for program improvement based on the data.
- More effective assessment was available to be reported in the five-year APRs.
- Assessment committees at the college level and department level (for one department) emerged as leaders to improve assessment efforts.
- An effective collaboration (assessment focused) was forged and will continue between the College Assessment Committee and the College Graduate Council.
- Assessment tools (rubrics, senior exit surveys) were developed (or revised) and tested.

Funding Sources, Cooperators, Partners, Mentors etc.: Funding for stipends to reviewers of the graduate program writing assessment project and the stipend for a graduate research assistant for assessment was received from the Oklahoma State University Office of University Assessment and Testing.

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