STEPPING INTO ASSESSMENT

International Assessment and Retention Conference
New Orleans, LA
June 11, 2009

Presenters

- Rebecca Sanderson, Student Affairs Research and Evaluation
- Pat Ketcham, Student Health Services
- Melissa Yamamoto, Student Leadership and Involvement
- Kent Sumner, Memorial Union
- Beth Dyer, Counseling and Psychological Service
Goals for the Workshop

- Develop strategies for getting started with assessment
- Explore various ways to engage student affairs professionals in assessment
- Become familiar with strategies for sustaining a successful assessment culture

What brings you to this session?

What do you want to take away?
GETTING STARTED

How We Started

- Division-wide assessment council
  - Composed of volunteers

- Purpose
  - To lead the division in developing a culture of assessment

- Organization/Process
  - Developed by the group

Oregon State University--Sanderson, Ketcham, Yamamoto, Sumner, Dyer, 2009
Learning Community Approach

- Anyone can join
- Everyone agrees:
  - to learn
  - to help others learn and
  - the work goes on even if a person misses a meeting
  - to share the work
- Discuss and come to consensus around important issues
- Strive for excellence and also for JOY

Elements that Foster Involvement

- Have an impact
- Support the organization
- Learn new skills and be challenged
- To be involved
- Have some control over the process
- Belief that it is the "Right" thing to do
- Bring clarity and purpose to our work
- Contributing to the "Bigger Picture" of student learning
Our First Agenda

- Define Assessment
- Develop a shared conceptual understanding of the purpose of assessment
- Define a common language
- Foster our own learning
- Develop a public and inclusive way to communicate

Assessment Definition

...the systematic collection, review, and use of information about programs/services undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development... (adapted from Palomba & Banta, 1999)
**Goals for Assessment**

- Improve programs
- Improve planning
- Focus efforts
- Inform decision-making
- Clarify intentions
- Intentionally elevate learning in Student Affairs

**This Language**

- To improve student learning in essential areas (e.g., multiculturalism, leadership).
- To improve programs and services.
- To ensure that students are learning what we want them to learn.
- To focus efforts.
- To inform decision-making and clarify intentions.
**Versus This Language**

- Accreditation
- Administrative mandates
- Accountability
- Spelling’s Commission
- Expectations from professional organizations

*This is important—do it...!*

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**Basic Assessment Questions**

- What are we doing and why are we doing it?
- What do we expect a student to know, to think, or to do as a result of our program/service?
- How well are we doing it?
- How do we know?
- How do we use the information to improve?
- Does that work? (Bresciani, 2002)
Assessment Myths We Had To Manage

Assessment must be:
- Perfect
- All-encompassing
- About numbers and statistics
- About one thing and I don’t do that one thing
- About surveys
- Done by a PhD
- Done the one right way
- Fast because we need it fast
- A one person job because the rest of us have work to do
- Something bad because I feel scared/threatened
- About a task and once that task is done then you are finished
- About success and success = happiness, satisfaction, and large numbers of attendees

Oregon State University--Sanderson, Ketcham, Yamamoto, Sumner, Dyer, 2009
Successful assessment includes a written assessment plan

- To think through assessment needs and capture agreement about what matters
- To give direction for action—To know who, when, where, what
- To provide a means to determine if progress is being made

Elements of Assessment Planning

- Department or Program Mission
- Goals
- Intended Student Outcomes
- Methodology
- Implementation
- Results
- Decisions/Recommendations
Mission

■ Describes the purpose of the organization and the constituents served

■ Should be able to state the mission in 25 words or less

Examples of Missions

■ We strengthen the University by providing quality recreational and educational opportunities that foster healthy living

■ We facilitate OSU students’ education-academically, emotionally, and socially-through high-quality, time-effective counseling, consultation, outreach, and training
Goals

- Broad general statements of what a program is trying to accomplish.
- It is not a “to do” list.
- Is aligned with university mission/goals and the departmental mission
- Provides departmental focus

Examples of Goals

- Develop sustainable assessment capacity and structures in the Division of Student Affairs
- Provide counseling and clinical services that meet or exceed current standards of practice
- Maintain responsible stewardship of our financial, human and physical resources, providing for current needs and addressing future growth
Learning Outcomes

- Detailed and specific statements derived from the goals. They are specifically about the intended end results of your program efforts and typically use active verbs such as: arrange, define, explain, demonstrate, etc.

- Levels of learning or mastery—Bloom’s Taxonomy

Tips on Outcomes

- Think about what is important rather than only what is easy to measure.
- Keep in mind that outcomes are the result of activity—not the activity itself.
- May want to begin with “captive” audiences (e.g., student employees).
- Keep it manageable in terms of the resources you have.
- Start with one or two learning outcomes and follow them through the full cycle.
Writing Learning Outcomes

- Target Group
- Targeted Learning
- Level of Mastery (Bloom’s Taxonomy)

Learning Outcome:
- **Target Group** will be able to **Bloom’s Taxonomy** word **Targeted Learning**.

Oregon State University--Sanderson, Ketcham, Yamamoto, Sumner, Dyer, 2009

Refining Learning Outcomes

- Students will learn to prepare for an interview and practice with mock interviews.

  **Refined Outcome**

- Students will be able to identify components of effective interviews and demonstrate those components during mocks interviews.

  - Bresciani, 2007

Oregon State University--Sanderson, Ketcham, Yamamoto, Sumner, Dyer, 2009
Refining Outcomes

- Students will understand financial aid services and how to complete a scholarship application.

- Strengths? Weaknesses?

  **Refined Outcome**

- Students will identify financial aid services and articulate the steps and corresponding deadlines for completing a scholarship application.

  - Bresciani, 2007

Refining Outcomes

- Through the various programs (social, academic, and cultural) students will gain a greater level of understanding and appreciation of cultural differences as well as their own culture.

  **Refined Outcome (s)**
Refining Outcomes

- Through the various programs (social, academic, and cultural) students will describe the social and economical advantages of being able to work effectively across cultural differences.

- Students will be able to identify their cultural heritage and explain the contributions of their culture to their program of study.

Refine this Outcome

- Student tour leaders will improve their ability to handle the complex needs of campus visitors.
  - Student tour leaders will demonstrate effective customer service skills with visitors.
  - Student tour leaders will accurately identify campus services appropriate to campus visitor questions.
  - Student tour leaders will conduct effective campus tours.

Strengths?
Areas for improvement?
Assessment Methods

- The criteria, process, and tools used to collect evidence and to determine the degree to which the intended outcomes were reached.
  - Assessment methods include:
    - the target audience,
    - the methods and tools for data collection,
    - criteria or targets that tell you when the outcome has been met.

Considerations

- What method(s) will get the data to answer the question you are asking?
- What level of reliability and validity are needed?
  - Reliability—consistency of measurement
  - Validity—measures what it purports to measure
  - Does it make sense and look like it measures what we want it to measure?
- What is the Time, Cost, Motivation?
- How will you analyze the data?
Types of Methods

- Survey
- Tests
- Performance-based Measures
  - Checklists
  - Rubrics
- Interviews & Focus Groups
- Institutional Data

Survey

- Self-reported information: Demographic/descriptive data, attitudes, opinions, values, experiences, behaviors, expectations, goals, needs
- Dependent on accurate and honest recall
- Can be commercial and/or standardized
- Internally developed
Survey Examples

- National
  - National Survey of Student Engagement
  - CIRP Freshman Survey
  - Your First College Year Survey
  - College Success Survey
  - Educational Benchmarking Surveys (housing, college/university unions, etc.)

- Provide a broad overview of different areas

Tests

- Cognitive or thinking information
- Can include written and oral presentations of material
- Can be commercial and/or standardized
- Internally developed
Examples of Tests

- Department of Recreational Sports
  - written test for life guard certification
- Student Health Services
  - written test for CPR certification
- Both also include a practical demonstration of student’s ability to problem-solve and apply knowledge attested to on the written test (performance-based method)

Performance-Based Measures

- Direct evidence of learning through performance.
  - e.g., projects, work samples, capstone experiences, direct observation.
- Must develop criteria for evaluating the performance.
  - e.g., rubrics, checklists.
Examples of Performance Based

- Student Health Services—CPR certification
- Recreational Sports—life guard certification
- Student Involvement and Leadership Programs—student advisor training & certification
- Admissions—Tour leader training and certification
- Disability Access Services—accommodation certification

Checklists

- Direct evidence of
  - presence,
  - absence,
  - frequency of a behavior
- Often used with direct observation, can be used also for content knowledge.
Checklist Example

Problem:
- Are student advisors to organizations able to implement training on event planning advisement

Learning Outcome:
- Student advisors will be able to implement effective problem-solving and advisement practices with organizations in their event planning.

Checklist Use

- Scenario provided to student advisor
- Student asked to answer questions about the scenario
- Raters scored the presentation of information and problem-solving by the student using a check list

Oregon State University--Sanderson, Ketcham, Yamamoto, Sumner, Dyer, 2009
Example

You have been trying to make contact with the President of your assigned organization for 3 weeks. Today you found this email from that President—Bob, President of the OSU Horse Shoe Club

We are planning a food demo event and would like to use the Memorial Union ballroom for it. After talking to the officers we came up with some possible dates, either Friday three weeks from today, Thursday three weeks from today or Saturday four weeks from today. We have never organized a big event before and our organization is fairly small (5 officers and 3 members), so what do we need to know to make this event successful?

Scenario Checklist

1. What concerns would you have about this request?
   - Group size large enough to pull off large event
   - Relationship of the event to the purpose of the club
   - Location proposed may not be conducive to type of event planned
   - Timeframe and prep time is short
   - Funding
   - Other well-reasoned response _________
2. How could these concerns be addressed?
   - Refer to event planning for student groups website
   - Ask the officers to meet with you to clarify their intentions and to provide coaching on event planning
   - Suggest that they talk with the Food Club to see how they planned their very successful food demonstration
   - Other—well reasoned response ________

Rubrics

- Used to score subjective measures of performance
- Involves prior determination of how performance will be rated
- Answers the question: What does a satisfactory rating look like?
Developing a Rubric

- 4 Basic Parts set out in a grid
  - Task description (what the student is to do)
  - Scale (levels of achievement)
  - Dimensions of the task broken into parts
  - Description of what constitutes each level of performance

Developing a Rubric

- Dimensions
  - Represents components that students will need to put together for a successful “performance”

- Description of the Dimensions at each scale level
  - What does this dimension look like at the Exemplary level, the Proficient level, Marginal level, and Unacceptable level
Developing a Rubric

Task description: Tour students will conduct an effective and enjoyable campus tour for campus visitors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIMITED SAMPLE</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Marginal</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about OSU</td>
<td>Wide range of knowledge</td>
<td>Depth of knowledge in several areas</td>
<td>Knowledge limited to one or two areas</td>
<td>Very limited knowledge in any specific area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Speaking</td>
<td>Adapts content to listener and situation</td>
<td>Adapts content in general way</td>
<td>Adapts poorly to listener</td>
<td>Ignores listener and situation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teamwork Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participate</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Oregon State University--Sanderson, Ketcham, Yamamoto, Sumner, Dyer, 2009
**Interviews and Focus Groups**

**Interviews**
Perceptions of experiences, stories, opinions, can be used to assess individual knowledge.

**Focus Groups**
- Perceptions of experiences, opinions, feedback on new product/service, etc.
- Considerations: content, data and analysis, external credibility, time for analysis, transcription, selection of group members and facilitator(s).

**Institutional Data**
- Peer comparisons
- Demographic information
- Enrollment
- Retention
- Ethnicity/race
- Graduation
- Majors
- Post graduation success
- Success in subsequent courses, etc.
Implementation of Assessment Plan

- Often a map or grid is used for this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1</td>
<td>1.B</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Janice</td>
<td>Nov. 15, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1</td>
<td>1.B</td>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>Rose and Henry</td>
<td>May 12-15, 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment Results

- Data Analysis
  - Dictated mostly by the type of data you collect
  - Frequency distributions, some measure of central tendency, and may want to compare means or look for significant differences where applicable

- Depiction of information
  - Graphs, tables—pictures can be very helpful in explaining data

- Reporting
  - Do report and may need to produce more than one report depending on number of different audiences
Assessment Decisions/Actions

“Closing the Assessment Loop”
- Now that we know--What are we doing about it?
  - Celebrate
  - Initiate changes
  - Study further
  - Enlist others to help with making further meaning of the data
  - Add to or take away from X
  - Revise assessment methods
- When will we look at this again?

Using Assessment Information

- Documentation
  - To use as a record
  - To use as a guide for future decision-making
  - To talk with constituencies we serve
  - To use with faculty, staff and others
  - To show progress to ourselves and our constituencies
  - To use to talk with students
Using Assessment Information

Discussions with Staff.
- Share results with all staff and in multiple formats
- Make results as transparent and public within the department/division, etc. as possible
- Openness can build trust and fosters the integrity of the process
- Department meetings, planning retreats, unit meetings

Discussions with Students and others
- For students to invest time in our assessment efforts they must see the value
- Sharing results and including them in conversations about how to make improvements based on data builds investment
Sustaining Assessment

People support what they help to create.

Student Affairs Assessment Model

Student Affairs Assessment Council at the core and is the heart
- e.g., NSSE, CIRP, FSSE, YFCY, etc.
- e.g., Student Affairs
- e.g., Student Health Services, Recreational Sports, Career Services etc.
- e.g., RA training, academic success, training, etc.
Assessment Council

- Authority and responsibility
- Shared learning
- Group development/teamwork
- Trust/risk-taking
- Common language
- Heart of the work (Support, energy)
- Ownership of the process and outcomes
- Administrative structure

Logic Model for Student Affairs

**Mission:** Describes the purpose of the organization and the constituents served. It clearly relates to the Oregon State University and the Division of Student Affairs Missions.

**Programs:** Sets of related activities and outcomes that consume a meaningful portion of the departmental resources (persons, dollars, time, etc.) and that are designed to support the department’s goals.

- **Inputs:** Resources dedicated to the program e.g., Money, Staff, Time, Equipment
- **Activities:** Activities done to deliver the program e.g., Provide workshops Advise students Distribute brochures Develop handbook Teach classes Provide training Give tests
- **Service Outcomes:** Products from the activities e.g., Number of workshops Number of people advised Types of brochures produced % served % satisfied Amount of money collected
- **Learning Outcomes:** Benefits for participants e.g., Gained new knowledge Increased skill Modified behavior Improved their condition Positively altered their status

Oregon State University–Sanderson, Ketcham, Yamamoto, Sumner, Dyer, 2009
Assessment Accountability Structure

Vice Provost for Student Affairs

Student Affairs Assessment Council

Director, Research and Evaluation

Student Affairs Departments/Units

Programs/Services

OSU Division of Student Affairs

Assessment Reporting

- Annual Departmental Reports
- Departments submit to the Student Affairs Assessment Council:
  - Previous year’s plan with Results and Decisions/Recommendations, & Current year’s plan without Results and Decisions/Recommendations
  - Council teams review plans and provide feedback
  - The Assessment Plans and Reports are provided to the Vice Provost

Oregon State University–Sanderson, Ketcham, Yamamoto, Sumner, Dyer, 2009
Sharing Assessment Information

- Newsletters and campus newspaper
- Websites
- Annual reports
- Marketing materials
- Department meetings
- Advisory committees
- Student groups and committees
- University work groups/committees
- Other departments with whom you collaborate

Unexpected Sources of Sustainability

- Brought new area for learning—generated some energy and excitement
- Increased visibility for Student Affairs and what we know about students
- Increased our thinking about education and the curriculum we deliver in Student Affairs
- Helped us become more intentional
- New members
Unexpected Sources of Sustainability

- Provided leadership for some who otherwise might not get leadership experience
- Served as a model for other initiatives
- Helped students see why we do what we do and what we expect them to learn—engaged them in setting their learning agenda.
- Invited to present at conferences, to consult with others (professional recognition)

Tips on Sustainability

- Assessment is best done inclusively
- Leadership structure
- A common language
- Training and education over time
- Feedback on assessment efforts
- Tie to improvement rather than merely to accountability
- Visible and vocal support from the top(s)
Tips on Sustainability

- Start small and practical
- Consider Resources (fiscal, energy, personnel, time, knowledge, tools, etc.)
- If you collect it use it
- Build from small successes
- Foster transparency
- Seek input over and over again
- Include students

For More Information

OSU Student Affairs Research and Evaluation Web Site
http://oregonstate.edu/studentaffairs/assessment/index.html
2 Minute Assessment

- What was the most important thing you learned?
  - What aspects were most valuable?
- What aspects were least valuable?

- What other workshop topics would be helpful to you?

Our Developmental Timeline

- 1996 – Campus Compact identified assessment as one of five initiatives
- 1996 to present – SA assessment committee formed, stormed, trained, explained and complained
- Assessment Consultant
- Functioned as a learning community – advancing and sharing knowledge
- 2001 – OSU Assessment Showcase
- 2001 to present – Participation in national surveys: CIRP, NSSE, FSSE, YFCY
Our Developmental Timeline

- 2002 – Office of SA Research and Evaluation
- 2003 – New charge for SA Assessment Council
  - Implement a coordinated assessment program
  - Establish methods to share and maximize use of resources
  - Establish a standard format for reports
  - Identify a set of common learning outcomes and areas of impact to be assessed
- 2003 – Assessment Consultant
- 2004 – Learning & Assessment Symposium
- 2005 – Learning Goals for the Division

Oregon State University--Sanderson, Ketcham, Yamamoto, Sumner, Dyer, 2009

Our Developmental Timeline

- 2007—Researching software to manage our assessment
- 2008—Implementation of Assessment software

Oregon State University--Sanderson, Ketcham, Yamamoto, Sumner, Dyer, 2009