Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

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University of Kentucky
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Overview

- Review University of Kentucky strategic planning and assessment structure
  - Strategic Plans
  - Annual Program Review
  - Annual Student Learning Outcome Assessment
  - Periodic Program Review

- External review overview

- Assessment principles and practices
UK Planning, Budgeting, and Assessment Cycle

UNIVERSITY/UNIT
- Mission

EXTERNAL FACTORS
- Implementation Plan: Revises Strategic Plan; Identifies actions to be taken and a timeframe for accomplishment of goals; re-visits evaluation criteria and develops assessment plan.
- Recommendations: Provided by external review committee.
- Strengths and Challenges

STRATEGIC PLANNING
- Sets forth goals, objectives, and expected results

BUDGETING
- Operationalizes Strategic Plan

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES
- University-wide, Area and College/Programs, Student, Alumni and Employer Surveys, Customer/Client Satisfaction Surveys, Retention and Graduation Rate Analysis, Teacher and Course Evaluations, Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, Strategic Indicator/Metric Progress, Accreditation Studies, Financial Reports, Accountability Reports, Other Research and Special Studies

ASSESSMENT RESULTS
- Compared to criteria or standards to determine progress and assess goal attainment

ANNUAL REVIEW
- A concise report that summarizes accomplishments and includes:
  - Goals, objectives, and outcomes
  - Assessment methods
  - Actual results for reflection and analysis
  - Improvement action plans

PERIODIC REVIEW
- An in-depth analysis occurring every 5 to 7 years that includes:
  - Preparation of self-study
  - Evaluation by external review committee
  - Recommendations for quality enhancement

USE OF RESULTS
- Used in annual and periodic reviews for reflection and analysis to develop improvement action plans and promote quality enhancement
# UK Planning, Budgeting, and Assessment Reporting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IE Activity</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Cycle</th>
<th>Reporting Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Planning</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>5 Years</td>
<td>Defined by BOT</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educational &amp; Administrative Units</td>
<td>3-5 Years</td>
<td>3-6 Months from Completion of Periodic Program Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Program Review</td>
<td>Educational &amp; Administrative Units</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>31-Oct</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University</td>
<td></td>
<td>June 1—following close of unit reporting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) Assessment Reports</td>
<td>Academic Programs</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>31-Oct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Periodic Program Review</td>
<td>Administrative Educational</td>
<td>5-7 Years</td>
<td>12 Months (starts spring term)</td>
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<td>12 Months (starts fall term)</td>
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Strategic Plans

- University (5 year)
  - Current plan: 2009-2014
  - Five goals
  - 21 objectives

- Unit plans (3-5 years)
  - Mission
  - Objective
  - Goal
  - Metrics
  - Strategies
  - Assessment Method
  - Actual Results
  - Descriptive Results
  - Improvement Actions
  - Analysis of Results and Reflection
Annual Program Reviews

- Annual progress report using in the “Strategic Plan Implementation Project 2009-2014” template
- Sometimes objectives are stated as outcomes and sometimes stated as tasks
- In general, current strategic plans do not include operational outcomes
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

- Student Learning Outcome(s) Assessed
  - Frequently, only one per year
- Assessment Methods and Tools
- Results
- Interpretation of Results
- Improvement Action
- Reflection
- Attachments
- Annual submission
Periodic Program Review

- Applies to both academic and administrative programs
- Required every 5-7 years
- Informs unit strategic plan

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Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment
Our Review

- **Satisfactory** means that we think it will look okay to a SACSCOC reviewer—it does not necessarily mean that it is good.
SLO Review Observations

- Most programs have defined some student learning outcomes
- Some programs have really embraced the use of assessment to improve student learning; others don’t get it
- Many programs only assess one outcome per year
- Assessment methods and measures vary considerably
- Some programs focus on student progress and not on learning
- Undergraduate programs seem to have a better sense of SLO assessment than graduate programs
Issues and Needs

- Better understanding of focus on improvement
- Better understanding of assessment so outcomes and measures make sense
- Better understanding of how to construct an outcome related to mission
- Better understanding of what kinds of measures can be used to describe outcome performance levels
- Better understanding how to interpret results and develop appropriate actions to take
Systems Supporting Improvement

Annual SP/PR Reviews and SLO Assessment

Periodic Program Reviews

Strategic Planning

Program Assessment

Budget

Linkages
• Share data and information
• Inform budget process

Differences
• Different cycles
• Additional data elements
• Different purposes
  • Continuous improvement
  • Evaluation
  • Planning
Opportunities for Improvement

Performance Improvement

- Continuous improvement
- "breakthrough" discontinuous improvement

Course and program assessment: Continuous Quality Improvement

Strategic planning; benchmarking; periodic program review; focused initiatives
Assessment “Definition”

- Need a common understanding of assessment
- Assessment—the examination and review of evidence representing levels of performance, accomplishment, and knowledge
- Purposes—what you do with it
  - Formative assessment—focused on providing feedback to support improvement (e.g., not graded)
  - Summative assessment—focused on evaluating or judging the level of observed performance (e.g., graded)
  - Important to separate formative from summative assessment
Levels of Assessment

- Classroom assessment
  - Determination of individual student performance at course level by instructors

- Course assessment
  - Determination of how well a course is meeting student learning outcomes

- Program assessment
  - Determination of how well an academic program is meeting student learning outcomes
  - Determination of how well an administrative or educational support program is meeting its objectives

- Institutional assessment
  - Determination of institutional performance
Effective Program Assessment Should Answer these Questions

- What and how does a program contribute to the development and growth of its students and/or the support of its customers?
- What outcomes are you trying to achieve?
- What is the level of performance?
- How, using the answers to the first three questions, can you improve the program?
- What actions did you take?
- What are the results of these actions?
Why Do It?

- **External drivers**
  - Regional and program-level accreditation criteria
    - Documentation that you have established an effective assessment process that leads to continuous improvement
    - SACSCOC, ABET, AACSB, NCATE
  - Baldridge Award

- **Internal drivers**
  - Good management
  - Quality motivation
  - Knowing where you are
  - Knowing where you have been
  - Knowing what is possible and how to get there
Core Requirement 2.5. The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. (Institutional Effectiveness)
SACSCOC Assessment Requirements

- 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)
  - CS 3.3.1.1—educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
  - CS 3.3.1.2—administrative support services
  - CS 3.3.1.3—academic and student support services
  - CS 3.3.1.4—research within its mission, if appropriate
  - CS 3.3.1.5—community/public service within its mission, if appropriate
SACSCOC Assessment Requirements

- Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1. The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them. (General education competencies)

- Federal Requirement 4.1. The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission. Criteria may include: enrollment data; retention, graduation, course completion, and job placement rates; state licensing examinations; student portfolios; or other means of demonstrating achievement of goals. (Student achievement)
Mechanics of Assessment

- To improve, you need to know your purpose, where you are today and where you would like to go—this is your PLAN
  - Mission (purpose)
  - Objectives or outcomes (what you need to achieve in order to get there)
  - Measures (how well you are currently doing)
- To improve, you need to take action—RESULTS
  - Analyze program or operations to determine changes
  - Plan changes
  - Take action
  - Assess Impact
Assessment Cycle

**Planning Phase**
- Mission/Purpose
- Educational Goals
- Identify Outcomes and Objectives
- Identify Measures and Methods

**Program**
- Assess Impact
- Take Action: Implement Change
- Interpreting Evidence
- Gather Evidence

**Results Phase**
Student Learning is Complex

- Faculty
- Tutors
- Peers
- Lab Assistants
- Teaching Assistants
- Spiritual Leaders
- Advisers
- Support Staff
- Coaches
- Library Staff
- Resident Assistants
- Mentors
Educational Outcomes

*adapted from presentation by Dr. Gloria Rogers

Student Pre-college Traits

Institutional Context

Coursework & Curricular Patterns

Out-of-class Experience

Educational Outcomes

Classroom Experience

Timeline xx years

Feedback Loop

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Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

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Why Is SLO Assessment Important to Faculty?

- To improve your own teaching
- Provides ideas for growth and development of the course
- Allows a group to see how well courses are doing to achieve the goals of a program (compare)
- Discover that support services are missing for the course
- See if the students are learning what is intended
- How teaching translates into learning
- Find weaknesses in the course and program and delivery
- Find weaknesses in student preparation
- Assess what was really learned compared to what was intended
Why Is SLO Assessment Important to Faculty?

- Are students learning what they are supposed to learn
- Think critically about why students are or are not meeting the learning outcomes and the student needs
- Motivates the students to engage in the course
- Improves the classroom experience and gives positive feedback on success
- Gives a sense of who is doing well and who is not
- Helps to change the course design or change the assignments
- Helps to determine when it is the students versus when it is the course that needs improvement
Why Is SLO Assessment Important to Students?

- Gives the students a feeling that the students have a role to play in the course
- Working together to ensure that they are getting value out of the program. Professors commitment to the student
- Confidence that the current course prepares them for the next course
- Determine whether the students understand goals of course
- Students gain value from assessment (along with grading). Assessment is more than grading.
- Students learn their strengths and weaknesses
Why Is SLO Assessment Important to Students?

- So they know whether or not they are meeting the outcomes
- Students take charge of their learning
- Gives the students an idea of how they are graded
- Helps them organize their schedule (due dates)
- Helps students know how to schedule their study time
- Know what are the weaknesses to focus their efforts
- Increases transparency in understanding expectations
- Better information about what the faculty members want
- Grading is less arbitrary if tied to learning outcomes
- Helps the professor teach them better
Why Is SLO Assessment Important to the University?

- Accreditation
- Recruitment—better identify students, help students know expectations
- We deliver on our promises
- Continuous improvement
- Be part of a learning and teaching community that is interested in improving programs
- Supports decisions regarding resource allocation
Why Is SLO Assessment Important to the University?

- SACS accreditation and other accrediting agencies (AACSB, ABET, etc.)
- Be consistent in providing the education
- Accountability—need to be able to prove you are delivering what is promised. External recognition of the quality.
- Forces the identification of the learning goals for the university
- Preventing the institution from becoming static. Focuses on improvement.
Identify Scope of Assessment

- What should assessment include?
  - Assess resources (facilities, students, faculty)
  - Assess processes (pedagogy, advising, feedback)
  - Assess results or outcomes; plan changes
  - Who receives feedback and how

- Academic program assessment typically focuses on student outcomes (learning and program)

- Administrative unit assessment typically focuses on quality of products, processes, and services
  - May also focus on student learning outcomes
# Identify Scope of Assessment

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
<th>FEEDBACK</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Student Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Alumni</td>
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<td>Faculty, Staff</td>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Growth and Development</td>
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<td>Advising</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
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<td>Physical Resources</td>
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<td>Financial Resources</td>
<td>Resource Management</td>
<td>Department or University Reputation</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
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<td>Community Impact</td>
<td>Department</td>
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<td>Program</td>
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A Checklist for Identifying Program or Unit Needs

- What are you assessing?
- Why are you assessing?
- What do you want to know?
- From whom will you collect the data?
- Who will see the results?
- How will the data be used?
- How often will the data be collected?
- Who will collect the data?
Developing an Assessment Plan

- Include **mission** or purpose of program
  - State primary functions and activities
  - State why these are done (program purpose)
  - Identify stakeholders
- Include a sufficient number of **outcomes**
  - Program outcomes (student learning, operational)
- Include multiple **measures** for each outcome
  - Direct measures
  - Indirect measures
- Include **methods** for measurement and targets
Discussion and Questions

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