

Purdue University Fort Wayne, IN

Institutionalizing Assessment in a Culture of Student Success

Participation Start: 06-03-2015

Participation End: 06-13-2019

Date Completed: 07-15-2019

Scholar(s): Susan Hatfield

Primary Mentor(s): Jeff Sturges
Primary Mentor
Felix Wao

Team Lead: Kent Johnson

Team Member(s): Debrah Huffman
Manoochehr Zoghi
Carolyn Stumph
Maria Leatherwood

This Results Report reflects the activity of Purdue University Fort Wayne in the Assessment Academy Collaboration Network. It is not an official document of the Higher Learning Commission.

Context

Q: Describe your plan for creating shared responsibility for assessing and improving student learning. (100 - 200 words)

A: Participation in the Academy is one part of an overall plan for creating shared responsibility for assessing and improving student learning at IPFW. In addition to Academy participation, The Assessment Council engaged in a project to update and replace the Senate Document (SD 98-22) guiding programmatic assessment at IPFW including programmatic assessment of our general education program. The proposed restatement of SD 98-22 was completed in April and is currently in review by the Educational Policy Committee for submission to Faculty Senate. The importance of the document is that it establishes the Academic Assessment Plan as a clearly communicated foundation for an integrated teaching, learning and assessment process focused on leveraging programmatic assessment to improve student learning, success and achievement. Finally, IPFW is developing an Institutional Assessment Academy that will extend the HLC Assessment Academy model strategies to assess and improvement student learning relative to stated outcomes to a broader campus constituency.

Q: What is the broader impact of your Academy work on the institution, faculty and staff, students, or other stakeholders? How will this work influence the culture of your organization, build institutional capacity, advance teaching and learning...etc.? (100 - 200 words)

A: The Academy work is central to IPFW's efforts to shift from a primarily externally motivated culture of assessment for accountability to an internally driven "culture of learning" that focuses on improving the institutional capacity for and effectiveness in continually improving student learning, achievement and success. The Assessment Council is leading this effort through the restatement of the Academic Assessment Plan communicated through SD 98-22. The new academic assessment plan creates a common assessment reporting structure that engages faculty (within academic departments and programs including general education) in:

1. Clearly articulating the student learning outcomes expected of students at graduation,
2. Mapping student learning outcomes by expected levels of achievement to specific points in the curriculum.
3. Assessing achievement of these outcomes at specific curricular points focusing on measuring how and/or the extent to which the planned curriculum is supporting student learning.
4. Using the assessment results to guide curricular and co-curricular innovations to improve student learning – and assessing the impact of those innovations.
5. Leveraging assessment findings to inform institutional decision making.

Q: Optional: What else is important to know about your work on assessing and improving student learning? (100 - 200 words)

A: The initial phases of the Academy work focus on creating an integrated model of teaching, learning and assessment at IPFW. As such, much of the work in the first half of the scheduled Academy participation is heavily vested in Academic Affairs. This focus is not intended to neglect the important contributions of other institutional divisions, rather, it is intended to emphasize the primacy of the relationship of faculty and students as the institutional core. As this work moves into the second half of Academy participation, around the end of Year 2, we expect to more fully engage Student Affairs in the Institutional Academy as we move to a more comprehensive and inclusive institutional strategy.

The modeling of assessment in the "skills core" of general education (i.e. quantitative reasoning, written communication, and oral communication) presented in the proposal remains central to our plan. These domains are introduced in general education and applied in the major and provide a bridge to assessment across traditional departmental silos. We hope that developing a comprehensive assessment of the student learning outcomes attached

to these domains as defined in the general education program will provide a foundation to scaffold assessment of expected student learning at the course level, to the general education program and academic programs, to common expected learning at the college level, and finally to the stated learning outcomes for all baccalaureate degrees (institutional level) defined in the Baccalaureate Framework.

Impact Report

Q:

What do you see as the next logical steps for continuing the work that you have begun in the Academy?

A: Sustaining our project is dependent on the continued participation of our faculty. The institutionalization model that we are implementing provides guidance on next steps and is described fully in the paper linked below.

As we look to strengthen the cultural/meta-cognitive pillar, we need to increase collaboration across academic departments and colleges. To help us move in that direction, we are going to pilot faculty learning communities focused on exploring how we might use assessment findings to improve student learning environments. The first wave of faculty learning communities will be piloted within colleges. Representatives from two or more departments within a college will form learning communities aligned with the workshops described in the Impact Report section on steps to engage faculty. Following the year-long pilot at the college level, we plan to expand the program to include communities with faculty from multiple colleges.

Our plans to provide better forums for sharing information, increase our faculty development activity, celebrate the work of our faculty, and reinforce the emphasis of a learning improvement culture rather than a compliance culture are discussed in the final section of the report "Institutionalizing Assessment," which can be reviewed in the link below.

Finally, we hired a new Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, and part of her agenda is strengthening our assessment of student services. The new assessment plan in student affairs along with program review and assessment activities in academic affairs will help us move to an institutional plan that integrates the work of academic and student affairs in support of student success and learning.

Link 1: [Institutionalizing Assessment Paper](https://www.pfw.edu/offices/accreditation/docs/HLC-Academy-Project-Final-Team-Report-6-25-19.pdf)

<https://www.pfw.edu/offices/accreditation/docs/HLC-Academy-Project-Final-Team-Report-6-25-19.pdf>

Q:

What steps will you take to keep faculty and staff engaged in ongoing assessment of student learning?

A: Specific steps to increase engagement of faculty and staff include:

1. Work with leadership to better integrate the assessment of student learning in PFW's Strategic Plan, specifically in the student success and engagement domains. Create tighter linkages between assessment and the university budget process.

2. Provide support to faculty aimed at helping units use assessment for improvement and

meaningful change. This effort begins with the Fall 2019 Workshop Series including:

- Signature Assignments Workshop grounded in NILOA's Charrette Model as one of the tools faculty use to support general education assessment and programmatic assessment.
- Real-Time Assessment Workshop exploring how we might apply Maki's (2017) research to improve the use of assessment at the course level to improve student learning as students matriculate through courses and majors.
- Re-assess Workshop focusing on assessing curricular interventions to support faculty in understanding how changes made as a result of assessment are contributing to student learning.

3. Advance the institutionalization of assessment within the Purdue Fort Wayne Teaching, Assessment, and Learning Model consistent with the intent of HLC Criterion 4 to improve institutional support of student success. As part of this initiative, the assessment office is coordinating with student affairs to implement a similar assessment model in the context of co-curricular programs. The coordination of in-class, out-of-class, and co-curricular learning is necessary to improve student success.

4. Improve faculty development models emphasizing community and engagement across departmental silos. As part of the workshop series, develop faculty learning communities to encourage collaboration focused on using assessment to improve student learning and to extend the impact of the workshops.

5. Design and implement an annual Assessment Event to share assessment strategies, findings, etc., and to celebrate assessment and its positive impact on student success.

Response to Impact Report

Q:

Please describe your general impression of the institution’s progress in the Academy. Include recognition of significant accomplishments, progress, and/or practices.

A: The institution made a bold move by shifting from the project’s initial focus on three general education outcomes to initiating major/broad strategies for supporting academic program assessment. Significant progress has been made in almost all components of the new project. That’s commendable, as long as the important work of assessing specific learning outcomes at the general education and program level are not lost in the translation. Building infrastructure is important, but it's not the same thing as assessing student learning.

There appears to be increased faculty participation in assessment activities. Faculty are beginning to take “ownership” of the assessment process – this is an essential factor regarding the overall success of the project and, if maintained, will contribute significantly to sustaining the critical aspects of the project related to teaching and learning.

The emphasis on a “culture of learning” is evidently fostering strong collaboration among various key administrative offices (e.g., Institutional Research, Accreditation) whose functions contribute to aspects of assessment of student learning and the overall student success.

The approach to institutionalize assessment process in light of research on institutional theory is great as it is well aligned with the intent to integrate teaching, learning and assessment.

Q:

Do you have any particular concerns about the work they have done?

A: Felix Wao

Although the institution has made and continues to make progress in various components of the project, my main concern is that the project itself is too broad. Specifically, the following still remain unclear:

- a) Is there an implementation timeline for various components of the project?
- b) How will the institution measure progress in each component (the current components as well as the newly-proposed initiatives such as inclusion of student support areas)?
- c) When and how often will progress be measured?

- d) Who will be involved in measuring progress?
- e) The progress being felt currently may be largely attributed to the institution's participation in the Assessment Academy. What does the institution plan to use an impetus for continued faculty involvement? Are there plans to provide any incentives to faculty to continue to boost their participation in the project after graduation from the Assessment Academy? If yes, what forms of incentives?

Susan Hatfield

While the shift in project focus to a more comprehensive approach and plan is commendable, it's unclear to what degree General Education is being assessed. Assessment of General Education outcomes doesn't have to still be part of your Academy Project, but I'm hoping the importance of assessing general education outcomes specifically hasn't been lost in the larger focus. In essence, I applaud the theory, but there's still work to be done in translating the theory into ground-level work.

Q:

In your judgment, is the institution prepared to sustain its assessment efforts after it leaves the Academy? Do you have any specific recommendations to help it sustain its efforts?

A: While, as noted earlier, significant progress has been reported regarding various parts of the project, the ability to sustain their assessment efforts will depend on PFW's (1) creation of a solid implementation plan going forward, and (2) continued support from the upper administration. The impact report does not reflect a concrete implementation plan for various aspects of the project and how the upper administration will be involved in supporting the implementation efforts.

Recommendations:

- a) Develop a concrete strategic plan to be implemented after completion of the Assessment Academy. The plan may reflect, among other things, information on the Who, What, When, How, Where. You could include:
 - i) Key goals of the project going forward.
 - ii) Measure(s) for each goal and performance indicators
 - iii) Dedicated budget for supporting assessment activities.
- b) Establish institutional activities (e.g., internal conferences) to promote conversations around assessment and foster sharing of best practices in assessment from programs across the institution.
- c) Consider plans for providing some form of incentives for faculty as this may contribute significantly to fostering their continued commitment to the culture of learning.

Q:

Please note any other observations or recommendations that you wish to share.

A: Felix Wao

The following resources may be useful especially in light of the institution’s intent to (1) make use of assessment results for continuous improvement, and (2) continue to foster a culture of learning among faculty.

- Baker, G. R., Jankowski, N., Provezis, S., & Kinzie, J. (2012). [*Using assessment results: Promising practices of institutions that do it well*](#). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).
- Hutchings, P. (2010, April). [*Opening doors to faculty involvement in assessment*](#). (NILOA Occasional Paper No. 4). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.

Susan Hatfield

As you develop specific implementation plans, you might want to consider reviewing projects posted in the Academy network for ideas on strategies and processes.

Scholar(s): Susan Hatfield

Primary Mentor(s): Felix Wao

Project: Institutionalizing Assessment in a Culture of Student Success

Version 8.0 - Project

Q:

What have been your accomplishments while in the Academy? Consider the range of these accomplishments, from the very specific (e.g., development of a rubric) to the more general (e.g. outcomes-based curriculum approval processes).

A: Our participation in the academy has supported the development and implementation of a new academic program assessment plan and the use of assessment findings in general education to initiate a revision process for our current general education program. Finally, participation in the academy increased the intensity of our assessment efforts which assisted us in successfully navigating a “Change in Control, Structure, or Organization” process necessitated by a Indiana Commission of Higher Education required organizational change which moved all health sciences programs under the management and control of Indiana University and all other programs under the management and control of Purdue University. Through this process, we were able to address concerns raised on our previous comprehensive visit concerning assessment through demonstrating the implementation of a new assessment plan and through the individual departmental reports demonstrating that academic units were using assessment results to propose and implement solutions aimed at improving student learning.

Specific accomplishments include:

- Refinement of Student Learning Outcomes across all academic units to clarify programmatic expectations and improve measurement of student success
- A curricular mapping project that resulted in curricular maps for all academic programs and mapping of all academic program curricula to our institutional student learning outcomes as defined in the Baccalaureate Framework
- Development and implementation of rubrics as part of all department/program assessment plans
- Establishment of College Assessment Committees for each College in the University
- Development of a “College Rubric” to guide College Assessment Committees in evaluating the quality of the programmatic assessment reports for academic programs in their College
- Development of a Rubric for the University Assessment Council to evaluate the College Level Assessment Report

We developed a comprehensive program review process that includes annual assessment reports and annual departmental program reviews to support continuous quality improvement at the academic program level. We developed a full set of Assessment Tools including an Assessment Manual, Assessment Workbook, and Assessment Templates to support units in assessing student learning.

Q:

Looking back, reflect on the evolution of your Academy project. What factors does your team feel most influenced how the project developed and changed?

A: The project changed significantly upon our participation in the first Assessment Institute Team Workshop. The original proposal focused on improving assessment in three specific domains of the existing general education program – written communication, oral communication, and quantitative reasoning. This emphasis was created by the previous assessment leader without participation from university faculty. A new Assessment Director was hired in the month of the academy proposal submission which began the change in the conceptualization of our institute goals. The transition began with activating the University Assessment Council which had not met in approximately two years. The Assessment Council immediately began developing an Assessment Plan for approval by Faculty Senate. The Council decided a plan focused at the academic program level would have the most impact on student learning and developed a new assessment plan for approval by Faculty Senate. The plan was approved which resulted in shifting the project from a narrow focus on three groups of general education to a specific focus on supporting academic program assessment.

A second factor that had a significant impact on our success was shifting from the conceptualization of an “assessment culture” to institutionalizing assessment grounded Richard Scott’s (1995, 2004, and 2008) conceptualization of “Institutional Theory”. This shift was predicated on Peter Ewell’s evaluation of student learning assessment in higher education as “broad but not particularly deep”. Consistent with Ewell, we found that there was quite a bit of assessment activity on campus but it was not particularly impactful. In examining why this was the case, our assessment council and academy team agreed that emphasizing a “culture of learning” was more aligned to our institutional values. Given that student learning is an important aspect of that culture and that student learning is embedded in interactions between students, faculty, and curriculum, we developed the foundation of our assessment model as the integration of teaching, assessment, and learning and developed this model at the initial institute. Institutional theory’s focus on deep and resilient aspects of social structure in organizations provided a mechanism for creating a culture of learning through an integrated approach to teaching, assessment, and learning that had the potential to become ingrained in institutional processes and values. Specifically, Scott’s three-pillar model of institutionalization became our conceptual model for implementing the new assessment plan. The regulatory pillar (organizational rules), the normative pillar (patterns of norms and routines) and metacognitive pillar (organizational internal conceptualization of a value structure) guided the decisions to:

1. encourage faculty ownership of assessment through a Faculty Senate Document in support of the Assessment Council’s Assessment Plan (regulative pillar)
2. implement the plan with high levels of support at the departmental level with peer review of departmental assessment reports by a college level committee of peer faculty on an annual basis (regular activity and feedback to create norms and routines consistent with the normative pillar), and
3. public dissemination and university-wide discussion of assessment reports in the context of an emerging University Assessment Academy Model focused on sharing approaches to support continuous improvement (metacognitive pillar – still developing)

In just three years we have moved through the regulative to the normative pillar. We are still experimenting with the Assessment Academy Model but need to observe over a couple of more years to understand the extent to which the assessment model is fully institutionalized at a metacognitive level.

Q:

How has institutional capacity for assessing student learning changed over your time in the Academy?

A: Institutional capacity for assessing student learning has increased. We have developed and

provided training for College Level Assessment Committees, have reinstated the University Assessment Council, and (at the institutional level) enhanced our institutional research office. While the IR Office is a parallel unit with the Assessment and Accreditation Office, the two offices work collaboratively to provide evidence-based information for decision-making which provides additional metrics for student learning and success. These metrics, including retention, graduation rate, course efficiency, faculty productivity, etc. provide additional data points for evaluating the effectiveness of assessment in improving student learning and success. The close relationship between the two offices increases our institutional capacity for assessment.

The processes we have put in place to provide feedback on assessment at the College Level through the College Level Assessment Committees ensure that we are continually working collaboratively to improve the quality of assessment on campus. The University Level Assessment Council's continued work to use the evaluation of College Level Reports to inform practice across the campus increases capacity. The collaborative, faculty-led assessment process engages increasing proportions of our faculty in assessment practice. With the support of workshops and departmental collaborations on assessment, assessment knowledge is growing.

We are also making better use of institutional level assessments using nationally normed instruments. This year we administered both NSSE and FSSE so that we can examine both student and faculty perceptions of how practices across the university impact student learning and success. Through administering both instruments, we can examine gaps in student experiences and faculty member's perceptions of those experiences to encourage changes in teaching and learning practices. We hope to use this information in coordination with assessment findings to encourage building high impact learning experiences that are consistent with a new strategic planning action item focused on building high impact learning environments. The emphasis on student success and learning environments in the strategic plan helps build capacity as it raises the expectation to a university-wide goal.

We are also moving to a more coordinated assessment of our student support areas including assessing the impact units such as student affairs, advising, and retention have on student learning and success. This examination of co-curricular and other out-of-class experiences expands the number of units engaged in the assessment of student learning and increases capacity.

Q:

What evidence do you have that your Academy work is improving student learning?

- A:** Our primary evidence demonstrating the academy work is improving student learning is a review of the departmental assessment reports. To ensure that departments track how changes are improving learning, the assessment report template include a section on Programmatic and Curricular Improvement. In this section, departments report changes or innovations made to improve student learning based on prior year assessment reporting. While not all departments have demonstrated curricular and other changes that have improved student learning, multiple departments have. For example, in the Communication Department assessment, last year recommended programs provided more specificity of the alignment of departmental outcomes to enhance the individual portfolios of students. This increased emphasis on aligning assignments to the portfolio and communicating how the assignments contributed to learning resulted in students demonstrating gains in learning as measured by a two faculty member review of the portfolio. International Studies demonstrated improved student learning as a pedagogical change to improve the quality of a project (an International Cinema paper project). Engineering programs have used

assessment to both change curricula and to add early tutoring and support through a more intrusive advising process. These changes have been reflected in improvements in student learning in early and foundational engineering courses. Across our assessment reports, multiple points of evidence confirm that the assessment plan we put in place as a result of participation in the Assessment Academy is resulting in positive gains in student learning.

External reviewers from both specialized accreditors and HLC have noted the quality of the assessment activity and its use to improve student learning after reviewing assessment reports. The HLC visitors from our Focused Visit provided the following commentary:

The university has an Assessment Council, which is driven by department level faculty members. Ownership by faculty members was evident, with the prevailing philosophy, that national accreditation is not what is driving their assessment plans; rather it is proof of concept, collecting evidence that students can demonstrate what they know and can do. From our discussions with members of curriculum committees, we confirmed that faculty are diligent in the review of new courses, review of course changes and proposals for new programs.

Their evaluation provides external validation of the process and its impact on sustained improvements to student learning.

Finally, you can view all of our assessment work at:

www.pfw.edu/assessment

Link 1: [Assessment Web Site Including Assessment Reporting](http://www.pfw.edu/assessment)
<http://www.pfw.edu/assessment>

Q:

What work still needs to be done?

A: While we have made substantial progress in assessment at PFW, the continued focus on improving the quality of assessment is a priority. Specifically, we need to improve the quality of the measures we use, get more consistent in using both direct and indirect measures, and ensure that we do not become complacent. One concern is that some departments hit a specific benchmark for student learning but are not increasing the expected level of learning. I feel that we need to provide an environment that is more risk tolerant so that departments feel comfortable increasing expectations. We are in the process of expanding our assessment to include co-curricular and student support areas but are in the early stages of that process. We will need to provide training and support for those units. Finally, the volume of assessment data we are presently maintaining in individual departmental reports is becoming unmanageable. As a result, we have contracted Watermark to implement their AMS in July 2019. This will allow us to move our existing data into a data-based environment which will allow us to look at the achievement of Institutional Outcomes across programs. In addition, it will more easily allow us to track the impact of changes made as a result of assessment findings. We delayed the purchase of the system intentionally so that we could implement a high-quality assessment plan without the distraction of a specific technology. We now can import our current templates in the AMS platform. This will help us improve the quality of assessment and its use to improve student learning. One final issue we need to work on is external constituent involvement in reviewing assessment findings. As a metropolitan campus, it will be increasingly important to have our community providing input through imparting the knowledge of gaps they identify in student abilities as they relate to employer needs. Finally, we need to increase

the activity in our local Assessment Academy. At the moment, the Academy does not engage departments in peer to peer learning which is needed to leverage lessons from high-quality assessment strategies across campus. Finally, we need to expand our assessment strategy to include the impact of co and extra-curricular learning. We are working with Student Affairs to achieve this goal

Version 8.0 - Update

Q:

Please confirm that Part I of the Impact Report is ready for submission.

A: This project is ready for review.

Version 8.0 - Response

Q:

Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A:

Q:

What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A:

Q:

What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A:

Q:

What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A:

Q:

What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks,

instruments, models, and processes?

A:

Project: Institutionalizing Assessment in a Culture of Student Success

Version 7.0 - Project

Q:

Consider the current tags associated with your project, are they still accurate? If not, modify your tags.

A: Yes, the current project tags are correct.

Version 7.0 - Update

Q:

Have you achieved the goals outlined in recent posts? Why or why not?

A: We had hoped to have the new general education course assessment form approved for full implementation in Fall 2018. The General Education Subcommittee (a Senate Committee) wanted to pilot in 18-19 and fully implement by Fall 2020. We have offered the new assessment template as an option. We will not know how many faculty are moving to the template until we begin to get assessment reports.

Q:

How did you incorporate the feedback from the Mentor Consultation and previous postings?

A: We have shared these with our HLC Team and have incorporated the ideas into specific projects.

Q:

What tasks do you plan to accomplish in the next six months?

A: Now that we have both our departmental/programmatic assessment process in place, are getting high quality review from the College Level Committee, and seeing evidence of academic programs using assessment findings to make changes in their curriculum and in the support provided to students, we are putting our full attention on general education. We hope to have the revised general education assessment plan in the first stage of implementation in Fall 2019 with a full year completed prior to our comprehensive visit in 2020

Q:

What additional guidance is needed to see your project through to the end of the program?

A: We feel we are in good shape. We might need some help with final reporting - to make sure that it meets the expectations for the Quality Initiative expected in the HLC Comprehensive Study.

Q:

Now, in your final year, your team should begin to think about how your institution will continue to support and sustain improvement efforts without the structure of the Academy. What are some of your initial thoughts that your team has for continuing your momentum post-Academy?

(Note: Formal sustainability planning will be facilitated at the Results Forum).

A: Much of the work we have done is fairly well institutionalized. We have strong policies and processes with a tremendous "buy in" from Faculty. We need to build a peer system for training and support which we have tried to begin in the Institutional Assessment Academy; however, the size of the assessment office and its responsibilities to support the Program Review, Professional Accreditation, and Strategic Planning efforts of the universities limits the time available for faculty development. To address this, we are working closely with the Associate Vice Chancellor for Teaching to find ways to integrate the Academy into our other Faculty Development Activities. We will be assessing that option as we implement to see if this is the best approach or if we should expand the developmental capacity within the Assessment Unit.

Version 7.0 - Response

Q:

Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A: Susan Hatfield HLC Senior Scholar SHatfield@winona.edu

Q:

What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Purdue University - Fort Wayne is piloting their new general education course assessment form this year. The Academy Team reports that their work has been "fairly well" institutionalized and they have the support of faculty. They are seeking ways to integrate the Academy into their faculty development activities to help alleviate the strain on the assessment office.

Purdue University - Fort Wayne reports that program assessment is in place and that academic programs are using data to improve learning.

Q:

What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: How is work progressing on the AAC&U rubrics?

The details of the pilot of the new general education course assessment form are not really clear -- were faculty were trained to use the new template? How will the feedback on the new process be analyzed?

In what format are programs receiving feedback on their assessment reports?

Q:

What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: It continues to appear that the assessment of General Education is course-based, which is fine.... but it is unclear if there is any selectivity in the the courses that are being assessed. This is important because you probably don't want to assess a General Education OUTCOME in a course that is largely first semester students, nor will you want to aggregate data across courses from students' first semester and their fourth semester.

It's important to continue to examine whether or not the processes and data have generated answer the key assessment question, which is probably "Have our students achieved our <general education> or <program> outcomes?"

It is critical that you keep your assessment question front and center. It's possible to collect a lot of data that never gets to that fundamental question.

Q:

What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Did you ever decide on a software package? If you are leaning toward one, be sure to talk with as many schools as you can before you invest to find out how genuinely useful it is and what the hidden costs are.

Scholar(s): Susan Hatfield

Primary Mentor(s): Primary Mentor

Project: Institutionalizing Assessment in a Culture of Student Success

Version 6.0 - Project

Q:

Please provide a summary of your project so far, in 300 words or less.

A: As previously discussed, the project was initially restated in the first summer academy meeting. At that time, we decided to focus the project on two things. First, we wanted to initiate a new institutional assessment plan that began with redesigning the programmatic assessment process, integrating institutional level assessment based on our baccalaureate framework, and support these initiatives through an institutionally based assessment academy. Second, we wanted to continue gathering assessment data in general education based on the current course/section model and evaluate the quality of assessment reports to observe if they could scaffold to a programmatic level and use this information to propose and implement a new assessment strategy. The results of the evaluation of current assessment also revealed structural problems with the general education program that the general education sub-committee felt inhibited student learning and that the university administration noted created inefficiencies because of a large number of under-enrolled sections. The report was a collaborative effort of the General Education Sub-Committee (a faculty senate group), the Assessment Council (a representative group of faculty from all Colleges nominated by College Deans), and the HLC Academy Team. This report led to a proposal that is now being disseminated through a series of town halls (proposal and presentations can be found in the linked page for Academy Workshops 2017-18 General Education Assessment Plan Revision Proposal

Link 1: [General Education Assessment Plan Proposal Academy Workshop Materials](http://ipfw.edu/offices/assessment/academy/academy-workshops.html)
<http://ipfw.edu/offices/assessment/academy/academy-workshops.html>

Version 6.0 - Update

Q:

Looking back at the tasks that you had outlined for your project since its midpoint, what progress has been made and what tasks remain?

A: Since the last update, we have made substantial progress toward institutionalization of the programmatic assessment process. The assessment council is in the process of evaluating the College Assessment Committee Assessment Reports to provide feedback to the Colleges on evaluating programmatic assessment and on the quality of the reviews they provided this year. This is the third implementation of the process. The plan is progressing on schedule. All but three academic programs in the University provided Assessment Reports to their College Committee for review this year. Because of the pending realignment of missions, health sciences is anticipated to become an additional location of Indiana University's health sciences programs and were not required to submit. The general education assessment revision process began with the analysis of the assessment and program discussed above.

We are now engaged in the process of moving to broad faculty participation in discussing the proposal. The Faculty Senate President has asked that we pilot the proposed assessment templates (see Appendix A of the Proposal for details) for general education while the discussion of changes in the structure of general education is progressing. The General Education Subcommittee and Assessment Council agreed and the Assessment Office will coordinate the pilot. We are also continuing to refine rubrics for evaluating general education based on the AAC&U Value Rubrics. We are also replicating the AAC&U Value Institute process used to validate the rubrics locally and to train faculty in using the rubrics to evaluate work.

Q:

How have you incorporated the feedback from the Consolidated Response to your previous Project Update?

A: The prior feedback across all consolidate responses recommended increasing broader institutional involvement. We have done this by engaging the Faculty Senate, General Education Subcommittee, University Deans, and Chairs. The Chairs have been particularly helpful as they have provided opportunities to engage with departmental faculty in improving assessment processes at the departmental level.

Q:

How is the Academy project contributing to creating a culture of learning? How might your team need to adjust your project plans for the final two years in the program to further contribute to creating or sustaining a culture of learning?

A: The Academy Project has refocused assessment on campus from an act of compliance to a process that faculty feel has the potential to improve student success. We feel we are unlikely to make major adjustments in the project plan in its final two years. The process of refining and implementing the changes to general education assessment, and potentially, the general education will occupy the majority of energy over the next two years. The process of broad involvement, assessment pilots to provide information to the broad community, and the extensive reach of the process across the institution should continue the momentum we have in sustaining a culture of learning.

Q:

What assistance would you need, and from whom, in accomplishing your desired goals for the next six months?

A: We have enjoyed great support from our upper administration and broad participation from our faculty. We are reaching a point where we need to consider assessment software package to help us manage the large amounts of data and reports we are accumulating. We are presently looking at options. We are seeking funding fo this software from upper administration.

Version 6.0 - Response

Q:

Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A: Jeff Sturges sturgesj@cochise.edu

Susan Hatfield SHatfield@hlcommission.org

Q:

What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Jeff Sturges

Here are what I identify as strengths in your report:

1. The "substantial progress toward institutionalization of the programmatic assessment process"
2. The identification of problems, via data collection, with the general education program that has inhibited student learning
3. The reported collaboration achieved from several university groups and the proposal arising from it
4. You are moving toward greater faculty engagement in your assessment effort
5. The support you are receiving from upper administration
6. I am particularly impressed with this statement: "The Academy Project has refocused assessment on campus from an act of compliance to a process that faculty feel has the potential to improve student success." This is a huge step and a significant sign of overall strength in your assessment work.

Overall, I am happy to see your institution building upon previous work and its results. The strengths identified above evidence significant progress in your project and portend future success to be derived from your assessment efforts.

Susan Hatfield

Jeff, as always, does a great job of outlining the strengths of the project. I'd like to add that it appears the project also has the support of faculty senate.... this is notable.

Q:

What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Jeff Sturges

What kind of software packages are you considering, and what helpful functions do you

anticipate them performing?

Have you given any thought to how you will assess your assessments? That is, how will you know if changes made in response to assessment data actually improve student learning?

Susan Hatfield

It is hard to tell from the posting if the questions asked in the previous consolidated reports are generating discussion.

It appears that the assessment of General Education is course based. Are you being selective about the courses that you are using? (This is important because you probably don't want to assess a General Education OUTCOME in a course that is largely first semester students).

Are the performance levels on gen ed outcomes across multiple -section courses compared (as an opportunity to facilitate inter-departmental discussion)?

Are program assessment reports / reviews perceived to be genuinely useful (by the programs) in understanding student achievement of the program level learning outcomes?

Q:

What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Jeff Sturges

From your report, it seems that you have established some momentum. It seems critical that you build on this momentum and keep doing what you have been doing to increase faculty engagement and ensure follow through with your various efforts. Do all you can to encourage what appears to be, from your report, the good-faith efforts of your faculty; it is priceless.

Be careful that your proposed employment of a software package doesn't take your assessment efforts in a direction that does not fit your needs. Make the software fit your needs, not the other way around.

Susan Hatfield

The big issue is always whether or not the processes and data you have created and generated answer the key assessment question, which is probably "Have our students achieved our <general education> or <program> outcomes? If you can't answer that question yet (or won't be able to do so in the near future), you may want to reconsider the approach. (Don't misunderstand -- you may be able to do that now for your academic programs, but I'm not quite clear on that from the posting). But it is critical that you keep your assessment question front and center. It's possible to collect a lot of data that never gets to that fundamental question.

One additional issue related to technology and assessment. Once you narrow down your choices, make sure you can find (and talk to) several schools that have actually been using

the software for more than two years. Lots of schools invest in technological solutions in the 18 months before a site visit, make faculty enter a ton of data, and then don't do anything with it after the visit. It's one thing to enter data, another thing entirely to be able to use that data on an ongoing basis.

Q:

What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Jeff Sturges

Is it possible that, instead of purchasing a proprietary software package, the university can engage some of its IT personnel to produce some homegrown software designed to dovetail with your unique approaches to assessment? If you do take this route, a reasonable timeline for completion needs to be set and adhered to avoid unintended delays in your project. (I have witnessed this kind of snafu firsthand.)

Susan Hatfield

Jeff's suggestion is sound. Most software packages promote / encourage / allow / demand the collection of a lot more data than is necessary. Figure out what data you need. Collect that.

Scholar(s): Susan Hatfield

Primary Mentor(s): Jeff Sturges

Project: Institutionalizing Assessment in a Culture of Student Success

Version 5.0 - Project

Q:

What projects have you been following on the Collaboration Network? What have you learned from the experiences of other schools that is useful to your project?

To learn more about the progress and development of other projects, get alerts by following other projects.

A: I have not followed any additional projects since the last update. Most of the projects that I had reviewed were completed projects. Additionally, I was leading the Change in Organization process for IPFW which has limited my time.

Version 5.0 - Update

Q:

Identify and explain any specific changes to your project scope and design since the last Project Update.

A: We are now beginning to focus on redesigning our general education assessment. The program level assessment and reporting at the departmental level, college level, and the university level are now in their third cycle. We are inviting departments to participate in our assessment academies. We will be running two this Fall and Spring. The first is focused on using assessment findings to make curricular and instructional changes (and assessing those changes). The second is on designing signature assignments and using AAC&U Value Rubrics to assess following the process AAC&U used in the validation of the rubrics. The focus of general education is providing support and training for assessment at the course level. We will be supplementing the course level assessment with capstone assignments in the general education capstone sections.

Q:

Describe your short-term plan for measuring student learning. What specific tasks do you plan to accomplish in the next six months?

A: Our six month plan is to continue with the assessment plan we implemented.

Q:

How well are you positioned to complete your project in the remaining years of the Academy? What additional tools, resources, and engagement do you need?

A: We are in excellent shape. We are focusing the next year on general education. We have about two years of assessment data that while not as good as I would like, does let us know a couple of things. First we need to focus on some course design issues - faculty are not focusing on the statewide SLO's as they should be - we are working on that from a review perspective. Second, we need to create more consistency across sections of courses. This will be our focus for the next year and a half as we work through the end of the project.

Q:

What changes do you anticipate as you move into the second half of the Academy term? What have you learned from the first two years of the Academy to mitigate these challenges?

A: I really don't expect big changes - we have advanced quite well thanks to the feedback we have gotten from the leaders. We have learned quite a bit from prior academy members that has helped us avoid some of the pitfalls they encountered.

Q:

How have you used what you have learned about student learning to improve your educational strategies (curricular and co-curricular)? What evidence do you have that your work thus far has improved student learning? What more do you need to know?

A: We have learned that often our instructional strategies are misaligned with the level of learning we expect of students. We are emphasizing more inquiry based learning, portfolios, etc as well as using common assessment rubrics across multiple assignments with trained faculty evaluators. We think this should really help us improve instructional quality.

Version 5.0 - Response

Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A: Jeff Sturges sturgesj@cochise.edu (520) 227-3466

Susan Hatfield SHatfield@hlcommission.org

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Jeff Sturges

I see these as strengths of your project because they seem to indicate that your project is moving forward effectively:

1. You report that you are redesigning your general education assessment.
2. You are undergoing your third cycle of assessment in other areas.
3. You are developing capstone assignments.
4. You are providing faculty with assessment training.

Additionally, I see these as strengths because they indicate that you are learning from your project experiences:

1. You have learned that some of your instructional strategies are misaligned with the level of learning that you expect of your students, and you are consequently "emphasizing more inquiry based learning, portfolios, etc as well as using common assessment rubrics across multiple assignments with trained faculty evaluators."
2. You have learned that faculty are not as focused on learning outcomes as much as they should be.
3. You have learned that you need to "create more consistency across sections of courses."

I am also pleased to read that you have learned from Academy leaders and other Academy members.

Susan Hatfield

The only thing I can add to Jeff's list is that it is also a strength that progress feels as if it is being made.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Jeff Sturges

From your report, it is not clear that you have identified any achievements in improving student learning (which is the subject of one of the prompts to which you were asked to respond.)

You report that faculty are not focusing on learning objectives as much as they should be, but it is unclear why this is the case. It is also not clear to me what you mean by the statement that you will be addressing this issue "from a review perspective."

I am left wondering how you intend to "create more consistency across sections of courses." What kind of administrative directives, for instance, will be used or what kind of administrative support might be offered to faculty to help them create this kind of consistency?

You report that your six-month plan is to continue with the assessment plan that you implemented. Although this plan was previously described, I would have liked to have read more details in this section, and I wonder what, if any, changes to this plan you may be contemplating.

Susan Hatfield

I was struggling with the same issues -- while the posting indicates that progress is being made, there's not a lot of information provided to understand the "whats, hows and whys."

For instance, I was wondering about the implications of shifting focus to general education -- what does that mean for the continued focus / attention / improvement to program level assessment? I identified a number of questions in the previous posting (not all of which require responses here) but it's not clear if those questions prompted any discussion.

I identified a number of questions in the previous posting (not all of which require responses here) but it's not clear if those questions prompted any discussion. Now that you have collected a few years of data, what happens? Who is talking about the data? What interventions are being designed, and who will implement these changes?

Additionally, it is hard to get a sense of the project in terms of the scope of faculty involvement. Are faculty seeing any benefits to assessing learning outcomes, or is it seen as more of a reporting / check-off function?

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Jeff Sturges

I believe that one of the most critical things to pay attention to is to ensure that your project maintains a strong focus on the improvement of student learning. This means that all of your efforts need to be geared to answering these, or similar, questions:

1. What should our students be learning?
2. How well are they learning this?
3. How can we improve this level of learning?
4. How do we know that what we have done to help improve learning is actually helping?
5. What do we need to do differently?

I see that you seem to be able, at this point, to answer questions 1 and 2 to one degree or another, and are working on answering question 3. I think it is critical to make sure that that question gets the most accurate and helpful answers possible, but please don't forget the importance of answering questions 4 and 5.

Susan Hatfield

While assessing general education is certainly a valuable project, I'm not getting much of a sense of how you are going about that. It appears you are planning on using the Value Rubrics -- but it is unclear if you will those be for General Education, or just for Programs... How and who will be revising the Rubrics? Do these rubrics align with your General Education, program, or institutional outcomes? -- this is a critical issue.

What is the infrastructure for this project beyond the Academy Team? Is there an assessment committee? Gen Ed committee? Is there another group beyond the Academy Team that has responsibility for General Education?

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Jeff Sturges

I have no suggestions here. As I stated above, you seem to have a good idea of what you need to do and how to do it. Good luck!

Susan Hatfield

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Scholar(s): Susan Hatfield

Primary Mentor(s): Jeff Sturges

Project: Institutionalizing Assessment in a Culture of Student Success

Version 4.0 - Project

Q:

What projects have you been following on the Collaboration Network? What have you learned from the experiences of other schools that is useful to your project?

To learn more about the progress and development of other projects, get alerts by following other projects.

- A: We have been looking at a couple of projects. Most recently, we have studied two completed projects at University of Northern Colorado and Arkansas State University. Our interest in University of Northern Colorado was prompted by the progress they made in improving assessment culture. It appears their philosophy mirrored, in many respects, ours. In particular the idea of moving beyond an external accountability philosophy. We also have looked a bit at Arkansas State's project because it focused on some of the same general education learning outcomes that were part of our original proposal. Their approach differed from ours in that they grounded their assessment in externally developed "tests" while we are working toward using a more embedded approach. However, we are interested in adding a second layer to our program that would use some standardized instrument and a solid sampling approach so looking at the utility of the instruments they used was beneficial. We are still attempting to determine the value of adding this element and the Assessment Council is trying to decide if this is something we are doing to actually improve our assessment process rather than as a "window dressing" exercise to give the appearance of assessment activities for specific audiences. In other words, we have not decided if the added value of assessment findings from an external instrument is really sufficient at this time given the work we are doing on signature assignments, departmentally driven designs, etc.

Version 4.0 - Update

Q:

How have you incorporated the feedback from the Consolidated Response to your previous Project Update?

- A: The biggest reveal from the prior responses was the perception that the project was too "top down". Some of that perception was related to the way we described our implementation - it was a very quick implementation and was pushed (to some respect) by me in my role as Director of Assessment. What was less clear, was the fact that we worked very closely with faculty across the university to explain the initial design, to help them develop plans that fit their specific departmental needs, and focused on helping improve student success. Also, we partnered very closely with the General Education Subcommittee and the result has been positive. The general education assessment made it quite clear that the degree of curricular

incoherence was making it difficult for students to understand and matriculate through general education as a program. As a result, the GE Subcommittee has been working on - and proposed, a modified general education curriculum that attempts to reduce the number of courses, increase the focus on the general education outcomes rather than courses designed to meet the specific service requirements of specific majors - this really seemed to be the big problem for us.

The other aspect of involvement across the university community was the designed process review that was built into the initial institutional assessment plan. As part of the feedback process this year, we are gathering recommendations on what is working well and what is not working so well in the current assessment process. The purpose of this is to adjust the assessment plan in ways that increase its utility and quality. Most of the comments so far have revolved around specific aspects of the rubrics used by the College Assessment Committees to review the departmental reports. The Assessment Council is reviewing those concerns and will be sharing updated rubrics with the colleges for input in early Fall 2017.

Q:

Your team has reached the midpoint in the Academy. Summarize your team's accomplishments thus far.

A: Our progress to date is strong. We just completed the second implementation of the assessment plan and the quality of departmental assessment reports and the college level reviews has improved dramatically. We still have a few departments that are not effectively using assessment for programmatic improvement and as a result we are increasing the emphasis in our academy workshops on this aspect. We added a new workshop that focuses on using assessment results for programmatic improvement and off of that, a couple of departments are in the early stages of working with the assessment office to figure out how to better use assessment findings to drive change.

Q:

Describe the most significant challenges and opportunities encountered in the development and initial implementation of your Academy project.

A: The most significant challenge for us is time. Specifically, we are in the middle of significant organizational change. The State Legislature, Indiana University Board of Regents, and Purdue University Board of Regents have made the decision to consolidate all non health science academic programs at IPFW to Purdue control and are splitting health sciences and moving them as an extended location of IUPUI. These changes are requiring us to move around half of our current academic units from IU to Purdue. As a result, we are completing a CHange in Organization application and preparing a self study in advance of a site visit in the Fall. Despite these challenges, progress continues on assessment plan implementation. This suggests that our "culture" for assessment is improving. One opportunity of the current environment is that we are really looking closely at our curricula because of the organizational changes described above. In a way it can help us focus our assessment efforts even more.

Q:

To this point, who has been engaged in the Academy process. Are there additional stakeholders who need to be included in the Academy process? How can they be engaged?

A: Our Assessment Council, all Departmental Chairs, all College Deans, and over 100 additional faculty through workshops we have delivered. In addition, the general education sub-committee, our University Senate, and more recently many of our academic support administrative areas. We just designed a new process for administrative program review that requires annual assessment reports for all administrative units on campus. We do need to continue increasing the number of faculty involved in the process. We are increasing our emphasis on partnering with a couple of groups on campus including the Center for Learning and Teaching and several faculty groups.

Q:

What are your goals for the next six months? How will this advance your project?

A: The goals for the next six months are:

1. Continue to expand faculty involvement - we need to stay vigilant about getting new faculty involved in the process.

2. Increase collaboration across Colleges -

Q:

What challenges do you anticipate? How will you address them?

A: Our biggest challenge will be balancing the realignment of our academic programs from IU to Purdue without stalling the progress we are making on assessment. While the two things are mutually supportive, our faculty are feeling very stressed at the moment. The institution has focused on trying to consolidate as many activities as possible and to prioritize the types of requests we make of our faculty. This should help us through the transition.

Version 4.0 - Response

Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A: Jeff Sturges sturgesj@cochise.edu 520.227.3466

Susan Hatfield SHatfield@hlcommission.org

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Jeff Sturges

Here are what I see as the main strengths of your project:

1. I liked that you mention that you are following a couple of other institutions, hoping to learn from their projects. I liked your thoughtful consideration of whether adopting Arkansas State's approach to using externally developed exams works for your institution. (In my opinion, these exams are worthless for two reasons: It is virtually impossible to get an accurate cross-section of your student population taking the exams. It is virtually impossible to find a way to assure that you are getting students to do their best on the exams.) I like that you are focusing on assessments that should help you improve student

learning at your university rather than focusing on external validation.

2. I appreciate and accept your explanation as to why your other report may have been interpreted in a way to view your approach as more "top down" than it actually is.
3. Your efforts to involve so many stakeholders in you assessment project is certainly one of its strengths.
4. It is also a strength that, as you move forward with your project, you are learning about some areas of weaknesses in your institution, such as your "curricular incoherence," and that that learning has led to attempts to strengthen those areas.
5. The same can be said about your efforts to gather "recommendations on what is working well and what is not working so well in the current assessment process."
6. It is impressive that you have initiated a new workshop to help faculty understand how to use assessment results to improve their programs.
7. I like that you seem to be finding ways to expand institutional involvement in your assessment project, for instance, with the new process "for administrative program review that requires annual assessment reports for all administrative units on campus."

Overall, I agree with your own assessment of your assessment accomplishments: Your "progress to date is strong."

Susan Hatfield

Jeff's very thorough list leaves me little else on which to comment except to say that I agree with the strengths he's identified. That you are able to move forward and make progress in spite of the reorganization is impressive.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Jeff Sturges

The only things that seem to need more clarification is how you plan to expand faculty involvement and increase collaboration across the colleges--the two goals that you name in the final segment of your report. I look forward to reading the details of how you attempted to achieve these goals and how successful you were in achieving them. These are indeed challenges for any college or university working to institute the effective assessment of student learning.

Susan Hatfield

Just to clarify -- are you able to aggregate the assessment of the general education outcomes from the different programs and units? Will this come from the annual assessment reporting?

How are part-time faculty involved in the initiative?

Is it assumed that all faculty will collect data specifically related to the general education outcomes, course content outcomes, or both?

Annual assessment reports will be required by all administrative units on campus. Does that mean each program chair or director completes the assessment report? Will that trickle down to each faculty completing an annual assessment report?

Are there campus-wide discussions about the student achievement of the General Education outcomes?

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Jeff Sturges

I think that you named these in your concluding segment: You need to continue to expand faculty involvement and increase collaboration across your colleges. These are challenging tasks but critical to your success. Of course, you also need to keep up the forward momentum you seem to have achieved. Finding ways to keep assessment in the forefront of all of your stakeholders' minds should help with this.

Susan Hatfield

How will the annual assessment reports be used? Who will review them? What kind (and in what format) will feedback be provided to the unit? What you don't want to happen is for these documents to become "Black Hole" reports. Be sure that everyone knows why this information, collected on an annual basis, is important and valued.

The other thing to be careful of when using annual reporting is that it doesn't shrink the time frame for improvement. If the assumption is that the annual reports should show that the unit has effectively "Closed the loop" -- the assessments reported tend to become about small issues that can be easily solved -- leaving the Big Issues untouched because they would take too long (more than one or two reporting cycles) to address.

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Jeff Sturges

I have no further suggestions in this area. I will reiterate that I think that looking skeptically at external instruments like standardized exams is wise.

Scholar(s): Susan Hatfield

Primary Mentor(s): Jeff Sturges

Project: Institutionalizing Assessment in a Culture of Student Success

Version 3.0 - Project

Q:

What projects have you been following on the Collaboration Network? What have you learned from the experiences of other schools that is useful to your project?

To learn more about the progress and development of other projects, get alerts by following other projects.

A: We have spent the bulk of our time reviewing completed projects in the first phase to learn from their experience. Specifically I have been looking at Illinois State and Truman State as their projects share similarity to ours. I think the major lesson we are applying is based on looking at the challenges I perceive Illinois State had at the end of their program due to Faculty losing momentum as reflected in involvement and the success Truman State had at creating a culture of Faculty Involvement. As a result, we are intentionally involving faculty in our IPFW Assessment Academy very quickly. For example, the College of Arts and Sciences Assessment Committee did a great job of reviewing departmental level reports in our pilot year. We are partnering with members of that particular committee to provide training for our other College Level Committees this Fall. Also, we have identified programs in COAS, Engineering, College of Visual and Performing Arts, and Health Sciences that did specific sections of the assessment report particularly well to do some targeted workshops for departments this Spring based on areas that the College level committees find need improvement. We hope this establishes an increasing base of faculty involvement which replicates Truman State's success. This Spring we will begin looking at the projects that are in progress (especially from our cohort) to learn more.

Version 3.0 - Update

Q:

How has your project developed and changed since the last posting?

A: Since our last posting, we have received at least section 1,2, and 3 of the Annual Assessment Report from 90% of our departments. We have also completed a full assessment of all general education courses. This assessment reinforced the issue that I raised in my last report that our general education program is operating a series of disconnected courses rather than a program. As a result, the general education sub-committee has developed a proposal to revise our general education program that will move to a series of town halls in October to get our faculty involved in both revising the program and to help them begin thinking of general education as a program. I am working on training our advisers to help students understand how general education works as a program and how it integrates with their major.

I developed a new Assessment Manual and Assessment Workbook to support departments in the implementation of the new assessment plan and the Assessment Academy is running a series of workshops this Fall to support departments in their assessment efforts and to build a stronger community of assessment specialists as discussed in the prior section

Finally, we have updated our website to make our assessment process more transparent and to help facilitate sharing information across units. On this site, you can also see our assessment workshops, assessment reports at the department, college, and institutional level, the assessment manual and workbook, our Assessment Blog and our Assessment Newsletter which includes updates on assessment activity.

Link 1: [IPFW Assessment Website](http://www.ipfw.edu/assessment)
<http://www.ipfw.edu/assessment>

Q:

Describe your team's initial implementation of the project you have designed.

A: Our has been actively working within the assessment council to help guide the changes we discussed earlier. One major change that will take place this Fall is a change in Appendix D to emphasize the rubrics as more holistic rubrics. We have done this through taking out the scoring part of the metric and adding a category "not present". The Committee feels this will better guide a program that emphasizes using assessment findings to actually improve student learning as it emphasizes change rather than a score.

Q:

How have you incorporated the feedback to your previous postings?

A: The comments on the scope of the project were considered carefully and this is why we have emphasized increasing faculty involvement. The comments on the challenges of the general education assessment were provided to our General Education su-committee and I fees thy helped encourage that department to focus on creating a more coherent general education program that will lend itself to the type of integrated teaching, learning, and assessment model we are attempting to build.

Q:

Thus far, what have you discovered about student learning at your institution.

A: One thing that we are beginning to look at, partly as a function of the assessment findings, is to examine with Institutional Research how we might better understand challenges our students face because of the nature of our largely first generation population. Specifically we are examining course taking patterns in relationship to some of the assessment findings to see how this affects student success. In re-analyzing some of the assessment results, we are hoping to find ways to focus certain activities, for example the support provided by CASA to increase student success.

Q:

How will you continue to advance your project in the next six months?

A: Our primary emphasis areas in the next six months are:

1. to complete the first full university cycle of programmatic assessment to identify our needs on campus
2. to increase faculty involvement with a specific emphasis on building a culture focused on integrating high quality assessment to improve teaching and learning and student success.
3. To continually examine our process to improve its quality, scalability, and usability

Q:

What challenges do you anticipate? How will you address them?

A: Our primary challenge is that we are potentially undergoing a major organizational change that is creating a great deal of organizational stress. Unfortunately this change is driven by our two parent institutions and we have little control. We have positioned the Assessment Academy as an area we can control in an attempt to compartmentalize the work to keep it going.

Our other challenge is continually focusing on ensuring that we are developing an effort that is both broad - from the perspective of all units "doing" assessment, but also "deep" to ensure that our assessment efforts are actually improving student learning. The common emphasis across all our activities is making the link between teaching, learning, and assessment. In addition, our continued emphasis on increasing the base of faculty involved in the project is intentional. I am considering partnering with a research group in their pilot of a research instrument measuring "assessment culture" based on a faculty survey but am not sure this is the right time given the level of stress our faculty are feeling as a result of the organizational changes. However, I am following the project and talking to the primary investigator to help guide that decision.

Version 3.0 - Response

Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A: Jeff Sturges sturgesj@cochise.edu (520) 227-3466

Susan Hatfield SHatfield@hlcommission.org

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Jeff Sturges

Here are some of the strengths I see:

1. You report that you are involving faculty in your IPFW Assessment Academy very quickly. It is good to see that a number of your faculty members are getting involved in your academy, presumably with some enthusiasm.
2. The targeted workshops for departments, based upon what you learned that needs improvement, seem like they could be productive.

3. You also seem to have learned from your experiences in this way: The "general education sub-committee has developed a proposal to revise our general education program that will move to a series of town halls."
4. Getting 90% of your departments to participate in your annual assessment report is a strength.
5. Updating your website to make your "assessment process more transparent and to help facilitate sharing information across units" is a good move.
6. I like your efforts to emphasize using assessment findings to "actually improve student learning" by emphasizing change rather than scores.

Overall, I see the strengths of your project being your awareness that faculty involvement is crucial, along with your efforts to increase this involvement. I am also impressed that you continue to focus on the improvement of student learning as the ultimate goal of your assessment efforts.

Susan Hatfield

Jeff has done a great job of noting the many strengths of the project -- he and I are both on the same page in terms of noting the same multiple strengths of the project.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Jeff Sturges:

I wonder about the rather frequent references to the writer: "I am working," "I developed," "I am considering partnering," etc. These references seem to indicate that a lot of this work is being done by one individual. This seems incongruous with the statements about including a number of faculty members. Why have you done so much work seemingly by yourself?

Some sentences were unclear to me, due, it seems, to uncorrected typos: "I fees thy helped . . .," "Our has been . . .," etc. Some of these typos made parts of the report hard to read and understand.

You write that you are looking at student course-taking patterns in relationship to some of your assessment findings "In re-analyzing some of the assessment results, we are hoping to find ways to focus certain activities, for example the support provided by CASA to increase student success." This is interesting, but I am left wondering what was discovered in your analysis. What was discovered about the relationship between course-taking patterns and the assessment results?

One of your stated goals is "to increase faculty involvement with a specific emphasis on building a culture focused on integrating high quality assessment to improve teaching and learning and student success." I am left wondering how you might go about achieving this goal. How will you get more faculty involved? How will you make certain that this involvement results in improved student learning and success?

This intrigues me, but I am left wondering how you may have "positioned the Assessment Academy as an area we can control in an attempt to compartmentalize the work to keep it going." This seems to be an administrative move not centrally related to your assessment

efforts, but nonetheless, I wonder how this positioning was accomplished and what it entailed.

Susan Hatfield

I too was wondering about the "I" statements -- I trust the Academy Team is involved in these activities as well?

I was wondering about what has been discovered about the quality of the assessment reports that have been submitted. Do programs receive any feedback on these? Is there the sense that these are being taken seriously (by both departments and whomever is receiving them?) How do (or will) these reports connect with your program review process?

Is the assumption that all Gen Ed courses will be continued to be assessed every year?

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Jeff Sturges

You seem to be making very good progress, so it seems that you mostly need to keep up the momentum. You have made efforts in two important areas that will need continuous critical attention:

1. Faculty involvement. As noted above, I question why you, as it seems from your report, personally took on so many tasks: training advisors, developing the manual and workbook, etc. The more that tasks are shared, the more faculty buy-in you are likely to gain.
2. Focus on improvement of student learning. I suggest working on "closing the loop" as quickly as you can, which means using assessment results to make changes to effect learning improvement. I also suggest avoiding top-down solutions. Let faculty in your various departments analyze the results, develop action plans to improve learning, and implement those plans. It is also important for faculty to then find ways to ascertain whether those action plans impact student learning positively. If they do, then those actions need to be integrated into the curriculum and/or the operating procedures of the departments. If they are discovered to be ineffective, then new action plans need to be devised and implemented.

To sum up: keep up the good work.

Susan Hatfield

In terms on General education, while I applaud the faculty that every course has been assessed, I'm not sure what question all of that data answers. This might be a useful discussion to have. If you are interested in whether or not students are achieving the general education learning outcomes, you may need to consider exactly where that learning would be evidenced and who you want to sample. I'm seeing a lot of schools collect data from a lot of GE course and aggregate it, even though that data represents different types of students (first and second year -- just to keep it simple), and different courses (courses typically taken as a second or third course in a gen ed category). Strategic data collection would likely yield more useful data. If you are collecting data on every course to make sure they are all contributing at some level to the achievement of general education outcomes, you might be able to rotate through the classes on some kind of schedule.

Also, keep in mind that not all faculty have to be collecting data to be engaged in assessment -- there are lots of ways to be engaged in the process.

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Jeff Sturges

You mention a challenge that you face regarding organizational change that may impact your assessment efforts. Without knowing what kind of change you are undergoing, I can only suggest that you perhaps research other institutions that have gone through similar changes to discover how their challenges were met.

Susan Hatfield

That's a good suggestion!

Scholar(s): Susan Hatfield

Primary Mentor(s): Jeff Sturges

Project: Institutionalizing Assessment in a Culture of Student Success

Version 2.0 - Project

Q: What projects have you been following on the Collaboration Network? What have you learned from the experiences of other schools that is useful to your project?

A: Northern Iowa and University of Michigan Dearborn. It appears that in both institutions, the focus of the project increased and the scope of the project narrowed as they matured. We had a similar challenge - as identified by our consultants. As a result, we have focused on rethinking the Internal Assessment Academy Idea as is discussed in the following sections.

Version 2.0 - Update

Q: How has your project developed and changed since the Roundtable?

A: In the first 10 months of the project, we reconvened our Assessment Council, developed and restated the senate document governing programmatic assessment at IPFW (SD 15-6) which is included as the first link below, fully implemented a pilot of the new Assessment Program through the College of Arts and Sciences (Link to COAS Assessment Report is below). and have worked with all of the other Colleges to complete the first three sections of the new Assessment Plan as stated in SD 15-6. All Colleges have committed to completing the first three sections (Section 1, Programmatic SLO's, Section 2: Curricular Maps, and Section 3: Programmatic Assessment Plan) by May 2016 and implement the assessment plan in Fall 2016. We expect full results from all Colleges in Spring 2017.

We modified the organization and conceptualization of our IPFW Assessment Academy. We developed materials in our learning management system (Blackboard) to support a workshop series that was delivered in Spring 2015 and Fall 2015). The presentations are available on our website (see Workshop Link below). This workshop series focused on developing expertise in academic units necessary to support the implementation of SD 15-6.

We have delivered these at the unit level (customized to specific academic units), at an administrative level of chairs of academic departments, and at the university level through open workshops. Over 100 participants were engaged in the workshops which has allowed us to move quickly to implementation of SD 15-6. We are now inviting departments to partner with each other in pairs to help implement the assessment plan and to focus on using data to improve student learning. The departmental collaboration that we are now beginning should help us move to the institutional learning model proposed in our initial proposal.

Link 1: [SD 15-6](https://www.ipfw.edu/dotAsset/0b3ed91b-2219-486c-b0ae-9bea62c970c8.pdf)

<https://www.ipfw.edu/dotAsset/0b3ed91b-2219-486c-b0ae-9bea62c970c8.pdf>

Link 2: [Workshop links](http://www.ipfw.edu/offices/assessment/assessment-academy/)

<http://www.ipfw.edu/offices/assessment/assessment-academy/>

Link 3: [COAS Assessment Report](http://www.ipfw.edu/dotAsset/572abd99-34e8-439a-880e-7c4abfaf839d.pdf)

<http://www.ipfw.edu/dotAsset/572abd99-34e8-439a-880e-7c4abfaf839d.pdf>

Q: Identify and explain any specific changes to your project scope or design.

A: The most significant change in our project is to focus on assessment of academic programs

(academic units offering a major and College level) prior to a more intensive look at modifying the general education assessment in the first year. The reason for the change was that the General Education Sub-Committee is collecting course level assessment presently as part of their implementation of the new general education program and we want to use the course level assessment to guide the development of the general education programmatic assessment. We are, however, continuing to examine the assessment of written communication, oral communication, and quantitative reasoning. We expect to complete full reports in each of these areas by the beginning of Fall 2016.

Q: How did you incorporate the feedback that you received on your previous posting?

A: The majority of the feedback was on project scope and a lack of clarity in the implementation of the Assessment Plan. We paid close attention to this as we worked with the Colleges to establish more specific requirements as reflected in the expectation that all units complete the first three sections of the report in the first year. In addition, the more methodical nature of the implementation of the Assessment Academy was largely based on feedback from the Consultant.

Q: What are the plans for the next six months? How will this work advance your project?

A: In the next six months we are focusing on ensuring that all academic units complete the first three sections of the Assessment Report including a specific plan for assessing two to three programmatic student learning outcomes in Fall 2016 through Spring 2017. We have a commitment from all colleges to complete the first three sections of the report by May. This will allow the Assessment Council to provide feedback to the Colleges and Departments that should increase the quality of programmatic assessment in the initial 2016-17 implementation.

Q: What challenges do you anticipate? How will you address them?

A: The biggest challenge we presently face is a pending governance issue resulting from a legislative study. Our traditional organizational model had one institution granting degrees from both Indiana University and Purdue University. Under the proposed organization, all programs would be Purdue programs and our College of Health Sciences would be moved to IU's College of Medicine and no longer a part of the newly configured Purdue University Fort Wayne. This is a major distraction for the campus and potentially might slow the progress we have made. We are working proactively with all Colleges including the College of Health Sciences to ensure that we continue building our assessment program through this period.

Version 2.0 - Response

Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A: Jeff Sturges sturgesj@cochise.edu (520) 227-3466

Susan Hatfield SHatfield@hlcommission.org

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Jeff Sturges

Overall, the biggest strength I see in the work that you have done is the progress made in moving forward with the implementation of your plans, along with the specificity you provide, which was something I felt could have been stronger in your last report. The

progress in implementation is evidence in your 2014 -15 COAS Committee Assessment Report, in which you demonstrate that real assessment is already taking place at your institution, and Senate Document SD 15-6, in which you outline, in great detail, your assessment mission, goals, and procedures.

You seem to have garnered significant cooperation from all of your colleges and academic departments. Your workshops seem to have been well attended. As you note, the departmental collaboration should help you proceed to more fully implement your plans.

Sharpening your focus on program assessment prior to expanding your efforts to encompass general education assessment may be a good idea.

The COAS Committee Assessment Report is indeed good evidence to present to the HLC of robust assessment. However, most impressive to me are the responses given to the departmental assessment reports, particularly the bulleted items that the committee provided which detail the things to which the departments needed to pay attention in the future. You have in place, it seems, a system that should, over time, increase the quality of departmental assessment.

Susan Hatfield

In addition to the project's strengths outlined by Jeff, I would like to add that a significant strength of the project is the self reflection of the project on the part of the Academy Team. It's easy to move a plan forward -- far more difficult to be willing to assess the progress of the project and recognize when it's necessary to rethink direction, activities, and processes.

Additionally, I appreciate that IPFW is using the network to learn from other schools and carefully considering the feedback on their postings.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Jeff Sturges

It is unclear to me how you will use your course-level assessment to guide your general-education assessment efforts. What is the connection or anticipated connection?

While SD 15-6 stipulates that assessment data must be used to improve student learning, and your COAS Committee Assessment Report template includes the requirement that departments include plans to improve student learning based on assessment results, how will the departments and the committee determine whether the plans have been implemented and, if implemented, whether they have been successful in improving student learning?

Susan Hatfield

Have you been keeping track of the most common issues that have come up in your review and feedback to units? This might provide future direction for training.

Also, is it assumed that the general education outcomes will somehow manifest themselves in academic programs? (This may have implications for General Education assessment).

Is there any way to insulate the project to try to minimize the impact of the proposed organization change?

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Jeff Sturges

When reviewing the COAS Committee Assessment Report, I noticed that an unvoiced but apparent concern--reflected in a number of the department reports--seemed to be about proving that students were meeting the objectives rather than in determining what ways student learning could be improved. This, in my experience, seems to be rather common when departments are first charged with conducting student-learning assessment. They naturally want to demonstrate that they are doing a good job. I think it is important to make it clear that finding areas that need improvement and working to improve is more laudable than trying to prove that the department or program is successful.

As noted in the section above, it is good to see that departments are required, in their assessment reports, to devise methods to improve student learning based on their findings. It is critical, however, to hold the departments accountable for implementing their action plans. Furthermore, they must also be required to ascertain whether these plans result in actual improvement. I'm hoping that you can adjust your assessment procedures to include these critical steps.

Susan Hatfield

What Jeff is describing is the difference between Assessment OF Learning (documenting the current state) and Assessment FOR Learning (planning for the future). Jeff's identification of how critical is it for units to be encouraged to facilitate improvement is important. It might be worth having units step back from the data and ask themselves "What is the most critical area of needed improvement in student learning" in their programs. You want to encourage programs to address the BIG ISSUES they face -- though often those BIG ISSUES may not be evidenced in their assessment plans. This gets back to the bigger issue of the unit's Learning Outcomes themselves and your level of confidence that those outcomes when taken together are of significant scope and importance to reflect what students should be able to do upon graduation.

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Jeff Sturges

Your COAS Committee Assessment Report reveals that you have devised some effective procedures and that departments seem to be taking assessment seriously. A possibility that most likely you have considered--but I will mention it here just in case you haven't--is to periodically analyze the reports to identify common problems departments might be encountering when following the prescribed assessment procedures. You could also identify some common misunderstandings about assessment in general or the specific procedures that faculty must follow. This kind of analysis may help you fine-tune the procedures and the way in which you communicate them to the departments as well as help broaden faculty knowledge of student-learning assessment in general.

Susan Hatfield

I agree with Jeff -- this would be good practice.

Hope to see you at the Annual Meeting!

Scholar(s): Susan Hatfield

Primary Mentor(s): Jeff Sturges

Project: Institutionalizing Assessment in a Culture of Student Success

Version 1.0 - Project

Q: Describe the project you developed at the Roundtable. Focus particularly on the general strategies you developed. (500 words)

A: The Roundtable project developed by the Academy Team is to build and implement a comprehensive and cohesive assessment plan to support a culture of student success. While this is a large project, significant progress is necessary to meet the requirements of our next Comprehensive visit. IPFW is developing an Internal Assessment Academy that replicates the structure and process of the HLC Academy to ensure broad participation in accomplishing the project goal. The project is phased over four years and is developmental in design. The central goal of the project is promoting student success defined as significant progress toward and timely completion of a degree. The strategies described define how we are operationalizing the plan.

The project is staged and builds on current assessment activity in three domains of general education: written communication, oral communication, and quantitative reasoning. These domains represent the “skills core” of our general education program. The academic departments primarily responsible for student achievement of the outcomes for the domains have collected two years of assessment data. Our first strategy in building a culture of student success is to evaluate the current assessment activities to determine the effectiveness of assessment strategies in measuring student progress toward the outcomes, examining how current curricular and instructional strategies are contributing to student success relative to the outcomes, and how assessment findings are presently being used to make systemic changes to improve student performance relative to the expected outcomes. The assessment strategies developed across the domains will be transferred to the balance of general education domains beginning in Year 3 of the project.

The second strategy focuses on programmatic assessment. Presently some of our professionally accredited programs and some of our non-accredited programs have good assessment practices. The Academy Leadership Team will identify exemplars from these programs to form a core group to help lead the IPFW Assessment Academy.

Our third strategy is to build a foundation for programmatic assessment across all academic programs beginning with supporting the development and mapping of programmatic student learning outcomes in the first year, assessment of three programmatic outcomes in the second year and programmatic changes based on assessment findings in the third year. This process operationalizes an assessment process described in the revision of our current Senate Document governing academic assessment. The assessment activities will serve as a pilot for the academic assessment plan and the experience will be used to refine the plan.

Our fourth strategy begins in Year 3 and focuses on integrating the assessment plan between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to focus on a comprehensive assessment of curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular support for student success. The strategy for this will be developed jointly through the IPFW Assessment Academy.

The development of the plan will include ensuring the resources are available to implement and sustain the effort. The Academy team will build an initial Institutional Assessment Budget. The non-financial resources will be developed as part of the IPFW Assessment Academy.

Q: How will your project contribute to making assessment an activity that leads to the improvement of student learning?

A: The emphasis on defining assessable student learning outcomes and alignment of all student learning outcomes to our IPFW Baccalaureate framework is the foundation we are building all activities on. Specifically, the IPFW Assessment Academy will provide a peer-led, university wide team focused on formative and summative assessment of student learning and development with specific goals around the acquisition and application of knowledge, enhancing personal and professional values, creating a sense of community, developing critical and problem solving skills, and communicating effectively.

The development of the IPFW Assessment Academy is expected to help foster campus-wide involvement in creating a culture of student success. This culture will reinforce our commitment to the institutional mission to improve student learning.

Q: What are the desired outcomes of this project? How will you know that you have achieved each of these outcomes?

Project Outcomes	Evidence of Achievement
<p>Program and Department Student Learning Outcomes are mapped to Institutional Student Learning Outcomes described in the IPFW Baccalaureate Framework.</p>	<p>Student Learning Outcomes are developed for all thematic areas in the IPFW Baccalaureate Framework.</p> <p>SLO's for all programs are mapped to the Baccalaureate Framework and Programmatic Outcomes are mapped down to course and out-of-class experiences shared by all students.</p> <p>Curricular Maps are completed and shared on the institutional website for all programs.</p>
<p>General Education assessed as an academic program to improve student success.</p>	<p>Initial two rounds of assessing oral communication, written communication, and quantitative reasoning demonstrates applying assessment findings to make changes and changes reassessed.</p> <p>Transfer of knowledge through peers to other cognitive and skill domains of the general education program.</p>
<p>A cycle of Assessment for three stated learning outcomes is completed for all academic programs</p>	<p>Completion of the Assessment Report using Appendix D of the restated SD 98-22 for all departments are submitted, reviewed by the college level committee, and the college level committee report is submitted to the Assessment Council for Review.</p> <p>Based on two levels of review, the second</p>

	year departmental report includes evidence of how assessment findings were used to make changes and the impact of those changes is assessed.
Develop outcomes for and assess student success in all SLO's for all Non-Academic Areas.	All units publish Student Learning Outcomes, assessment plans, assessment results and describe how findings were used to improve student success.
Develop the resources necessary to sustain the effort.	Budget for Institutional Assessment developed, Academic and Non-Academic areas are funded. Internal Assessment Academy is active and continues to grow. Leadership for the Academy is developed as programs move from being mentored to mentoring other groups.

Q: What serious challenges do you expect to encounter? How will you deal with them?

A: The challenges we expect are in three groups:

1. History – We have an inconsistent history of sustaining assessment efforts at the institutional level. While we have pockets of high quality programmatic assessment that are tied to student success and program qualities, the institution is not at a point where one could argue we have a “culture of assessment”.
2. Financial – Funding an assessment effort in a constrained financial environment is challenging.
3. Cultural – The cultural challenges are on two fronts. First, as discussed in the history challenge, we have not sustained a culture of assessment focused on student success. We have not adequately defined student success relative to our population. Second, our level of institutional knowledge about quality assessment is limited. IPFW has pockets of expertise; however, that expertise has not been intentionally shared with other campus members.

The Internal IPFW Assessment Academy is being designed to help address these issues. Supporting an integrated vision of student success shared across the university, the Academy is intended to engage a large proportion of the campus around a singular goal to integrate assessment in all efforts focused on student success to ensure we are continually examining and working to improve student success. The structure of common assessment reporting, departmental ownership and college level review should support an assessment environment focused on student learning. Its emphasis on improvement aligns with faculty values and changes the context from “assessment as an activity for external groups” to “assessment as an activity integrated into teaching and learning processes to improve student success”.

The plan and activities should help us gain support and commitment for resources to sustain the effort.

Q: Describe the specific steps you will be taking in Year 1 to develop and implement the early stages of your project.

A: The specific steps as defined in our timeline are:

1. Develop, refine and map assessable SLO's for all programs and departments from the program to course and/or co-curricular level.
2. Map programmatic SLO's to the Baccalaureate Framework.
3. Evaluate 2013-14 and 2014-15 General Education assessment reports for Written Communication, Oral Communication, and Quantitative Reasoning.
4. Establish the IPFW Assessment Academy
5. Begin Departmental Assessment Training and Campus Conversations about the Assessment Plan and the work completed at the Assessment Academy.
6. Work the restated policy document SD 98-22 through the Faculty Senate and get it approved.

Version 1.0 - Update

Q: Please confirm that this Activity is ready for review.

A: This project is ready for review.

Version 1.0 - Response

Q: Please give your name and contact information (email address and/or phone number).

A: Jeff Sturges Cochise College sturgesj@cochise.edu (520) 227-3466

Susan Hatfield HLC Senior Scholar SHatfield@hlcommission.org

Q: What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?

A: Jeff Sturges

One major strength of your project, I believe, is your plan to develop an Internal Assessment Academy at your institution. If you plan and implement this carefully, it should help you move a long ways toward engaging the broad participation you hope for and gain the necessary buy-in of your faculty and administration.

It is a good thing that you report having programs already engaged in good assessment practices, and that you will call upon folks from these programs to form a core group to help lead your internal assessment academy. Having faculty members who have participated in successful assessment share what they have learned and, especially, emphasize the benefits of doing so should help you get buy-in from faculty with less experience and perhaps more

skepticism concerning assessment.

I like that you have an overall conception of integrating assessment at the different levels: general education, program, and student affairs. It is a strength that you also have a timetable for when the different levels of integration will be achieved.

Ensuring that you have the resources available to implement and sustain your assessment efforts is important, and it is a strength of your plan that you are considering its importance at this stage of your planning.

Another strength of your plan is that of supporting the development and mapping of program student learning outcomes. Without clear outcomes that faculty can understand, agree upon, and work with, effective assessment is not possible.

Finally, I like that your plan seems to take into account the most important reason to conduct assessment: the improvement of student learning, which you link to "student success." While providing evidence of student achievement is important to share with other stakeholders--such as accreditation entities like HLC--the improvement of student learning is the goal to keep at the forefront. When faculty members understand that this is the ultimate goal of assessment, they are much more likely to buy into the process.

Susan Hatfield

Jeff has done a fine job of outlining the strengths of the IPFW project. On a broader level, IPFW seems motivated to undertake a project that would involve virtually all faculty and shift the campus conversation to focusing on student success.

Q: What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?

A: Jeff Sturges

While the internal assessment academy idea seems like a very good one, few details are provided concerning this plan. How will this academy be organized? You mention that exemplars from previous assessment attempts will be used as leaders in the academy, but what and who will these leaders be leading? What will motivate these faculty member and or administrators to do this work? What guidelines will you provide to the leaders, and what guidelines will they need to provide those they help guide through the process of establishing effective assessment throughout your institution? How will you, in other words, structure the academy in a way that ensures its success?

I was somewhat confused that you list written communication, oral communication, and quantitative reasoning as the general education outcomes representing the "skills core" of your general education program, but then you discuss the formation of a "university wide team" focused on formative and summative assessment of student learning and development with specific goals around the acquisition and application of knowledge, enhancing personal and professional values, creating a sense of community, developing critical and problem solving skills, and communicating effectively." These goals seem very much like general education outcomes. When and how will they be integrated with the other general education outcomes--if they will be.

You mention that academic departments "primarily responsible for student achievement of the outcomes for the domains have collected two years of assessment data." What kind of data, how was it collected, and how will the processes as well as the data be used as a model in your assessment academy to help other programs develop assessment processes?

You mention an Academy Leadership Team. Who will serve on this team. How will members work with your "exemplars"? In addition, who will be responsible for leading the leaders and ensuring that the overall plan is implemented?

You also mention an "assessment process described in the revision of our current Senate Document governing academic assessment" but give no details. What is this process, which appears to be something your institution has already developed? If you already have established an assessment process, what is left for the assessment academy to achieve?

You state that you "have not adequately defined student success relative to [your] population." This confuses me, for it seems that that general education outcomes are meant to provide this definition. What other kind or kinds of definition(s) do you have in mind?

Susan Hatfield

While Jeff identifies some important issues to consider, I don't want you to think that the expectation was that you were going to be able to answer all of these questions in this first Academy posting. Perhaps it would be best to use the questions as guides and your plans take more shape in the next six months.

I was wondering if you:

- (1) Have a specific implementation plan for the next six months,
- (2) Will be able to use any faculty development days prior to the start of the semester to officially "kick off" your initiative.
- (3) Have any communication strategies for dealing with the History issue -- you will need to address it so it doesn't become the elephant in the room. Somehow you will have to signal this your approach is different than previous efforts and that the focus is on student success.

Q: What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

A: Jeff Sturges

Overall, it seems that you need to work out many of the details of your plan. While the project report I have read here seems to be aimed in a direction that should help you achieve your desired results, it seems that you have much work to do in planning and implementing the details that will help ensure your project's success. Many of my questions and concerns expressed above regard what seems to be the need for more details concerning who will do what and how.

Since so much, as I understand it, hinges upon your internal assessment academy, organizing it in a way that ensures success seems to be critical at this point. Perhaps the details of this organization are already in place, but I don't see them in this report. It seems that you need to make it clear who will ultimately be held accountable for organizing the academy, how it will be organized, and how those participating will be motivated (perhaps compensated) for attending. The organization of the academy also needs to take into account how those attending will be held accountable for fulfilling their leadership roles. Unless the academy is clearly organized and issues of motivation and accountability are dealt with proactively, you risk dissipation of focus and momentum.

As you go forward with your plans, it also seems critical that you find ways to keep, for all

involved, the ultimate goal clearly in view: improvement of student learning. Well-stated learning outcomes are essential, as are the data and methods for collecting it. Thoughtful analysis of the data shared with all faculty members is critical. However, the most important aspect of the whole process is, of course, actual improvement resulting from actions taken in response to the analysis of data. Educating the faculty members about your assessment process so that they understand the purpose of each step is something to which you need to pay close attention, but you should take great efforts to make certain that all understand the ultimate goal, which is improving student learning, which you link to "student success."

Susan Hatfield

I agree with Jeff's comments and the need to spend the next six months working on the implementation details of your plan. This is usual trajectory of an academy project.

The posting outlines a significant project encompassing both gen ed assessment and program assessment. The result will be a significant shift in the culture of the institution. I suggest thinking of and shaping this new culture as one of student learning or student success, and not a culture of assessment (which may tap into some of the old history).

My primary caution is to be deliberate as you move forward -- pilot test, build coalitions, regroup if necessary, create infrastructure.

Q: What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

A: Jeff Sturges

To help inform and motivate the "the large proportion of the campus" you intend to involve in integrating your assessment efforts, you might consider tasking members of your internal assessment academy to develop and distribute an assessment handbook (hard cover or digital). In addition, a video, perhaps featuring respected members of your administration and faculty, could be produced by the academy for the same purpose. A creative video employing humor may be one way to help train and motivate the campus community.

You seem to have a very good start with your planning. I wish you the best with the implementation of your plans.

Susan Hatfield

The Collaboration has a lot to offer and I suggest looking around to find schools and projects that are similar to yours. You may find some great ideas, useful suggestions, and contacts that can offer support.

Scholar(s): Susan Hatfield

Primary Mentor(s): Jeff Sturges

