CREATING AN ASSESSMENT PLAN THAT VALUES DATA FOR DECISIONS
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UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
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*Gardening, reading, blogging, hiking

University of Utah
- Public Research University in Salt Lake City, UT
- Around 31,000 students – 24,000 are undergraduates
- Over 70 undergraduate academic departments
- About 2300 students live on campus
Academic Advising at the U of U

University College Advising
- General Education
- DARS & GPS Admin
- University Policy & Procedure
- New students in transition
- Major exploration
- Academic Performance
- Pre-professional school planning

Departments & Colleges Advising
- Major/minor curriculum
- Course selection
- Major declaration
- Program management
- Graduation Advising
- Updating DARS & GPS
Learning Outcomes – Tools I

- Build advising community through assessment process
  - Understand the advising systems at various institutions
  - Understand student populations throughout system
- Understand the elements of assessment
- Understand the cycle of assessment
- Understand Programmatic Learning Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes
- Understand and develop a survey
- Understand and develop a rubric
- Understand a focus group
- Network with HI system colleagues
Assessment of Student Learning

Be Open To New Lenses
As You Understand and Impact Student Learning

Sharing ideas
Accepting ideas
Cross-institutional teams
Understanding outcomes
Developing tools
For Academic Advising...

Assessment is the process through which we gather evidence about the claims we are making with regard to student learning and the process/delivery of academic advising in order to inform and support enhancement & improvement.

Campbell, S. (2008)
Basic Principles of Assessment

Assessment is . . .

- evidence-driven—relying on multiple measures
- formative rather than simply summative
- measurement of outcomes
  - Student learning-outcome based (in education)
- complex process of comparison
- always a process of reasoning from evidence
- always, to some degree, imprecise

Assessment is not . . .

- episodic
- just about measurement
- about performance evaluation—although it can inform it
- solely an administrative process
- easy or quick
Flowchart of Assessment

Values
Vision
Mission
Goals
Programmatic Objectives
Learning Outcomes
Process & Delivery Outcomes
Mapping
Measurement Tools
Analysis of Data
Components of Learning Outcomes Assessment

- Values: what is important for academic advising
- Vision: aspiration – the desired future
- Mission: purpose of advising – map to achieving vision and affirming values
Components Cont’d.

- Goal – broad statements that are long-range, clear, guidance for action but are too broad to measure
  - For Example: The goals for academic advising are to design a program that is
    - Based on theories of teaching, learning, and identity development.
    - Reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of student population.
    - Proactive in creating a safe environment that is focused on social justice issues.
Components Cont’d.

- Programmatic Learning Objectives: clarify goals through language that is precise, detailed, and action oriented. Offers direction to actualize the goal and leads to learning outcome statements.
  - Student can identify career and academic goals that incorporate his/her interests, values, and skills.
  - Student can develop and implement an academic plan.
  - Student can identify and use campus and it
Components Cont’d.

- **Student Learning Outcomes** – articulates what students are expected to know, do, or value based on advising
  - For example:
    - Student can identify the elements of a goal.
    - Student can communicate his/her career goal.
    - Student communicates his/her academic goal.
    - Student can identify what an interest is.
    - Student can communicate his/her interests.
    - Student can identify what a value is.
    - Student can communicate his/her values.

- **Process & Delivery Outcomes** – articulates the expectations for delivery of academic advising
  - For example:
    - Advisor can explain the elements of a goal.
    - Advisor can explain what an interest is to a student.
    - Advisor can identify resources to assist student in identifying his/her interest.
Components Cont’d.

- Mapping: identifying where the learning outcome occurs in the curriculum
- Measurement Tools: the medium for gathering data about learning. Tools include surveys, rubrics, focus groups, interviews, observations, etc.
- Analysis: reviewing data from multiple measures to assess learning.
- Change: what happens based on assessment.
The Assessment Cycle

Identify Outcomes
Gather Evidence
Interpret Evidence
Implement Change
**Key Resources in Advising Assessment**

- NACADA Core Values
- NACADA Concept of Academic Advising
- Council on Academic Standards – Academic Advising
- NACADA Academic Advising Assessment CD – 2\(^{nd}\) edition
### Gathering Evidence – Measurement of Student Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Written exams</td>
<td>- Surveys &amp; questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Portfolios</td>
<td>- Rubrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reflective essays (personal statements)</td>
<td>- Focus Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Direct observation</td>
<td>- Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Performance on case study</td>
<td>- Retention &amp; graduation rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pretest/posttest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Gathering Evidence – Measurement of Student Learning

## Quantitative
- Measuring amount of learning
- Structured
- Descriptive or causal
- Sample is large, random, representative
- Numbers
- Questionnaire, survey, rubrics, experiments
- Data analysis summarizes
- Generalize

## Qualitative
- Meaning and understanding
- Emerging
- Exploratory
- Small and purposeful
- Words
- Observation, focus groups, case studies
- Data analysis interprets
- Not for Generalizing
Measurement Tools on National & Institutional Level
National Tools

- Examples
  - NSSE – National Survey of Student Engagement
  - Noel-Levitz’ Student Satisfaction Survey

- Why?
  - Instrument and process is in place
  - Assistance with administration and data processing
  - Comparison to similar/peer institutions
  - Third party involved in data for assessment & change

- Issue: Cost
Institutional Data

- Utilize campus resource: Institutional Analysis or Institutional Research Office
- This office may already be collecting information you can utilize (numbers of students in your college, age, number of credits taken per semester, etc.)
- Often, it’s FREE!
- Third party involved in collecting assessment data can be advantageous.
Measurement Tools
Advising Involved with Production

- Survey
- Rubric
- Focus Groups
Survey

Questionnaire, Checklist, or Evaluation
Survey

- Survey: a method for collecting quantitative information about the level of learning in a population
- Closed-ended questions
  - Controlled response – Likert scale
- Statistics/Percentage
- Benchmark
Survey Advantages

• It is an efficient way of collecting information from a large number of respondents. Statistical techniques can be used to determine validity, reliability, and statistical significance.
• Surveys are flexible.
• Because they are standardized – reduce error.
• They are relatively easy to administer.
• There is an economy in data collection due to the focus provided by standardized questions.
• Cheaper to run.
Survey Disadvantages

- They depend on subjects’ motivation, honesty, memory, and ability to respond.
- Structured surveys, particularly those with closed ended questions, may have low validity when researching affective variables.
- Although the individuals chosen to participate in surveys are often randomly sampled, errors due to non-response may exist.
- Survey question choices could lead to vague data sets because at times they are relative only to a personal abstract notion concerning "strength of choice".
Methods used to increase response rates

- brevity - single page if possible
  - financial incentives
  - non-monetary incentives
    - commodity giveaways (pens, notepads)
    - entry into a lottery, draw or contest
    - discount coupons
    - promise of contribution to charity
  - foot-in-the-door techniques - start with a small inconsequential request
- personalization of the request - address specific individuals
- claimed affiliation with universities, research institutions, or charities
- emotional appeals
- convince respondent that they can make a difference
- guarantee anonymity
- legal compulsion (certain government-run surveys)
Developing a Survey

- What is the focus (student learning)?
- What are you trying to gain insight into or about? Does a survey work?
- Writing the items
- Developing a response scale
- Administer the survey via paper or electronic format?
- Validity of instrument
- Reliability of instrument
Survey Development

- Identifying and using campus resources.
- Writing the item
  - Address learning outcome
  - Is it a leading question?
- Responses
  - Range of response
  - How response choices are developed
  - Acceptable response rate – what is it?
- Sample
  - Participants
  - Random Sample
  - Access to survey based on deliver mode
Closed Survey Item Development

- Be clear on what you want to know – learning outcomes
  - Length
  - Clarity
  - Abbreviations
  - Jargon
  - Concrete
  - Central focus

- Item is meaningful to participant
- Use standard language that is clear
- Avoid specialized words, abbreviations, or biased words or phrases
- Avoid items that are too lengthy
- Item is concrete
- If you need personal information, carefully phrase item
- Item is focused on one concept or idea
Response Choices

- Clarity
- Avoid Abbreviation & Jargon
- Concrete

- Yes/no
- Range or scale / Likert
- Developed due to expertise of area
- Based on actual options
  - Select only one
  - Select all that apply
- Checklist
  - Select the most appropriate response
  - Rate from one to 5
# Validity & Reliability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Validity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Extent to which an experiment, test, or any measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials.</td>
<td>- Indicator measures what it is intended to measured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The survey tool consistently identifies that learning occurs.</td>
<td>- Survey only measures student learning through advising process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Purposeful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example

- Purpose of question: Student understands resources for engagement
- Item
  - If you were glum for some time during your undergraduate experience at U of Zim in beautiful Crete off the coast of the Med Sea, you would use which resource listed below and explained in your catalog as well as the Orientation program and academic advising?
    - Join a frat.
    - Go to a shrink.
    - Put it on Facebook.
    - The dining facility since food makes me happy.
    - Not sure.
    - Never glum.
## Better choices

### Question One

If often you were anxious (not able to focus, not able to recall information) before your exams, which resource would you use?

- a) The Campus Library
- b) The Counseling and Advising Center
- c) The Service Learning Center
- d) The Student Union Activity Center
- e) Not sure which resource would assist with anxiety

### Question Two

You are applying for a scholarship. One requirement is a resume. Which campus resource would assist you in preparing a resume?

- a) The Service Learning Center
- b) The Women’s Resource Center
- c) Career Services
- d) Academic Advisor in major department
- e) All of the above
Rubric

“Not the cube”
Definition

A rubric is a scoring scale utilized to measure a student’s or advisor’s performance against a predetermined set of criteria.
A Rubric:

- divides a desired objective or outcome into its component parts
- identifies what are acceptable and unacceptable degrees of performance for a specific outcome
- These component parts are criterion points and degrees of performance
Criterion Points

- At Least two points on vertical axis of rubric
- Criterion points identify knowledge, understanding, and behavior
  - Objective: Student can develop and implement an academic plan
  - SLO’s:
    - Student communicates courses needed for degree.
    - Student explains why certain courses are needed for a specific major.
    - Student builds an academic plan for a specific graduation point.
    - Student demonstrates registering for courses
Degrees of Performance

- At least two points on horizontal axis
- Points can include
  - Adequate/not adequate
  - Excellent/competent/developing
  - Numbers (from 1 to 5)
## Basic Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion Points (vertical)</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
<th>Not Aware</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Descriptors for Criterion Points

- You would then add *descriptors* for each criterion point
  - For example, a descriptor for the criterion *Knowledge* may be “Ability to communicate the required courses for the major”
  - For the criterion *Understanding*, it may be “Ability to comprehend the reasoning behind the general education requirements”
  - And for the criterion *Behavior* it may be “Ability to schedule/enroll in appropriate major courses”
## Descriptors in Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion Points</th>
<th>Description for Criterion Points</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
<th>Not Aware</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Ability to communicate the required courses for the major</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Ability to comprehend the reasoning behind the requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Ability to correctly schedule/enroll in appropriate major courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Descriptors for Degrees of Performance

- Descriptors would also be added for the degrees of performance for each criterion as well.
  - For example, the descriptor for Excellent for the criterion Knowledge may be “Can delineate all requirements for the major”.
  - For Competent regarding the criterion Knowledge, it may be “Can delineate most of the requirements for the major”.
  - For Needs Work it may be “Can delineate some of the requirements for the major”.
  - And for Not Aware for Knowledge it may be “Cannot delineate any requirements for the major”.

# Descriptors for Degrees of Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
<th>Not Aware</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to communicate the required courses for the major</td>
<td>Can delineate all requirements of the major</td>
<td>Can delineate most requirements for the major</td>
<td>Can delineate some requirements for the major</td>
<td>Cannot delineate any requirements for the major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
<th>Not Aware</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to comprehend the reasoning behind the requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
<th>Not Aware</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to correctly schedule/enroll in appropriate major courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continue to Build the Rubric

- You then continue to add descriptors for each degree of performance relative to each of the remaining criterion points for Understanding and Behavior items.
## Rubric – Academic Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degrees of Performance</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
<th>Not Aware</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to communicate the required courses for the major</td>
<td>Can delineate all requirements for the major</td>
<td>Can delineate most requirements for the major</td>
<td>Can delineate some requirements for the major</td>
<td>Cannot delineate any requirements for the major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to comprehend the reasoning behind the required courses</td>
<td>Can clearly describe reasons/rationale for required courses</td>
<td>Can clearly describe many reasons for the required courses</td>
<td>Can clearly describe several reasons for the required courses</td>
<td>Cannot describe any reasons for the required courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to correctly schedule/enroll in appropriate major courses</td>
<td>Enrolls in appropriate courses to fulfill major requirements</td>
<td>Enrolls in several appropriate courses to fulfill major requirements</td>
<td>Enrolls in a few appropriate courses to fulfill major requirements</td>
<td>Has no appropriate courses on schedule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Construction of a rubric requires:

- reflection on the overall objectives, goals, and outcomes of your program, and
- identification of what you hope will be accomplished via academic advising

Rubrics are a good way to allow a quick evaluation of a performance or demonstration of knowledge
Focus Groups

- Why are you selecting a focus group?
  - Types of evidence you want to gather
- How will you find and select participants?
- Question Protocol
- Recording Data
- Analysis
Focus Group Interview

Definition: is an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic. (Patton)
- Groups are 6 to 10 people
- One to two hours in length
- Questions – open-ended/semi-structured
- The results – exploring to describe a phenomenon or concept
- Emerging patterns
- Often answering “why or how”
- Planning is key
Focus Interview Groups

TRADITIONAL FOCUS GROUPS
- In person
- Can read body language and ask follow up questions
- Can really connect with the participants

WEB-BASED FOCUS GROUPS
- Online
- Can survey larger number of people
- No need to transcribe, answers are already written
# Focus Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pro’s</th>
<th>Con’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describes</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to probe</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich data</td>
<td>Students to participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful in developing response items for surveys</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assignment – There are twelve tables. Each table is a development team.

The team will be assigned to develop a survey or a rubric.

Your purpose is to assess student learning with the tool.

You will be developing a rubric or survey that addresses student learning outcomes in one programmatic learning objective for the HI System.

Use the computer provided to record your work to share with others.

On your rubric or survey, clearly indicate the objective and outcomes you are addressing.
Assignment II – There are twelve tables. Each table is a development team.

The team will be assigned to develop the opposite tool from this morning. If you created a survey in the AM then a rubric now.

Your purpose is to assess student learning with the tool.

You will be developing a rubric or survey that addresses student learning outcomes in one programmatic learning objective for the HI System.

Use the computer provided to record your work to share with others.

On your rubric or survey, clearly indicate the objective and outcomes you are addressing.
What’s next?

- Now that we have these data, what do we do?
  - Definition of data-driven decision-making
  - Definition of assessment – multiple measures
  - Analysis of data
  - Communicating results of assessment to stakeholders
  - Tools to organize and prioritize activities based on assessment data
  - Change models
  - And the cycle begins again
Resources

Complete Resource Sheet provided in packet.