LaGuardia Community College
City University of New York
Division of Student Affairs
Motto: "Providing Help and Hope for Students"

Assessment

November 2010

OVERVIEW

- Purposes for Assessment in Student Affairs

- Characteristics of a Good Assessment

- Assessment Model

- Methodology

Reasons for Assessment in Student Affairs

- Communicate to internal and external audiences the worth, importance, and effectiveness of Student Affairs

- Provide a basis to retain and increase funding

- Provide a basis for policy development and decision making

- Respond to political pressures and realities

- Provide a basis for strategic planning

Reasons for Assessment in Student Affairs (Cont'd)

- Skepticism about the value of Student Affairs to the students holistic educational experiences

- Communicate the value of Student Affairs to the students holistic educational experiences

- Lack of clarity regarding the impact of out-of-the classroom programs and services on the social and academic development of student

Dimensions of Student Affairs Assessment

- Assessment of Service Functions

- Assessment of Students' College-Wide Experiences and Perceptions

- Assessment of Student Learning and Development Outcomes

Six Approaches to Assessment in Student Affairs

- Utilization
- Needs
- Satisfaction
- Professional Standards
- Benchmarking
- College-Wide Student Experiences and sPerceptions
- Assessment of Student Learning and Development Outcomes

Ask Yourself These Questions

- What decision did you make about your programs/services last year?

- What evidence did you use to inform that decision?

- What influenced you when making decisions about your programs/services with the stated evidence.

Characteristics of a Good Assessment

- Comprehensive, systematic, ongoing, and evolutionary
- Broad involvement from everyone
- Clear, assessable goals and objectives
- Uses a variety of assessment and evaluation methodologies
- Collects meaningful and accurate data
- Primary emphasis is on improvement of programs/services

Assessment Cycle

Key questions…

• What are we trying to do and why? or

• What are my programs/services supposed to accomplish?

• How well are we doing with programs/services?

• How do we know?

• How do we use the information to improve or celebrate successes?

• Do the improvements in programs/services work?

The Iterative Systematic Assessment Cycle

Adapted from
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Gather Data

Interpret Evidence

Mission/Purposes

Goals

Outcomes

Implement Methods to Deliver Outcomes and Methods to Gather Data

Make decisions to improve programs; enhance student learning and development; inform institutional decision-making, planning, budgeting, policy, public accountability

Six Step Assessment Model

1. Mission – Articulate unit name, primary purpose, primary activities, audience

2. Goals – top 3-5 "planning-type" statements

3. Outcomes – 3-5 specific (i.e. measurable) statements

4. Measures – Direct measures can verify learning outcomes, attitudinal change or behavior modification. Indirect measures typically reflect student satisfaction and/or self-reported understandings

5. Collection of Data – Research instruments (e.g., pre-post tests, surveys, focus groups, performances) designed to gather qualitative & quantitative information

6. Closing the Circle – Resultant data should be used when considering program/service improvement modifications, etc.

Why Move Away from Student Satisfaction Assessment?

- This methodology doesn't:
- help you understand the contributions of your programs/services
- tell you how your programs/services contribute to student development and learning
- help you make decisions for continuous improvement of programs/services

Example of Changing Satisfaction to Student Development and Learning Outcomes

- 97% of the admission service orientation participants will agree or strongly agree that the admission service session provided information and assistance

  that were helpful to their completion of application.

- Students completing the admission service orientation session will demonstrate an understanding of completing the application form properly.

Methodology

- Quantitative (Define)
- Involves the assignment of numbers to observations
- Uses to fit varying perspectives and experiences into predetermined categories
- Concerns with representativeness and generalization of a sample to a larger population

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Focus
  - Quantity…how much? how many?

- Population
  - Purposeful Sample
  - Random Selection

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Methods
  - Experiments
  - Surveys
  - Instruments

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Strategy
  - Deductive-Typically starts with a hypothesis

- Instruments
  - Surveys
  - Inventories

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Data Analysis
  - Uses statistical methods
- Findings
  - Precise
  - Numeral

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Advantages
  - Findings tend to be highly accepted by scholars and politicians
- Disadvantages
  - Researcher tends to view variables as remaining constant
  - Oversimplification of the issue

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Example of Research Question:
  - Does the exposure to the financial literacy course during the first semester increase the probability that a student with triple remediation will return the second semester?

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Example of Research Question:

  - What impact do numbers of credits earned, GPA, gender, and full time employment have on students' participation in student government?

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Qualitative (Define)
  - Study a phenomenon in its natural setting
  - Interpret the meanings individuals constructed, i.e., how they make senses of the world and their experiences

Methodology (Cont'd

- Focus
  - Quality..comprehensive..descriptive

- Population
  - Small
  - Purposeful

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Sampling

  - Homogeneous   Convenience

  - Stratified   Snowball or chain

  - Criterion

  - Confirming or challenging prior findings

  - Opportunistic

  - Politically sensitive

Methodology (Cont'd

- Methods
  - Interviews
  - Focus groups
  - Observations
  - Document analysis (public or personal records)

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Data Analysis
  - Field notes…ongoing
  - Inductive approach..theory emerge from data
  - Triangulation of Data-cross-checking of data….interviews, documents, and observations

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Findings
  - Comprehensive
  - Holistic
  - Descriptive

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Advantages
  - Flexible, generate insight in student behavior
  - Disadvantages
    - Time consuming
    - Challenges with data analysis
    - Trustworthiness issue

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Example of Research Question:
  - How does the policy of $100 commitment fee influence students perceptions of LaGuardia Community College?

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Example of Research Question:
  - How do GED students' perceptions of affinity group affiliation influence their decision to graduate from LaGuardia?

Assessing Against Professional Standards (Council for the Advanced Standard in Higher Education-CAS)

- The CAS standards were not written specifically for two-year institutions, but are broad enough to still be useful.

Assessing Against Professional Standards (Cont'd)

- Those using the CAS standards decide on methods to evaluate current practice against the standards, determine discrepancies between the two, note corrective actions, and prepare an action plan.

Choosing A Method

- It is important to choose method based on what you are trying to assess

- Consider what method will influence your constituents

- Consider what will provide you with the best information to make decisions

- Be able to justify your choice of method

Evaluation

- Analyze the data to determine the degree to which the outcomes were met

- Create a plan for improvement especially in areas of deficit

- Execute the plan

Closing the Assessment Loop

- Report outcomes to stakeholders
- Report areas that the intended outcomes were met
- Report areas that the intended outcomes were not met

Closing the Assessment Loop (Cont'd)

- Report/document decisions made to improve functional areas

- Refine assessment method and repeat process

Putting It All Together!

Student Affairs Assessment

is a

Collective Responsibility

Discussion

- **Questions**

- **Answers**

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