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 Peggy Maki, Ph.D. by Marilee J. Bresciani, Ph.D.

Mission/Purposes
Goals
Outcomes

Gather Data
Interpret Evidence

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
  - Stratified
  - Criterion
  - Confirming or challenging prior findings
  - Opportunistic
  - Politically sensitive
  - Convenience
  - Snowball or chain
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?
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
References


References (Cont’d)


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