

**“Bottoms Up:”
Institutional Collaboration
and Creation of an
Assessment Culture**

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“Bottoms Up!”

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Michael Herzog, Ph.D.
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Overview of Outcomes
Assessment and
Accreditation

NWCCU Accreditation Visits

- 1994: Accreditation mandates outcomes assessment
- 2004: Failure to demonstrate real progress
- Two-year focused visit

Responses

- Administrative response:
“Top down” mandates
- Faculty response: Resistance
- “Bottoms up” approach -
recommended by faculty to
demonstrate value of assessment

“Bottoms-Up” Approach

Components

- Faculty-driven assessment committee
- Texas A&M University Assessment Conference
- Resources
- Student Learning Outcomes Day (SLOD)
- Experts reshape the conversation

“Bottoms Up” Approach (Components...)

- Institutional research/Coordinator of Outcomes Assessment hire
- Faculty members with OA experience
- Data-gathering and rubrics
- Successful accreditation site visit

2007 Accreditation Site Visit

New mandate:

- Core Curriculum assessment

Our responses:

- Overall “Bottoms up” approach
- Campus-wide conversations
- Mission statement: Gonzaga graduate characteristics

2007 Accreditation Site Visit

(Our responses...)

- Teagle Grant
- Continuous work on student learning outcomes
- SLOD activities
 - Faculty as a whole
 - Departments
 - Sharing experiences
- Teagle Grant: Qualitative assessment of social justice education

Desired Outcomes

- Faculty ownership of assessment:
 - Changing the language
 - Frustrations
 - Overall high degree of success
- Success resulted from:
 - Administrative/faculty cooperation
 - Conditions on the ground
 - Multipronged approach

Christina Geithner, Ph.D.
Professor of Exercise Science
Chair, Academic Council
Assessment Committee

Assessment Committee
Student Learning Outcomes Day
(SLOD)

Overview of Responses to Accreditation Reports

- Academic Council Assessment Committee
- Outside experts
- Student Learning Outcomes Day (SLOD)
- Funding for implementation of outcomes assessment (OA)
- Hiring of a Coordinator for Outcomes Assessment

Academic Council Assessment Committee

- Formal vehicle for faculty involvement
- Peer review of faculty-generated OA reports
- Recommendations re: OA activities

Outside Experts

- John Bean, Seattle University
(Fall '06, Winter '07)
 - Rich faculty discourse
 - Expert insider prose
 - Manageable workload - one focus/yr
- John Webster, University of Washington
(Spring '07)
 - Rubrics for discipline-specific writing

Student Learning Outcomes Day (SLOD)

- Half-day of structured time
- Continental breakfast
- Focus
 - Outside speaker
 - In-house/Faculty presentations
- Two hours for faculty work in depts.
- Reconvene and share
- Lunch

Pitfalls

- Scheduling challenge
- Getting Deans and Chairs on board
- Faculty resistance

What We've Learned

- Scheduling challenge
 - No universally acceptable time →
hold on alternate days, one half-day/yr
 - Advance notice and repeated reminders
 - Publicize in a variety of ways/media

What We've Learned

Getting Deans and Chairs on board

- Meeting of AVP, Deans, and Assessment Coordinator prior to SLOD
- Deans as advocates
- Active involvement of Deans and Chairs

What We've Learned

- Faculty resistance
 - Use different levels of appeal:
 - threat, personal, logical, ethical
 - Provide structure to ↑ productivity
 - Feed them
 - Make them laugh
 - Thank them

What We've Learned

(Faculty resistance...)

- Allow for conversations within and across departments/disciplines
- Listen and be responsive to faculty feedback
- Provide support for OA activities
- Focus on the positive

What We've Learned

Other

- Not a quick process
- Choose outside experts to fit your campus culture and climate
- Depts. not in same place at same time, and progress at different rates

What We've Learned (Other...)

- A faculty-driven, “Bottoms up” process creates engagement, builds ownership, and shifts the culture (↓’s resistance...)
- Prominent role of faculty leadership has been a key to success

Funding for Implementation of Outcomes Assessment

- Assessment Committee proposal, Academic Council endorsement, AVP approval
- Identification of needs for moving OA forward by Departments/Faculty
- Assessment Committee recommendations
- Several departments funded for OA initiatives in 2007-08

Hiring of a Coordinator of Outcomes Assessment

- Need for administrative support and direction for comprehensive OA
- Hiring of Daniel Bubb - January 2007

Daniel Bubb, M.A.

Ph.D. Candidate

Adjunct Instructor of History/Political Science

Coordinator of Outcomes Assessment

Office of Institutional Research

**Direction and Coordination
of Outcomes Assessment**

Introduction

Hiring of Coordinator of Outcomes Assessment, Office of Institutional Research - January 2007

- Centralized point-person, full-time position
- Assist University in development of its outcomes assessment program
- Assist academic departments

Responsibilities

- Provide support for faculty - design tools:
 - Student Learning Outcomes Table (SLOT)
 - SLOT/OA Review Table and Criteria
 - Assessment Handbook for Faculty
 - Surveys (Alumni)
 - Implementing the NSSE (Freshman and Senior Years), CIRP, and other surveys

Responsibilities

- Conduct research
- Provide knowledge and experience re:
 - Assessment terminology
 - Prolific volume of publications in the discipline, and other relevant materials
- Understand the complexities of assessment as a faculty member

Pitfalls

- Getting ahead of the faculty (driving the process “Top down”)
- Expecting all departments to be in the same place at the same time
- Lack of availability of and access to resources for outcomes assessment work, including academic and financial

What We've Learned

A successful Coordinator of Outcomes Assessment:

- Understands current needs
- Understands the campus culture
- Identifies faculty with experience in OA
- Has the requisite resources and support from administration
- Utilizes creativity in program development

What We've Learned...

A successful Coordinator of Outcomes Assessment:

- Provides information and access to it via a website (in development):
 - Definition of assessment and importance
 - University's comprehensive assessment program
 - Department Annual Reports/Evaluations
 - Links to individual academic departments

What We've Learned...

A successful Coordinator of Outcomes Assessment:

- Finds and seeks support for assessment work:
 - \$25,000 Teagle Foundation Grant - Gonzaga University and Seattle University
 - Integration of a discourse approach to assessment within the majors
 - Focus on mission-related goal of student engagement in social justice through the University's Core Curriculum

Patricia Terry, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English
Associate Dean
College of Arts and Sciences

Core Curriculum Review

Introduction

- What we have done
- How “Bottoms up” approach has directed our efforts
- What we are learning

Introduction

- What we have done
 - Scheduled meetings with departments, professional schools
 - Reported to Assessment Committee

“Bottoms Up” and Department Meetings

- Reassurances
- Develop open-ended questions
 - (*Not*) How does the Core help students develop, or see relationships?
 - (*Instead*) What should be the characteristics of the ideal Gonzaga graduate?

Other Open-Ended Questions

- Please consider the attached Gonzaga Mission Statement and extract from it the most important values for our students.
 - What role does our Core play in inculcating these values?
 - What role should it play?

Other Open-Ended Questions...

- Are you satisfied generally with our current Core and its role in the formation of students?
- If you could do so, what would you change about our current Core?

What We've Learned

- Need authority
- Need for continued shaping of the discussion
- Departmental politics are alive and well
- Coordinating efforts *is* important
- “Bottoms up” approach *does* result in outcomes assessment

Examples of Core Curriculum Assessment

Positive faculty assessment:

- Yes, the current Core gives us a multidimensional, interdisciplinary critical reflection on the human condition. I would like to see better *integration* of what we have.
- Yes, the Core is introducing people to the conversation of humankind and introducing them to the literature of that conversation. We are teaching critical thinking, respect for others, and action flowing from this.

Examples of Core Curriculum Assessment

Issues to be addressed:

- We need more language study. Students need to recognize there's more than one language out there.
- The Core shouldn't be owned by departments, but should show students the connections among disciplines.
- We claim to create the "whole student," but we teach the Core in fragmentary blocks.

Examples of Core Curriculum Assessment (Issues to be addressed...)

- The Core should expose students to major modes of thinking.
- We should have the Core *throughout* the curriculum.
- What comes from the Core is ways to think and look at questions. Something in the whole process has this result. But students don't seem to be able to report what they're doing in Core classes.

Sample Student Learning Outcomes Identified in Core Conversations

Gonzaga University graduates should:

- Be capable of critical thinking
- Have certain literacies (social, religious, scientific, media, linguistic, mathematical, artistic)
- Have an understanding of their own tradition and those of other cultures
- Possess the ability to make connections among ways of knowing

What Remains

- Cross-curricular discussions to be held
- University-level committee for Core Curriculum assessment to be established
- Core models to be developed for faculty consideration

Michael Herzog

Summary

and

LAST THOUGHT

SPECIFICS

- Importance of planning
- Continuous, multi-pronged effort
- SLOD activities
- Core assessment

SPECIFICS

- Collaboration
 - Across the institution
 - With other institutions (Teagle Grant with Seattle University)
 - Peer feedback

SPECIFICS

- Faculty ownership
 - No resting on laurels
 - Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

SPECIFICS

- Better acronym than SLOD

LAST THOUGHT

Time is on our side ...

*... but there is no reason
to wait!*

A Toast...



“BOTTOMS UP!”

“BOTTOMS UP!”

Questions

- Biggest obstacles to assessment?
- Pitfalls, past and present?
- What have you learned?
- Does/would a “Bottoms Up” approach to assessment work for you?

THANK YOU!



GO ZAGS!!!