



Fully Engaging Students in the Assessment Process: Effective Strategies

2006 Texas A&M Assessment
Conference
College Station, TX



Student Life Studies

- Impetus for the creation of SLS
- Most of the budget comes from Student Service Fees
- Primary mission
 - Serve Student Affairs departments with assessment needs
 - Serve student organizations with assessment services (Student Organization Assessment Center)
 - Collect current data on Texas A&M students through national surveys (CIRP and YFCY) and local telephone and web survey program (Aggie R-r-ring)
 - Assure continuous improvement in the Division of Student Affairs through Comprehensive Program Review
 - Take a leadership role with the Office of the Vice President in strategic planning and the assessment/institutional effectiveness loop



Active Learning

- Active learning invites students to bring their life experiences into the learning process, reflect on their own and others' perspectives as they expand their viewpoints, and apply new understandings to their own lives.

–Principles of Good Practice in Student Affairs (1997)



Active Learning (cont.)

- Three principles for Bridge Building (based on Kegan's [1994] bridge metaphor)
 - Situating learning in students' experiences
 - Validating students' as knowers
 - Mutually constructing meaning
 - Baxter Magolda (1999) in *Good Practice in Student Affairs*



Active Learning (cont.)

- Student Learning Outcomes
 - *Cognitive Competence* (critical thinking, reflective judgment, reasoning, comprehension)
 - *Intrapersonal Competence* (self-awareness, self-reflection, self-authored belief system)
 - *Interpersonal Competence* (collaboration, communication, problem-solving, effectiveness with diversity)
 - *Practical Competence* (time management, effective independent action)
 - *Student Learning Imperative* (1994) and *Student Learning as Student Affairs Work* (1999)



Comprehensive Program Review

- Once every five years
- Current iteration based on Baldrige Standards of Excellence
- Includes assessment results from customers (students)
- Students on site review team



Student Organization Assessment Center

- Purpose: to assist recognized student organizations (over 800) in their assessment activities
- Philosophy: we are partners/consultants in the process, they are the content experts
- Have served over 40 organizations with over 200 projects since 1998



Student Organization Assessment Center (cont.)

- Process
 - Meet with student representative
 - Discuss purpose, process, timeline
 - Refine their questions
 - Design survey
 - Analyze the data
 - Write summary report
 - Meet with student/organization to review results and recommendations



Fish Camp

- Four day extended freshmen orientation camp off campus
- ~4,500 of 6,500 freshmen attended six sessions in August
- Involves ~1,000 current students as counselors, co-chairs, and crew



Fish Camp Assessment

- 2000-2005 Participant Evaluation
- 2001-2006 Developmental Programs (Counselor Training) Evaluation
- 2002-2005 Interest Session Evaluation
- 2004-2006 Participant Follow Up Survey
- 2004-2006 Non-Participant Survey
- 2006 Parent Survey



Fish Camp Use of Data

- Asking “How does this support the data we have?” when making changes
- Providing feedback to presenters on content and format of interest sessions
- Changing schedule to reduce counselor skits, increase interaction
- Understanding why students do not attend
- Developing learning outcomes
- Understanding the long-term impact



Student Engineers' Council

- Represents over 8,800 engineering students to college faculty and administrators
- Provides programming such as Career Fairs



Student Engineers' Council Assessment

- 2002—1-page survey regarding whether or not students attended programs and events
- 2004 to present
 - Multiple page surveys addressing problems with facilities and academic courses
 - Survey questions generated by students, faculty, and administrators



Student Engineers' Council Use of Data

- Survey results are shared with each engineering department, relevant staff, and Physical Plant
- Changes include:
 - Re-assignment of an academic advisor
 - Improvement to exterior building appearance
 - Changes in menu options at the engineering dining facility
 - New student lounge
 - More student listserv traffic
 - Restructuring of introductory engineering courses



Aggie R-r-ring

- Collect information about students and current issues that impact the Division of Student Affairs
- Advisory committee of faculty, staff, and students
- Survey specific committees for each survey include faculty, staff, and students



Aggie R-r-ring Data Dissemination

- Long Report & Highlight Report
- Web Page Posting
- Campus Resources
- Information Sharing



“Hazards” of working with students

- *Schedules* may not meet your time frame
- *Turnover* of students
- Relying upon students for *follow through*
- Limited *knowledge* of assessment
- Takes *time* to educate students about the purpose and process
- May get stuck in “*we’ve always done it that way*”
- *Pressure* from advisor/department to collect certain information



Other ideas to include students

- Committees that coordinate national surveys
- Helping design and pilot surveys
- Responding to survey results: written material, panel discussion
- Presenting on findings to other students
- Involvement in Assessment Teams
- ?????



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