

# Department Level Assessment in Student Affairs: Strategies for Involving All Levels of Staff in Assessment and Improvement

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9<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas A&M Assessment Conference





# Session Outline

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- Student Learning
- Building a Culture of Assessment
- Training Strategies
- Resources



# Student Learning

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- ❑ Student learning is not confined to the classroom
- ❑ Student Affairs is increasingly expected to provide evidence of learning
- ❑ Learning outcomes are what students will know or be able to do following an activity
- ❑ Learning outcomes should be measurable, meaningful, and manageable



# Research, Assessment, & Evaluation

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- Research—conducted to test theories and make broad generalizations; rigorous
- Assessment—systematic process that gives truthful information to improve practice (action research)
- Evaluation—using assessment to make an informed judgment



# Your Department

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- Identify program(s) in your department where learning takes place—what should students know or be able to do after the intervention?
- List (1) initial assessment supporters, (2) supporters with a little effort, and (3) non-supporters within your department/division



# Building a Culture of Assessment

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## □ Challenges

- Satisfied with the status quo
- Don't see the relevance of the initiative
- Too busy to take on another project
- See initiatives come and go
- Don't have the skills or knowledge



# Building a Culture of Assessment

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- Assessment Leaders
  - Personally committed to assessment
  - Inspire interest in assessment
  - Promote communication
  - Encourage risk-taking
  - Build a sense of community
  - Set clear expectations for assessment
  - Reward assessment efforts
  - Use assessment results



# Building a Culture of Assessment

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## □ Process

- Frame it as a learning process
- Make assessment relevant
- Set clear expectations
- Be flexible
- Provide learning opportunities
- Minimize the burden
- Start small with easy successes
- Involve students
- Use results



# Your Department

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- Identify three characteristics that you possess to lead assessment efforts
- Brainstorm three strategies to overcome the challenges and build a supportive climate (how can you win over the “supporters with a little effort”?)
- Determine a timeline to implement the strategies



# Choosing an Assessment Strategy

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- Formal vs. Informal
- Formative vs. Summative
- Direct vs. Indirect
- Objective vs. Subjective
- Local vs. Published
- Quantitative vs. Qualitative



# Data Interpretation

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- ❑ Bring in a knowledgeable, good communicator who can explain data analysis
- ❑ Discuss published articles (begin easy)
- ❑ Involve staff in qualitative content analyses
- ❑ Write small (one page) interpretations of data
- ❑ Develop a book club for assessment



# Training Strategies

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- Create common language
- Campus resources/organization capacity
- Assessment team
- Graduate students, other staff, community
- Professional development—hands on, self study



# Assessment Resources

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- ❑ Assessment conferences: NASPA (June 10-13, New Orleans), ACPA (June 18-20, Austin), North Carolina State, San Diego State, University of Michigan, IUPUI, Texas A&M
- ❑ NASPA's Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Knowledge Community—Assessment Education Framework <http://www.naspa.org/kc/saaer/framework.cfm>
- ❑ ACPA's Assessment, Skills and Knowledge Standards [http://www.myacpa.org/pub/pub\\_books\\_assessment.cfm](http://www.myacpa.org/pub/pub_books_assessment.cfm)
- ❑ Books, articles, websites, on campus presentations, webinars



# Your Department

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- List three actions you will take in the next month on your campus to involve staff in the assessment process or develop your skills



# References

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