UST

Institutional Effectiveness Report Preparation:
Academic and Student Support Units

September 2018
Institutional Effectiveness

SECTION 8: Student Achievement

Student learning and student success are at the core of the mission of all institutions of higher learning. Effective institutions focus on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning and support student learning outcomes for its educational programs. To meet the goals of educational programs, an institution provides appropriate academic and student services to support student success.

2. The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

   a. Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs.  
      *(Student outcomes: educational programs)*

   b. Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs.  
      *(Student outcomes: general education)*

   c. Academic and student services that support student success.  
      *(Student outcomes: academic and student services)*
Filing Assessment Report

UST uses XiTracs for all Assessment Reporting
Obtain your login from Nathan Dugat, Office of Institutional Assessment & Effectiveness and access XiTracs at https://stthom.xitracs.net/survey/portallogon.jsp.

Welcome Siobhan Fleming to your Xitracs Portal™.

You are reviewing 4 programs

Thank you for contributing to the UST SACS COC reaffirmation efforts.

Please contact us at assessment@stthom.edu if you have any questions.
What is the difference between objectives and outcomes?

Do outcomes matter?

**Objectives**
- Broad, future-oriented statements
- What the program or office is striving toward
- Refer to process
- Used in policy making and program planning

**Outcomes**
- Brief statements of results
- Describe behaviors of stakeholders
- Refer to results of processes
- Used to assess effectiveness and provide improvement information
Outcome

• Aquinas Writing Scholar (AWS) students will be retained at a higher level compared to first-year non-Honors students at UST.

Objective

• The QEP will increase AWS student retention at UST.
Properties of Good Assessment Techniques

- Valid—directly reflects the learning outcome being assessed
- Reliable—"consistency" or "repeatability" of your measures.
- Actionable—results help faculty identify what students are learning well and what requires more attention
- Triangulation—multiple lines of evidence point to the same conclusion

Source:
Assessment Method Examples

Assessment Methods

Quantitative
- Surveys
- Analysis of Behavioral Records

Qualitative
- In-depth Interviews
- Focus Groups
Assessment Methods

• Assessment method should be clearly linked to an outcome.
• Assessment method description should be detailed and include the time period when the assessment took place, number of students who participated in survey or were included in the analysis, and survey item descriptions:

  During the fall semester 2012, all students who visited the Career Center for an appointment or a walk-in session were asked to complete a satisfaction survey. Approximately 1,300 surveys were distributed with 452 completions for a return rate of 33%. The first question on the survey asked what type of assistance they were seeking and students were instructed to check all reasons that applied...

• In cases when the number of students is rather small, one can combine several years of data.
Student Surveys

• Do not limit the survey instrument to global item(s), such as:
  • I would rate the overall effectiveness of … as: (1) poor; (2) fair; (3) good; (4) excellent.

• Include open-ended questions

• Avoid the following question formulation mistakes:
  • Ambiguous or imprecise questions, such as:
    • My friends often use campus recreation facilities: (1) yes; (2) no; (3) do not know
  • Two questions in the same question
    • The advisor I saw was friendly and helpful.
  • Questions that presume a particular answer
    • Wouldn’t you like to receive our free brochure?
  • Questions where a respondent does not have needed information
    • Do you agree with the university’s current residency requirement?
How Focus Groups Differ from Survey Methods?

Focus-groups

Insight not rules
Social not individual
Homogeneous not diverse
Flexible not standardized
Warm not hot
Words not numbers

Surveys
# Elements of Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Participants:</strong></th>
<th>Selected, by invitation only; should have similar characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size:</strong></td>
<td>8-12 participants per session; invite up to twice as many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length:</strong></td>
<td>90 to 120 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of different sessions:</strong></td>
<td>varies; should be more than 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data collection:</strong></td>
<td>Audiotape; transcription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formats of reporting:</strong></td>
<td>Selected quotations; analysis of repeated themes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of Student Behavioral Records

- Frequency of contacts between students and their advisors
- Enrollment patterns and academic progress:
  - Major changes
  - Retention rates
  - Degree completion
  - Time to degree
  - Grades
- Use of student services
Results

- Results would ideally provide information about common strengths and weaknesses. It is insufficient to provide one number or an average for all students:
  
  *95% of students were satisfied with services they received.*

- If a survey instrument was used, one can use averages for each survey item that measures an outcome.

- If student behavioral records are used, one can compare different groups of students.
Results, Examples:

- Behavioral Records:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-Year Fall GPA by Honors Status</th>
<th>Left AU</th>
<th>Left Honors</th>
<th>Honors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Fall GPA</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Retention rates in the Honors College declined substantially by high school GPA range. Those with a 3.75 or higher remained in the HC at a rate of 77%, compared to a 50% retention rate for those in a GPA range of 3.5-3.74. These retention rates increase when controlling for those who left Auburn all together. In this case, 79% of those with a 3.75 or higher remained in the Honors College, while 55% with a high school GPA in the range of 3.5 to 3.74 persisted. Further, differences in first semester college GPAs for those groups were significantly higher for all high school GPA ranges when compared to the average GPA of those who remained in the Honors College. Therefore we believe higher high school GPAs is a good predictor of retention in the Honors College.
Results, Examples:

- Surveys:

  University services

  All students indicated that they knew who their academic advisor was and that 99% were meeting with their advisor once or more per semester. These students had not made use of Tiger Advisor; less than 2% had used this service. However, they were active users of DegreeWorks; 94% had accessed this curriculum audit system. Other university services showed varying levels of familiarity: Study Partners (80% Very to somewhat familiar, 20% have heard of it, but don’t know what services it provides or never heard of it); Miller Writing Center (83%, 17%); Student Counseling Services (59%, 41%); Office of Undergraduate Research (42%, 58%); AU Career Center (71%, 29%).
Use of Results for Improvement

Improvements should be linked to results.

Examples:

• Based on the high demand for resume/cover letter assistance, new software was purchased to provide recorded resume/cover letter feedback on-line. (Career Center)

• Based on lower retention rates for students in Honors College who had lower high school GPAs, only students with 3.75 or higher high school GPAs will be accepted into the Honors College and exceptions will not be made based on other circumstances. (Honors College)
How can the Office of Institutional Assessment & Effectiveness (OIAE) assist?

- Survey design or setting up survey in SurveyMonkey
- Focus group moderator’s guide
- Feedback on draft assessment reports
- Incorporating questions in university-wide surveys
Assessment Report Due Date: August 2017