Communication Strategies and Tools to Build and Sustain Assessment Across the Institution

Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning

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Learning Outcomes

1. Become familiar with communication needs and tools we’ve found useful at our institution
2. Identify communication pathways at your institution and estimate how well assessment roles and results are communicated
3. Identify areas for improvement at your institution
4. Consider new tools or approaches you might try and how to manage potential wrinkles
Our Context

Washington State University

• Context
• Accreditor Feedback

Approaches

Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning

• Role
• Approaches
  ▪ Respect and Acceptance
  ▪ Service and Credibility
  ▪ Small Steps over Time
Acceptance

Getting the lay of the land

- Formative inventory survey
- Developmental annual report (not scored)
- One-on-one meetings with faculty and with associate deans

Service

We serve:

- Faculty members and degree programs
- Leadership
- Students and the Institution
Credibility

We provide tools and processes that are reliable and effective.

- Good practices
- Manage expectations
- Acknowledge limitation

Small Steps

- Piloting activities and tools
- Workshops
- Six key elements
Key Assessment Elements Reported in 2011 and 2012
Undergraduate Academic Programs

2011

2011 - 2013

Key Assessment Elements Reported in 2011 and 2012
Undergraduate Academic Programs

2011 (56 programs)
Communication Needs

• Accreditor recommendation about including branch campuses in assessment (2009)
• Communication gaps apparent in annual reports and inventory, and through our experience

Focus on Communication

- Understand and Enhance Communication Pathways
- Build Community
Communication Strategies

- Regular dialogs with leadership
- Meet w/faculty and coordinators
- Build on existing reporting lines
- Focus on communication pathways

Communicate at Various Levels
Apply Change Management

- Senior University Leadership
- College Deans
- Associate Deans
- Department Chairs
- Faculty/Staff
Clarify Roles - The Wheel

Adapted by WSU's Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning from University of Hawai‘i, Manoa

Clarify Communication: Flowchart
A moving target
Clarify Communication: Flowchart

New online campus
General education

Annual summary reports

Discussed Assessment Results in Past Two Years
Undergraduate Academic Programs

- Committee: 78% (2012), 89% (2013)
- Chair/Director: 65% (2012), 87% (2013)
- All Faculty: 65% (2012), 84% (2013)

- WSU 2012 (54 programs)
- WSU 2013 (55 programs)
2013: Assessment is used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of Decisions Assessment Has Helped Inform</th>
<th>2013 Programs (55)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>40 (73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>38 (69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising</td>
<td>19 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty, professional development</td>
<td>17 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Scheduling</td>
<td>14 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA Training</td>
<td>12 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>11 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Processes (plan, infrastructure)</td>
<td>44 (80%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results: Peer Evaluators

RECOMMENDATION – Resolved

COMMENDATION, April 2013
“The Peer-Evaluation Committee commends Washington State University for the high level of support that departments and faculty are receiving from the Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning. The leadership of and service-oriented approach of this office were cited repeatedly as responsible for the noticeable transformation of the culture of assessment since the Year One Report. The evaluators were pleased to see the extent to which assessment information is currently being used in college, school and institution decision-making. The Institution is to be commended for the level of support that has been provided to build assessment processes, and the commitment to use assessment information in decision-making at all levels.” (Standard 2.C.2)
Activity: Self-Assess Communication

1. Take stock of your institution:
   Fill out self-assessment (handout)
2. Share with neighbors (groups of 2-3)

Activity: Flowchart

Using the flowchart handout, draft a flowchart that describes your institution’s current communication pathways. Work individually or in a group.
Activity: Share-Out

- What’s working well with productive communication on your campus?

- What changes in your flowchart would be most useful in encouraging productive communication?

A moving target
Clarify Communication: Flowchart

DRAFT
New online campus
General education
Feedback

Please take a few minutes to give us feedback for improvement

Thank you! We look forward to talking with you.

Kimberly Green
Becky Dueben

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Washington State University