

Syracuse University

From “Necessary Condition” to “Fruitful Discussion”: The Evolution of a University’s Assessment Culture

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By attending this session, participants will have the opportunity to:

- model a comprehensive framework for assessing academic and administrative/support units to support institution wide assessment,
- utilize tools to monitor institution wide assessment processes,
- identify new resources to support faculty and staff in assessment activities, and
- learn from and share best practices with assessment colleagues.

Introduction

- In 2014, student learning outcomes assessment was not being sustained on our campus.
- A jumpstart was needed as reaccreditation was approaching.
- We will share our story of how we did just that.

- Since we began our efforts, we've seen a shift with faculty and staff more likely to:
 - Discuss and develop outcomes for new initiatives
 - Use evidence to inform decision-making
 - Let's begin with some recent comments from faculty.

“[The process] helped us surface some issues with [a course] that we did not realize were issues. We had particularly fruitful discussions about the assessment results with the students who were in that class last year—who are now juniors....Having them help us interpret the assessment meta-data led to a discussion that we might not otherwise have had.”

“Faculty in our department engaged in discussions related to curriculum assessment and/or enhancement in a day-long department retreat, multiple faculty meetings, and committee level meetings.”

“We are currently revising program requirements for them to better align with learning outcomes that we had identified at the beginning of the assessment process.”

“My view is probably the standard ‘hate assessment’ view. Like most faculty and programs, we continually assess and evaluate what we are doing and try to improve. We do that whether or not there are forms to be filled out, and always have.”

Lessons Learned

- Establish a strong foundation and set expectations
- Build relationships
- Engage in meta-assessment

Lesson 1: Establish a Strong Foundation and Set Expectations

“I honestly don’t know what ‘student learning outcomes data’ means.”

Lesson 1: Establish a Strong Foundation and Set Expectations

Step 1: We did our research:

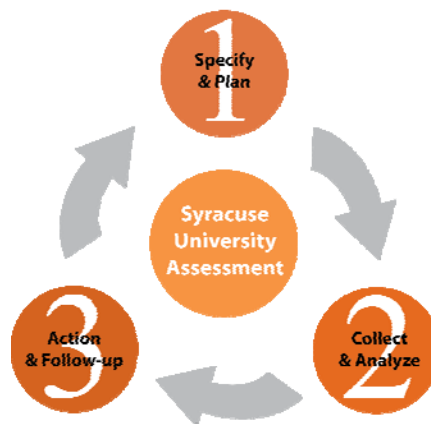
- Reflected on our past processes
- Reviewed regional and specialized accreditation expectations
- Read the literature to identify best practices
- Attended conference and workshops and viewed other institutions’ websites
- Surveyed department chairs

Lesson 1: Establish a Strong Foundation and Set Expectations

Step 2: We developed a framework:

- Determined that this should be a campus-wide effort (academic, co-curricular, functional)
- Established a three phase process and language for assessment for all areas on campus
- Drafted expectations for each component
- Piloted our assessment and action plan template

Syracuse University Assessment Framework



1
Specify
& Plan

Three Phases

Academic Programs		
Student Learning Outcomes	Measures	Criteria
At the end of the program, what will students know or be able to do?	What direct and indirect assessment measures will be used?	How will competency be determined?

Co-Curricular Programs & Units			
Goal	Outcome	Measures	Criteria
What do you strive to accomplish?	Specific student or operational outcomes that are measurable	What direct and indirect assessment measures will be used?	How will competency be determined?

Functional Areas			
Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Targets
What do you strive to accomplish?	What objectives will be measured? (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, time-bound)	How will the objective be met?	Targets (Formally known as KPIs) How will success be determined?

2
Collect
& Analyze

Academic, Co-Curricular & Functional	
Results	Interpretation
What was learned in the assessment process?	What do results mean to the program?

3
Action
& Follow-up

Academic, Co-Curricular & Functional	
Action	Follow-Up
Based on the results and interpretation from Phase 2, what action will be taken?	What has been the impact of the action taken?

Lesson 1: Establish a Strong Foundation and Set Expectations

Step 3: We rolled out our plan:

- Created and shared resources to support faculty and staff learning
- Went to lots of meetings
- Communicated our common framework across campus, but left the specific assessment and action plan details for faculty and staff to determine

Lesson 2: Build Relationships

- Interact with faculty and staff in individual programs, units, departments, and schools/colleges right from the beginning and on an ongoing basis
- Meet programs and units where they were (both physically located and in their thinking about assessment)
- Listen
- Create and share resources to support learning and address knowledge gaps

Lesson 2: Build Relationships

- Personalize communications
- Convene and work with the University Assessment and Accreditation Committee
- Provide professional development opportunities that allow faculty and staff to develop knowledge/skills, but also helped us to connect with those doing the work

Lesson 3: Engage in Meta-Assessment

Part 1: Capture the range of assessment activities

- Number of assessment plans submitted vs. number of eligible programs/units

Part 2: Evaluate the quality of assessment activities

- Develop rubric to provide programs/units with feedback
- Capture institution-wide areas that are doing well or need support

(Fulcher & Good, 2013)

Assessment Audit

Overall Findings

AAP

Meets expectations, department can implement	✓
Minor revisions necessary before implementing	
Major revisions necessary before implementing	

Curriculum Map

Meets expectations	✓
Minor revisions necessary	
Major revisions necessary	

Phase 1
3.0
1.0
3.0
2.0
2.0
2.0
3.0
1.0
3.0
3.0
2.0
3.0
1.0
2.0
2.0
3.0
1.0
2.0
2.0

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Academic Program Assessment and Action Plan Rubric

This rubric is intended to assess the status of student learning outcomes assessment for an academic program at Syracuse University. Each component of the University's assessment and action plan template is incorporated in the rubric. A sustainability component is included as well, providing the expectation that each academic program will sustain a well-designed and manageable assessment plan and process to inform decision-making.

Element & SU Expectation	Not Evident - 0	Emerging - 1	Developing - 2	Proficient - 3	Score
Student Learning Outcomes The academic program has clear statements of essential student learning outcomes that describe what students should be able to do, know, or produce over time as a result of participation in the academic program.	Student learning outcomes are not identified.	Student learning outcomes are written with imprecise verbs and/or may be too broad to measure.	Majority of student learning outcomes are written using active verbs that describe what students should be able to do, know, or produce over time as a result of participation in the academic program.	All student learning outcomes are written using active verbs that describe what students should be able to do, know, or produce over time as a result of participation in the academic program.	
Curriculum Map The academic program's curriculum map demonstrates the full progression of learning across the curriculum using the institutional scale.	Curriculum map has not been provided.	Student learning outcomes are mapped to some, but not all, courses.	Student learning outcomes are mapped to courses but the map does not demonstrate the full progression of learning across the curriculum.	Student learning outcomes are mapped to courses and the map demonstrates the full progression of learning across the curriculum.	
Measures & Criteria Assessment activities focus on the use of direct measures for gathering information about student learning and are supported by indirect measures. At a minimum, two direct measures, or one direct measure and one indirect measure, are used to assess each student learning outcome. Measures are clearly linked to student learning outcomes being assessed. A specific criterion is identified for each measure that establishes expectations of student performance or achievement of the student learning outcome being assessed.	Measures and criteria are not identified.	One measure is identified for each student learning outcome being assessed or only indirect measures are identified. A criterion is not identified for each measure.	Two or more measures (either one direct and one indirect or two direct measures) are identified, but may not be clearly linked to the student learning outcome being assessed. A criterion is identified for each measure, but lacks specificity.	Two or more measures (either one direct and one indirect or two direct measures) are identified for and clearly linked to each student learning outcome being assessed. A specific criterion is identified for each measure that establishes expectations of student performance or achievement of the student learning outcome being assessed.	

Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment (08/2018)

2015-16 Heat Map: Phases 1, 2, and 3

Phase 1				Phase 2		Phase 3
Learning Outcomes	Curriculum Map	Measures	Criteria	Results	Interpretation	Action & Follow-Up
3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0
2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0
2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	1.0
2.0	2.5	1.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2.0	2.0	1.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	1.0
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.5	2.0	2.0
2.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0

2016-17 Heat Map: Phases 1, 2, and 3 and Sustaining Assessment

Phase 1				Phase 2		Phase 3	
Learning Outcomes	Curriculum Map	Measures	Criteria	Results	Interpretation	Action & Follow-Up	Sustaining Assessment
3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0
3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	New	New	New	1.5
3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.5
2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.5
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	No results	3.0	2.0	2.0
3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.75
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.0	2.0
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.5
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.5
3.0	0.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	1.5
3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0
3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0
2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0
2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0
2.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
2.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	2.0
3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0

Goals for the Future

- Address turnover of program coordinators
- Develop resources as the field evolves
- Continue with meta–assessment - make it a priority when there isn't enough time
- Establish a peer review process that can manage reviewing over 500 assessment plans
- Address faculty obstacles

Small Group Discussion

- What does your assessment framework look like?
- Do you have campus partners that can serve as assessment champions?
- What tools help you improve your processes?
- What lessons have led to your success?

Questions?

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Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment

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