Establishing a Culture of Assessment in Student Affairs

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Presentation Overview

- Define a Culture of Assessment
- KU Student Affairs Assessment: History & Background
- Student Affairs Assessment Goals
- Use of Assessment Results Examples
- Recommendations
Learning Outcomes

*After participating in today’s session, participants will be able to...*

- Define a culture of assessment
- Identify elements that contribute to a culture of assessment
- Apply discussed strategies and recommendations in respective departments or divisions
What is a Culture of Assessment?
Defining a Culture of Assessment

- John H. Schuh (2013):
  - “…in a culture of assessment staff members recognize that they must collect evidence systematically to demonstrate accountability to their stakeholders, and that they must use that evidence to improve.” (p.89)
- Accountability and Continuous Improvement
- Helps sustain assessment as a central function in student affairs
Defining a Culture of Assessment

- Elements of a Culture of Assessment
  1. Commit to remain accountable to stakeholders but also to continuous improvement
  2. Commit to continuous innovation
  3. Remain self-critical
  4. Make data-driven decisions
Defining a Culture of Assessment

- Elements of a Culture of Assessment

  5. Conduct assessments across the institution
  6. Use multiple forms of assessment
  7. Identify and measure learning outcomes
  8. Involve all student affairs staff members
Defining a Culture of Assessment

- Elements of a Culture of Assessment
  9. Communicate and act upon results
  10. Use discretionary resources to seed assessment projects
  11. Reward assessment findings with resources
  12. Use formal events to celebrate and discuss assessment results
How would you describe the culture of assessment in your division/department?
KU at a Glance

- **University Facts & Figures**
  - Major public research and teaching institution of 28,000 students and 2,600 faculty on five campuses (Lawrence, Kansas City, Overland Park, Wichita, & Salina)
  - Comprised of 13 schools, including the only schools of pharmacy and medicine in the state
  - 70% undergraduate students

- **Division of Student Affairs**
  - 11 departments
  - 500+ staff members
KU Student Affairs Assessment: History & Background

New Director Hired July 2015

EXISTING CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT

What is the current culture of assessment?
What works? What does not work?
What needs to happen?
What are the expectations of me?

KNOWLEDGE GATHERING PROCESS

Review of Division Learning Outcomes & Bold Aspirations
Review Assessment Notes & Files
Meet with Student Affairs Directors
Synthesize findings to identify assessment goals and needs
Create a plan of action and share with division
History & Background

- **Student Learning Outcomes Concerns**
  - CAS Standards align with KU Core
  - Division: Need to Revisit, Unclear, Unspecific
  - Department: Some Have Them/Some Don’t, Too Many, Unspecific

- **Need for Student Learning Outcomes Projects**
  - Need to conduct projects that measure SLOs
History & Background

- Surveys, Surveys, Surveys... & more Surveys
  - Overutilization of surveys as an assessment method

- Impact/Value Assessment
  - Desire to show impact and/or value of programs, services, and interactions
  - Increase awareness of division assessment efforts
We had a solid foundation…

…but needed to build on it!
Student Affairs Assessment Goals

1. Focus on Student Learning Outcomes
2. Restructure Student Affairs Assessment Committee
3. Develop and Implement Assessment Plan & Report Templates
4. Establish Assessment Timeline & Key Dates
5. Increase Awareness of Student Affairs Assessment Findings & Results
6. Implement Department Student Learning Outcome Projects
1. Focus on Student Learning Outcomes

ACTION ITEMS

- Revise Domains
- Develop/Revise Department & Program/Service Student Learning Outcomes

Division SLOs | Department SLOs
Program/Service SLOs

STATUS

- Revised Division SLO Domain definitions, SLOs, & Keyword Descriptors on website
- SLOs for 10 departments on website
- Department SLOs align with division SLOs
- Program/Service SLOs align with department SLOs
2. Restructure Student Affairs Assessment Committee

**ACTION ITEMS**

Identify department representatives to serve as the central coordinating point for assessment efforts for the division

**STATUS**

Each department represented on SA Assessment Committee

Regular meetings:

- 2015–2016: Monthly
- 2016–2017: Bi-monthly
3. Develop & Implement Assessment Plan and Report Templates

**ACTION ITEMS**
Create assessment plan and report templates

**STATUS**
Templates compete

**Plan:** SLOs, Purpose, Method, Population / Sample, Timeline / Frequency, etc.

**Report:** Key Findings / Results, Impact, Lessons Learned, etc.
4. Implement Department SLO Projects

**ACTION ITEMS**

- SLO project per department for 2015–2016
- Focus on student learning
- One per department is the goal… no harm in doing more!
- Utilize assessment plan and report templates to carry out and document project

**STATUS**

- Departments implementing SLO projects:
  - 2015–2016: 10 departments
  - 2016–2017: 11 departments
5. Establish Assessment Timeline and Key Dates

**ACTION ITEMS**
Identify key dates for assessment tasks

**STATUS**
Key Dates finalized and shared with Student Affairs Leadership Team and Assessment Committee in:

- 2016–2017: July 2016
August–November:
Focus on SLOs; Complete assessment plan(s)

November 23:
Submit assessment plan(s)

December 2:
Assessment Committee reviews assessment plans

December 7:
Assessment plan feedback sent to each department

January 19:
Final assessment plans submitted

January 25:
Assessment plans posted online

January 19:
Final assessment plans submitted

January 25:
Assessment plans posted online

Fall 2015–Spring 2016:
Implement assessment project

June 1:
Submit assessment reports; submit data for inclusion in annual report

2015–2016 Assessment Timeline
2016–2017 Assessment Timeline

August 26th:
Submit assessment plan(s)

September 13:
Assessment Committee reviews assessment plans

September 22:
Assessment plan feedback sent to each department

October 7:
Final assessment plans submitted

October 14:
Assessment plans posted online

Fall 2015–Spring 2016:
Implement assessment project

June 1:
Submit assessment reports; submit data for inclusion in annual report

July–August
Complete assessment plan

August 26th:
Submit assessment plan(s)

September 13:
Assessment Committee reviews assessment plans

September 22:
Assessment plan feedback sent to each department

Fall 2015–Spring 2016:
Implement assessment project

June 1:
Submit assessment reports; submit data for inclusion in annual report
6. Increase Awareness of SA Assessment Findings & Results

**ACTION ITEMS**

- Update Student Affairs Assessment Website
- Identify Student Affairs’ stories

**STATUS**

- Revised/developed SLOs, assessment plans and reports, and Assessment Committee members posted on website
- Communication Channels:
  - 2016–2017: Annual Impact Report, Website, Monthly Updates, Assessment Showcase
Assessment Communication Channels

- **Annual Impact Report**
  - Released July 2016
  - Division: Mission, Vision, SLOs, Impact on Student Retention & Graduation, & Staff Highlights
  - Department: Highlights & Accomplishments, Data Points, 2016 – 2017 Goals, Student Quotes
  - Shared with campus partners, colleagues, & candidates

- **Website**
  - Assessment project reports highlighting findings & results and impact of assessment
  - Annual Impact Report
  - Monthly Updates
Assessment Communication Channels

- **Monthly Updates**
  - One-page document highlighting the mission and impact of the division’s work on the university and students
  - Each department submits 2 – 3 data points and/or assessment highlights from prior month, upcoming events, and staff recognition
  - Information submitted by the 5th of each month– released by the 15th
  - Shared via email with the Provost, academic deans, and division

- **Assessment Showcase**
  - January 2017 – 1st Annual Assessment Showcase
  - Collaboration with Student Affairs Professional Development Committee
  - Brief department presentations highlighting assessment project– including background/purpose, learning outcomes, assessment methods, results/findings, and use of results
Use of Results:

*Counseling & Psychological Services Example*

2015 – 2016 Assessment: CAPS Client Survey

• **Purpose:** Assess the impact of therapeutic services on CAPS clients

Method:

• Survey administered to student clients at the end of Spring 2016 semester

Findings/Results:

• 88% were able to identify one or more strategies to solve or cope with problems

• 79% were able to apply learned strategies in resolving academic concerns

• 57% were able to identify other helpful campus and/or community resources

2016 – 2017 Decision:

• Emphasis on raising students’ awareness of additional resources

• Administer survey Spring 2017 semester
Use of Results:  

**KU Recreation Services Example**

**2015 – 2016 Assessment: Tracking of Programs/Services**

- **Purpose:** Identify areas of growth and those in need of attention, as it relates to Rec Services’ programs and services

- **Method:**
  - Comparison of 2014 – 2015 and 2015 – 2016 usage data points

**Findings/Results:**

- Number of Sport Clubs student participants up 14.8%
- Number of Fitness Center entrance swipes down 5.5%
- Number of memberships down 31.9%

**2016 – 2017 Decision:**

- Needs Assessment conducted during Fall 2016
- Marketing Strategies
Use of Results:

2017 - 2020 Student Affairs Strategic Plan

Division of Student Affairs Strategic Planning Process

- Completed: April 2017

Strategic Goal #1: Establish and enhance programs and initiatives that meet the needs and interests of all KU students

- Objective 1.2: Engage students in learning opportunities outside the classroom.
Recommendations

- Assess your department or division’s existing culture of assessment
- Involve your department or division’s leadership team
- Involve staff members at all levels
- Identify ways to make assessment practical
- Seek out ideas and resources from peers
- Share your results!
Thank You!

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