Program Assessment Improvements for 2007-2008 Cycle

Based on two assessment cycles (2006, 2007) we have determined that there are improvements we can make at several levels:

Campus-Wide Assessment Process

Develop best practices and highlight people/programs following those best practices.

Document standards we are using for assessment processes, program assessments, and course assessments.

Conduct more workshops on assessment for all levels—program heads/assessment liaisons, faculty, teaching assistants, adjuncts (Very important since adjuncts teach a lot of core courses)

Discuss and decide upon the "lenses" we are using for assessment—what are the questions we're asking from assessment because these questions will determine what kinds of data we collect and how we collect it. For example, are we comparing ourselves to peer institutions? If so, that data will be different than if we are creating our own standards. If we decide to create our own standards, we need to validate them if we want credibility.

Publicize assessment—e.g. give advisors program assessment plans/learning outcomes, put them on the web (point—publicity will give an impetus to tighten up SLO's and assessment methods)

Involve students—workshops for student leaders on what assessment is and how it relates to their value-added education—maybe presentation during orientation?

Program Assessment Process

Make sure all faculty in the program know, understand, and agree with the program's assessment plan, SLOs, and assessment methods—need faculty meetings

<u>Executive Summaries</u>—need to be different for each program. There were too many that were cookie-cutter. For example, an exec summary for an MA program should not mention the undergrad programs in the area. It should focus on what worked/didn't work well for that MA program.

<u>Success Criteria</u>—Lessen our use of, " X% will score Y%" on assessment measures. While sometimes this is appropriates, using it when assessment methods look at embedded assignments in several different courses is not valid. For example, if an outcome is that "Students will be able to write research summaries" and that is assessed in 3 different courses, saying 80% of students will score at least 75% does not match the method. How will those scores be tracked across the three courses?

Closing the Loop—Make this section different for each program in an area. For example, in some departments, the closing the loop was not always based on assessment data rather was based on perceptions of what is needed (usually more faculty or space). This needs to be directly tied to assessment in that specific program. Often all programs in an area had the same closing the loop. Should AT6 be changed to make this clear?

Resources Needed---Tie the resources needed to the improvements that the data suggest are needed. For example, if students are not doing well in labs, it might not be the case the a program needs more faculty. They may need more lab equipment. Perhaps a place can put into AT6 to document specifically how resources requested tie directly into assessment data via a rationale.

Course Assessment Process

Make sure all individual faculty know their role in assessment—especially important for adjuncts and TAs. Maybe train TAs in assessment methods for their particular classes to help ease faculty burden.

Continue to offer beginning and end of semester training for core course assessments and ADD training for program assessments. It is important to let faculty know that program assessment is partially (and sometimes largely) dependent on course-level assessments.

Conduct workshops for faculty on learning objectives/outcomes to get them on board for all courses because program assessments might need to rely on many different courses. Also, it is important for all faculty to understand the assessment process because using it in classes for course-based testing and grading will enhance and improve teaching. This would ideally have administrative support for professional development activities is necessary.