Assessment Primer

DSA Summer Retreat
July 14, 2015
Assessment Defined

• Assessment is a cyclical, ongoing, systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and using information about divisional, departmental, and programmatic effectiveness, in order to improve student learning (Upcraft & Shuh, 1996; Anderson, Bresciani & Zelna, 2004).

• Two types: Institutional (pertaining to structural effectiveness) and Educational (pertaining to student learning, “co-curricular” is often Student Affairs specific)
Institutional Effectiveness:

• The College’s **budget process** drives the timeline for college-wide decision making about the allocation of all resources (including financial, human, technology and space).

• The **annual planning cycle** has been configured to align with this college-wide budgeting process so that **assessment results** may be used to inform plans, and thereby the use of resources.

• Units think strategically about their micro-budgets and align resources to achieve the tactics set out in annual institutional assessment plans.

• Results of the assessment of co-curricular learning outcomes impact programmatic planning in these units and budgets.
Educational Assessment:

1. Foundational Documents (mission, goals, strategic plan)
2. Establish Criteria for Success (outcomes or targets)
3. Provide Programs & Services
4. Determine Effectiveness
5. “Close the Loop” - use results for improvement
FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

• **Mercy College Mission Statement**
  Mercy College is committed to providing motivated students the opportunity to transform their lives through higher education by offering liberal arts and professional programs in personalized and high quality learning environments, thus preparing students to embark on rewarding careers, to continue learning throughout their lives and to act ethically and responsibly in a changing world.

• **Division of Student Affairs Mission Statement**
  The mission of the Division of Student Affairs at Mercy College is to promote student learning and holistic development by providing intentional opportunities for engagement outside the classroom. Through these programs and services, the DSA supports students’ academic development, inspires personal growth, and fosters interpersonal connections and collaboration to prepare students for success in our diverse community and beyond as leaders and in their chosen career fields.
1. Broaden and diversify the points of engagement for students to promote emotional satisfaction and intellectual success.

2. Provide opportunities for students to develop essential life skills that foster professional, personal and social growth.

3. Encourage our students to participate in the ongoing establishment of an inclusive and supportive campus community.

4. Strengthen our infrastructure to maximize the effectiveness of both our delivery agents and delivery methods.
Strategic plan 2020

Student Learning
Mercy College will provide students a transformative education which will both champion the values of general education and make sure they are well-equipped for their career choices
1.1 Continue to focus on underserved communities of students, including first and second generation, low income, minority, and adult students

Student Success
Mercy College will out-perform predicted measures of student success and earn a national reputation for its efforts in this area
2.1 Expand the PACT program and strengthen or launch other student success initiatives to foster increased persistence, graduation, and career placement in both undergraduate and graduate programs
2.2 Expand the breadth and quality of extra- and co-curricular programs at all campuses to improve student engagement
2.3 Strengthen support for student health and safety
2.4 Position students for career success by strengthening career services and cultivating employer partnerships, internships, and mentoring opportunities
Criteria for success - learning outcomes

- There are 6 essential co-curricular student learning outcomes that are:
  - intentionally broad and represent the inductive, top-down structure that our new Division of Student Affairs operates
  - linked upward to both institutional and strategic planning goals
  - universal for attachment to other non-academic units (OSS, COP, etc.)
Students will express individual ownership for one's emotional intelligence.
Students will recognize the influence of knowledge on motivation and purpose.
OCCUPATIONAL
Students will identify and articulate professional interests and opportunities

Career Services: Identify career-related experiences through high impact practices and secure participation

Health & Wellness: Translate personal values into tangible professional pursuits

PACT: Identify professional opportunities associated with chosen field of study
SPIRITUAL
Students will demonstrate an ability to think in ethical ways about character and civility.

Athletics:
Describe the connection between athletic teamwork and civic participation.

Health & Wellness:
Demonstrate respect for the experiences of others.

Residential Life:
Define participation in a residential community that promotes inclusiveness and respect.

Student Conduct:
Recognize the impact of negative behavior on communal identity and values.

Student Life:
Define the value of thinking in complex ways about societal issues and problems.
Social

Students will recognize the impact of one's behaviors and viewpoints on others.
ENVIRONMENTAL

Students will demonstrate an ability to respect the contrasting and shared experiences

Health & Wellness:
Apply positive coping techniques when encountering conflict

International:
Discuss both the commonalities and differences between one's home culture and US culture

Residential Life:
Demonstrate open-mindedness as a tool to enhance cross-cultural understanding in a residential environment

Student Life:
Define the cultural and social forces and individual beliefs that shaped one's selfhood
Assessment Strategies

• Traditional co-curricular assessment centered on efficiency models
  • Focus on process
  • How well is this office/service functioning (satisfaction)?
  • Focus on numbers (participation)
    • Attendance
    • Service visits/usage
    • Student/staff ratios
    • Retention and graduation rates

• Newer co-curricular assessment focuses on effectiveness models
  • Indirect measures (surveys, NSSE)
  • Direct measures (demonstration via observation, performance, objective self-reporting such as reflection papers and projects)
  • Strong connection and use of CAS standards