

Brown Bag Assessment Meeting **March 26, 2008**

Attendees: Rula Awwad-Rafferty, Jane Baillargeon, Matt Wappett, Gail Eckwright, Dick Battaglia, Jeff Bohlscheid, Barbara Zuck, Debbie Storrs, Ding Johnson, Dana Stover, Karen Launchbaugh, Howard Peavy, Mario Reyes, Mike Whiteman.

Assessment techniques used by College of Letters, Arts & Social Sciences

- Graduate students within their college act as the facilitators for the surveys – they organize the meetings, gather the information and provide a written report.
- The college surveyed graduating seniors exclusively.
- Graduate students seem to relate well with the students as they are closer in age and may help students feel more comfortable to open up to them than they would to a faculty member.
- The graduate students are compensated \$100 as part of the online NIH training course.
- The focus groups are each set up with two facilitators – one asking the questions and one taking notes.
- The college provided facilitators for their faculty at the total cost of \$300.
- They retain all of the raw data from the facilitators' notes and this is compiled for discussion with faculty members.
- The ideal size for their focus groups was found to be about 7 to 10 students.
- The groups were conducted during both daytime and nighttime hours - student preference seemed to be nighttime hours.
- Challenges –
 - The college found it was necessary to make sure that the facilitators had a clear understanding of program objectives – make sure language is clear and easy for the students to understand.
 - The written reports were a challenge last year – the reports were a little too general or vague.

Assessment techniques used by the Animal & Veterinary Science Department

- The department used interviews and focus groups.
- Their interviews are comprised of all age groups, not just graduating seniors.
- The interviews were conducted by faculty rather than students.
- The survey information contained student's name, what program they were in, future plans, internship & other experiential opportunities experienced.
- The surveys found that students like the experiential learning experiences and the quality of these experiences. Students also enjoyed the hands-on experiences.
- Interview times run from approximately 20 minutes to one hour.
- They give the students a sheet with questions but don't structure the interview any more than that – they just let the students talk.
- Challenges –
 - A lot of the comments that they got were really dependent on who you are interviewing – graduating seniors compared to other students.
- They are trying to use some of the feedback they have received to implement the student's requests.
- They do these exit interviews one-on-one. They try to get 100% of graduating students.

- Retain all of the raw data – the faculty sees an assimilation of the data because it shows student names & faculty input.
- The questionnaire is sent to the students in advance to give them a chance to write out their answers. It also helps the interviewer develop better questions from what the students wrote.
- They start scheduling the interviews right after Vandal Friday.

Assessment techniques used by the Special Education Program

- They are a smaller program so they are able to conduct exit interviews of all of their graduates
- Use one class period to conduct the interviews. Bring in drinks & pizza for the students and removed the regular instructor.
- Their survey questions are non-confrontational, open-ended broad questions.
- A younger faculty member conducts the interview session. The students are able to relate to him because he is a younger faculty member.
- The department found that they were not meeting some of their learning outcomes. In particular, they needed to have special education teachers connect and work more with non-special education classrooms.
- The results of the surveys are discussed with the faculty and also what they can do to make changes.
- They are a small department with 3 of 5 new faculty, so their faculty does not resist assessment the way faculty in a larger college might.
- Their data suggested students needed more connection with the curriculum and instruction students and faculty, and they recommended that their program be restructured to enable more interaction.
- Single, large dominant recommendation makes it easier to take a big step and make changes in the college. It also helped that there was national data supporting their data in order to change their program.

Other Comments

- College of Business is trying a sophomore survey in a classroom, with a large class – 100 students in the class. There was a feeling that this may be too big of a group and should think about breaking them up into smaller groups.
- It was also mentioned that there may be a perception that if the facilitator is a dean or assistant dean the student may think that this person can do something about their problem so they will provide more information.
- It was suggested that it would be interesting to compare a neutral party to someone with authority and see if the results are the same.
- It was also suggested that different methodologies should be compared, such as strict focus group methodology versus informal methods.

Suggestions for Upcoming Session Topics

- Issue of how to get faculty to accept the assessment process, engage in the work of assessment and see its value.
- Closing the loop
- How to present the assessment data to faculty in an easy to understand way. Provide examples of how other colleges are presenting their data to faculty.