Engaging Faculty in Outcomes-Based Assessment

Our Mission

The Office of Academic Assessment supports institutional effectiveness initiatives, assists university departments with continuous program and course improvements by offering education and consultation regarding the assessment of student learning and development.

USM Assessment Committee

In order to help guide the priorities of campus-wide assessment projects and inform the progress of USM’s NEASC compliance, a newly developed Assessment Committee has been formed. More specifically, the committee is charged with: establishing a campus-wide assessment cycle, coordinating institutional and program assessment projects, and serving as a monitoring board for addressing the NEASC assessment standards. Contact Susan King, if you have questions. (susank@usm.maine.edu)

What are Outcomes?

Outcomes are the effects or changes brought about by the curriculum or activities provided by an institution or program.

What is Outcomes-Based Assessment?

Outcomes assessments answer the question: Did we accomplish what we intended for our students? ...It is the formal process of comparing actual results to the intended outcomes criteria. Changes implemented as a result of these analyses can be documented and outcomes can be measured again in a following cycle to verify improvement. Measurements of outcomes show the degree of an institution’s or program effectiveness. (Banta, Jones, and Black, 2009)

Using the NSSE data for Campus Improvement! (Brief NSSE Report)

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was designed to help institutions examine their effectiveness on the five national benchmarks: Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Faculty-Student Interaction, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment. Brief summaries of the NSSE data have been circulated around the campus for dialogue on how USM could make some improvements.
The Assessment Process

1) Articulate the goals/outcomes for student learning; i.e. what will students be able to do when they complete your program.

2) Create and implement an organized plan for assessing the outcomes; i.e. use direct and indirect methods (see examples below).

3) Review the assessment; i.e. examine the assessment results by looking at the differences between the direct performance data and the intended outcomes. Also, review any indirect or self-reported data, and agree on what improvements need to be made, even if changes are small.

Once these tasks are completed, then re-assess the following year to determine what other changes need to be made; focusing on one or two outcomes at a time. Assessment is an ongoing process to improve student learning.

Examples of Direct and Indirect Assessment

**Direct Assessment**: measuring the performance of students; that is, essays, research projects, tests, group projects, observations, etc. These assessments are often embedded in the classroom and used for final course grades; however, class assignments can be used for overall program assessment by scoring assessments on a common rubric and using the rubric scores to get an overall review of student learning in a program.

**Indirect Assessment**: measuring a student’s perception of their learning and experiences; that is, in-house and national surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc. These assessments are important for obtaining the student’s belief, confidence level, and ratings of their own skills and abilities. Alumni and employers surveys also offer valuable information about student’s skill levels.

Source: Designing Effective Assessment by Banta, Jones, and Black (2009)

Assessment articles from National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA)

*What faculty need to know about assessment...*(Spring 2011)

*Strategies for meeting regional accreditation....*(October 2010)

Assessment Resources

*Creating an Assessment Plan...*Learning Outcomes Assessment Planning guide *(designed by Calif Polytechnic State Univ)*

*Writing student learning outcomes...using Bloom’s Taxonomy*

*Examining higher learning.....*The Degree Qualifications Profile
Go to the Academic Assessment’s website, to view additional assessment resources, access our campus assessment reports, check procedures for scanning services, or for testing schedules. Website listed below.

http://www.usm.maine.edu/assessment

Office of Academic Assessment Staff

Director of Acad Assessment: Susan King
Project Associate: Kristen Beahm
Scanning/Data Processing: Denise Jones (MC)
Testing Services: Mike Wing

To access USM fact books, retention numbers, or other institutional data, see the Office of Institutional Research website:

http://www.usm.maine.edu/oira