Transitioning Administrative and Student Affairs Assessment from Reporting Activity to Maximizing Effectiveness

2014 SACSCOC Annual Meeting

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Session Focus

- Initial challenges to understanding and valuing assessment across the institution
- Strategies and tools that have resulted in growth
- Continued and new challenges encountered
- Lessons learned
- Additional ideas for fostering a culture change
Administrative and Student Affairs Assessment Process

**Mission**
Primary functions of the unit that align with division’s mission and strategic themes

**Goals**
Broad-based, what unit should accomplish

**Objectives/Outcomes**
Measurable and align with the strategic themes

**Targets**
 Desired achievement levels of objectives

**Implementation Strategies**
Detailed, clearly promote the objectives

**Findings and Analysis**
Detailed, directly relate to objectives
Analysis clear and thorough

**Measure Objectives**
Tools able to determine achievement

**Data Collection**
Methods are rigorous

**Action Plans**
Developed from findings, used to improve unit’s functioning
Prevalent Challenges

* Academic assessment began over 25 years ago with an emphasis on accountability

* It is still:
  * Often undertaken to satisfy SACSCOC or other accreditation demands
  * Externally mandated by the administration
  * Confused with evaluation
  * Not well understood as a vehicle for improvement
Assessment at Georgia Southern: The Context

- With an impending Five-Year SACSCOC Interim Report due in 2011, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness was created in August 2010

- Some academic programs and many administrative units had not been engaged in assessment activities, and many others didn’t understand it

- Assessment was decentralized and inconsistent, for both academic programs and administrative units

- Assessment initially became an exercise in report writing
The Beginning

- In July 2011, we received notice from SACSCOC that our 5th Year Report showed academic assessment weaknesses

- Director of Assessment was hired in October 2011 and a Referral Report was due to SACSCOC in April 2012 (which needed to demonstrate significant growth)
  - In late 2011, a faculty-led infrastructure was developed
  - In Spring 2012, the Academic Assessment Steering Committee began their work
Beginning to Present

* June 2012 - placed on “Monitoring Status”
* PAL’s appointed Fall 2012
* Removed from Monitoring Status July 2013
  ◦ Later in fall term, began to focus on administrative units, emphasis on consistency across the University – academic, administrative, and student affairs units
* Office of Institutional Effectiveness’ 2012-2013 Assessment Report enabled us to see changes needed
* Compliance Certification Report was submitted September 2014
Biggest Challenges

* Addressing accreditation concerns, while simultaneously fostering a culture change, one in which assessment is internally driven because it is meaningful to programs and units

* **Response:** Concluded that consistency/commonalities were essential throughout the institution, beginning with the President and Provost
  * Common language
  * Similar processes and organizational structures
Goal:
* Provide leadership for the institution’s administrative and student support services units assessment processes to effectively reach their goals

Objective:
* Coordinate the completion of assessment plans by all administrative and academic and student affairs units, with a focus toward ongoing evidence-based efforts to maximize effectiveness and efficiency.
OIE Overarching Plan

- Common structures and processes
  - University policies developed
  - Academic Assessment
  - Institutional Effectiveness
  - Application of detailed assessment rubrics to annual assessment reports
  - Peer-review process, with feedback and change
  - Development opportunities and recognition events
Common Implementation Teams

* Academic Assessment Steering Committee
* IE Assessment Team
  * Subgroup of IE Team became an advisory committee
Findings from First Assessment Cycle

- Depth of knowledge about assessment was weaker than desired
- Assessment was administratively-driven or SACSCOC-driven
- Both cognitive and affective issues created obstacles to understanding and for engagement
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<th>Level 3: Application/Applying</th>
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<th>Level 1: Knowledge/Remembering</th>
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Assessment Cognitive Levels

* **Remembering** – Administrators and staff will be able to identify steps of the assessment process.

* **Understanding** – Administrators and staff will be able to describe all stages of the assessment process.

* **Applying** – Administrators and staff will be able to plan and report on an assessment process that addresses all elements of the process, to include: measurable objectives, places and strategies to foster achievement of these objectives, direct measures, analyzed data, a plan for addressing weaknesses detected, and results of the plan.
Assessment Cognitive Levels

- **Applying** – higher level (previously Analyzing/Evaluating/Creating) –
- Administrators and staff will engage in an assessment process that reflects an assessment approach that provides credible evidence to support achievement of objectives and to reveal weaknesses. The process includes multiple staff members who collaborate to analyze the results and develop meaningful and detailed action plans to address findings.
Assessment Cognitive Levels

- **Analyzing/Evaluating/Creating**— Administrators and staff will also be able to analyze and evaluate the assessment process by:
  
  - * articulating why all phases of the assessment process are necessary
  - * explaining what occurs when a phase is misunderstood
  - * explaining how the phases differ but are connected
  - * accurately evaluating the quality of others’ processes and reports
Affective Domain

Administrators and staff will:

* **Receiving Phenomena**: listen openly
* **Responding to Phenomena**: participate actively
* **Valuing**: demonstrate importance of phenomena
* **Organizing Values**: place into priorities by contrasting different values, resolving conflicts
* **Internalizing Values**: place into value system, evidenced by consistent behavior

Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1973)
http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html
Affective Domain

Administrators and staff will:

* **Receiving Phenomena**: listen respectfully about the topic of assessment

* **Responding to Phenomena**: write report, contribute to assessment process by providing data, developing an action plan

* **Valuing**: engage in assessment willingly, discuss benefits with others

* **Organizing Values**: compare and resolve previous conflicting values about assessment

* **Internalizing Values**: look forward to, engage in process even when data are not required, seek leadership role
OIE Assessment Plan Change

Objective 2
Build a culture in which assessment is valued, demonstrated by:
* Preparation for and participation during help sessions
* More comprehensive and active use of assessment results
* Less reference to external requirements
Cognitive and Affective Domain
Potential Places to Gather Evidence

* Examine administration’s and staff’s
  * language used when talking about assessment
  * descriptions of assessment
  * their assessment plans and reports

* Examine our
  * language when talking about assessment
  * cognitive and affective levels that we foster
  * practices used to reward participation in the process
Your Institution

* Describe the current range of understanding and attitudes toward assessment at your institution, in academic programs and administrative and student affairs units.

* Is assessment valued at your institution, and if so, by whom? If assessment is not valued, what are the potential reasons?
Your Institution

- What affective and cognitive level(s) do we want and administrators and staff to achieve?

- How can we measure/document changes in attitudes and understanding?
Administrative and Student Affairs Assessment Process

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Primary functions of the unit that align with division’s mission and strategic themes

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Broad-based, what unit should accomplish

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**Findings and Analysis**
Detailed, directly relate to objectives
Analysis clear and thorough

**Action Plans**
Developed from findings, used to improve unit’s functioning
Reporting and Review Process

- Development of reporting template
- Development of rubric
- Create a review team
- Establish a timeline
- Review format
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<th>Mission Statement:</th>
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<td>Goal 1:</td>
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<td>Strategic Theme Relationship(s):</td>
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<td>Objective 1:</td>
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<td>Implementation Strategy:</td>
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<td>Measurement Tool:</td>
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<td>Data Collection Process:</td>
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<td>Target:</td>
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<td>Findings &amp; Analysis:</td>
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<td>Action Plan:</td>
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# Administrative, Academic and Student Support Services Institutional Effectiveness Rubric
(Revised June 2013)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs Attention</th>
<th>Approaches Standard</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mission:</strong></td>
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<td>∙ pertains only to the unit’s reporting division.</td>
<td>∙ includes both the unit and its reporting division, but does not clearly distinguish between the missions of the unit and its reporting division.</td>
<td>∙ is directly related to mission of the unit’s reporting division.</td>
<td>∙ is a comprehensive and concise statement of the unit’s purpose, the broad primary functions of the unit and whom they serve, and the standards the unit is trying to achieve.</td>
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<td>∙ does not specifically address the unit (for example, “VP of Business and Finance” instead of “Postal Service”).</td>
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<td>∙ addresses the unit’s purpose and the standards the unit is trying to achieve.</td>
<td>∙ includes the unit’s support of or alignment with its reporting division and the University mission.</td>
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<td>∙ are designed to maintain the status quo.</td>
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<td>∙ are broad statements specific to the unit.</td>
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<td>∙ are ambiguous and do not clearly represent what the unit intends to accomplish.</td>
<td>∙ do not encompass all functions of the unit.</td>
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<td>∙ do not attempt to align with the unit’s reporting division or the university.</td>
<td>∙ are broadly stated and are specific to the unit but do not clearly encompass the unit’s stated functions and what will ultimately be accomplished.</td>
<td>∙ have an improvement focus, and although some may have a maintenance focus, most should have an aspirational focus.</td>
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Mission

* Description from Administrative Assessment Rubric
  ◦ Comprehensive and concise statement of the unit’s purpose, the broad primary functions of the unit and whom they serve, and the standards the unit is trying to achieve
  ◦ Includes the unit’s support of or alignment with its reporting division and the University mission
Structure of Mission Statement

The mission of (unit/program) is to (your primary purpose) by providing (your primary activities or functions) to (your stakeholders) guided by (the standards you are trying to live up to).” Additional clarifying statements can be added as needed.
Common Issues - Mission

* Not comprehensive

* Not specific to the unit
  ◦ Registrar: The mission of the Office of the Registrar is to maintain academic records as well as provide data to the campus community for decision making to enhance the Academic Excellence of the University. The office provides leadership in the development of automated processes and using new technologies to support students, faculty, staff and alumni being guided by the commitment to be student centered, enhance student success, and promote fiscal sustainability. The office also reviews the degree requirements for students applying for graduation.
Common Issues - Mission

* Too much detail

- **Stores & Shops**: The Stores and Shops division of Auxiliary Services exists to provide the University community those goods and services that support the University's strategic themes of Academic Distinction and being Student Centered. Stores and Shops is comprised of The University Store, Eagle Print Shop, Eagle Eye Care, IT Store, and Auxiliary Services Distribution Center. The University Store provides all required textbooks and school supplies needed for course requirements. Insignia merchandise is also available for students, faculty, staff, alumni and fans to show and promote school pride. The University Store has an ecommerce site for the sale of its merchandise...
Improved Mission

Stores & Shops:

The mission of Stores and Shops is to offer comprehensive on campus and online resources for the needs of students, faculty, and staff. Under the Division of Business and Finance and directly under Auxiliary Services, the four units of Stores and Shops are Computer Store, Eagle Eye Care, Printing and Postal and the University Store. The services offered by Stores and Shops contribute to the Georgia Southern University mission of student success.
Goals

* Description from Administrative Assessment Rubric
  - Broad statements specific to the unit
  - Encompass all functions of the unit
  - Improvement focus, and
    - Although some have a maintenance focus
    - Most should have an aspirational focus
  - Align with university strategic themes
Example: Career Services

Original: Develop a Resume Critique Night program before each major Career Fair (3 total events for FY13)

- Problems with original goal:
  - Too specific
  - Includes pieces that should be moved to the objective and the implementation strategy
  - WHY do they want to do this? Need to identify the true purpose (goal) behind this effort

Revised: Develop opportunities for students to enhance their job-seeking skills
Objectives

- Clearly align with the goals and are within control of the unit
  - Specifically define what aspect of the goal will be addressed
  - Exclusively focus on improvement
Common Issues - Objectives

* Not measurable

  ◦ **Student Media:** Students will form fraternal bonds through an environment of mutuality in the Newsroom

* Not measuring what the unit ultimately wants to measure

  ◦ **Public Safety:** Increase crime awareness/crime prevention classes conducted
Example: Career Services

* **Original:** Career Services will offer a series of Resume Critique Night events that will allow students to receive professional critiquing services (including networking) performed by Career Services Staff members and participating Employers. These events are designed to reach a larger number of students at one time to assist them with preparing for an employer interaction event following the Resume Critique Night events.
Example: Career Services

* Problems with original objective:
  * Status quo? Doesn’t have an improvement focus
  * Includes pieces that should be moved to the implementation strategy
  * Focus is on providing a service and counting attendance rather than the outcomes for the students
Example: Career Services

* Revised: Students participating in Resume Critique Night will improve their resumes prior to meeting with potential employers at Career Services events.
Example: Public Safety

* Original Objective:
  ◦ Increase crime awareness/crime prevention classes conducted

* Problem with original objective:
  ◦ Is it measuring what Public Safety really needs to measure? Will more class equal less crime?
Example: Public Safety

* **Revised Objective:**
  ◦ Reduce the number of thefts involving unattended property in campus buildings, especially University Union and Henderson Library

* The classes become a **Strategy** for achieving the **Objective.**
Example: Athletics

* **Original Objective:**
  ◦ Provide the physical and human resources necessary to ensure excellence in academics

* **Problems with original objective:**
  ◦ What do we mean by “excellence in academics?”
  ◦ How will we know when all necessary resources are available?
Example: Athletics

* Revised Objective:

  - To improve the grade point average of the Athletic Department and reduce the number of ineligible student-athletes
Implementation Strategy

- clearly described, detailed, and chosen based on their potential effectiveness

- include a clear description of why all of the strategies were developed or selected

- show direct connection between outcomes/objectives and strategies
Common Issues: Implementation Strategy

* Insufficient Detail:

“Search conferences online and schedule conferences well in advance.”

“Weekly/Monthly Reports are given to all areas in Athletics by the Business Manager.”
Measurement Tools

* Adequately described, in all cases, to determine their ability to measure the effectiveness of the implementation strategies for the relevant objective as well as the component pieces necessary to identify weakness

* Include detailed description of their development and selection

* Include multiple approaches for some outcomes/objectives
Example: Student Media

Objective (Outcome)
Students will learn about journalism through the Student Media training programs

Measurement Tool
Evaluation will include a Likert Scale survey (target value above 3 on scale of 1-5) using direct, independent, external reviewers yielding quantitative data without limitations as a way to measure levels of satisfaction and learning. On May 2, 2012, Director and Design Editor will administer the “Student Media Satisfaction Survey” to all students who remain in the program at that point. The survey will measure their levels of satisfaction and gauge how much they have learned in the program.

Outcome is about learning but measure is about satisfaction.
Objective

Increase compliance with time-card policy and decrease missed punches and unapproved time-cards within the E-Time system.

Measurement Tool

As the reports are used and regular notifications are sent to campus, the expectation is that the actual number of missed punches and missing approvals will be reduced. Notations will be made as to the beginning figures to compare to the numbers at specific intervals throughout the next two years.

As written, this explains the Strategy surrounding the Tool, but never actually identifies the tool itself.....“reports” is as close as they get.
Example: Athletics

**Objective**
Expand the physical and human resources required to ensure excellence in Athletics

**Measurement Tool**
Academic Progress Report (APR), Graduation Success Rate (GSR), number of scholar athletes, number of ineligible athletes

The **Objective** focuses on resources, but the tools all focus on **results**; how are the two connected? In this case, both the **Objective** and the **Measurement Tool** needed clarification.
Data Collection

• Includes sufficient data gathering or tracking opportunities to collect data necessary to make justifiable claims

• Includes an appropriate timeframe

• Clearly explained and based on accepted practice

• Includes a thorough description of how the measurement tool will be distributed and how the data will be collected

• When sampling is used, is representative of the population served
Example: Student Conduct

Objective (Outcome)
Students will know where to find the Student Code of Conduct and have a better understanding of the conduct process.

Data Collection
Students were introduced to the link through class presentations by the Office of Student Conduct as well as handbills at various tabling opportunities. The students who successfully completed the quiz received a t-shirt. A Coordinator for Student Conduct managed the data and it is stored under the Know the Code folder on the Office of Student Conduct server.
Example: Student Conduct

- Problems with original data collection:
  - Timeline is missing
  - Measurement tool distribution and data collection details are sparse
  - Written in past tense

Revised: Students will be introduced to the link through class presentations by the Office of Student Conduct as well as handbills at various tabling opportunities. The students who successfully complete the quiz will receive a t-shirt. A Coordinator for Student Conduct will manage the data and it will be stored under the Know the Code folder on the Office of Student Conduct server. Data will be collected from the quiz at the end of fall semester 2014 and the end of spring semester 2015.
Example: Procurement & Contract Services

**Objective**
Increase the number of departments on campus able to use ePro, our electronic procurement system.

**Data Collection**
Manual

Clearly, the process provides insufficient detail to show that the data collection process will, in fact, yield the data needed to show achievement of the Objective.
Example: Procurement & Contract Services

**Objective**

Improve the accuracy of annual spending report sent to State Purchasing.

**Data Collection**

The data collection process involves using established queries in PeopleSoft to collect purchase order data as each purchase order line is assigned an National Institute of Government Purchasing Code (NIGP Code). This data is then migrated into the NIGP Code Summary tool. State Purchasing has established a sampling goal of 100 purchase orders based upon the average number of purchase orders that we issue each year. Period for the collection is each calendar year and may be done either quarterly or once per year at the discretion of the Purchasing Director.
Targets

* Include a performance/achievement mark from the measurement tool to establish a meaningful, desired level of achievement for each outcome/objective assessed and a time frame for doing so

* Include, in all cases, a specific description of one or more of these expectations: funding target, quantity to increase or decrease, or quality improvement

* Discuss the process of developing the target and the parties involved
Example: Fraternity & Sorority Life

**Objective**
Increase the number of men by 25% from Fall 2011 in the Fall of 2013, which would mean over 300 men were participating in the recruitment process.

**Target**
Men who are interested in joining a fraternity and who have participated in the formal recruitment process.

This was a common issue early on - distinguishing between a target for the objective vs. a target audience.
Example: Financial Aid

**Goal**
Offered student financial aid exit loan workshops to help students understand the loan repayment process after graduation.

**Objective**
Offered financial aid exit loan workshops to students scheduled to graduate at the end of spring 2013 term. Students who attended were surveyed to determine whether the workshop was helpful. The feedback will be used to improve the loan workshop information and increase satisfaction.

**Target**
Increase student attendance for the loan workshop.

Since the true intention is to improve students’ understanding of the loan repayment process, the focus needs to be shifted to align what is being measured to the intended outcome.
Example: Procurement and Contract Services

Goal

Ensure integrity of Spend Data Analysis sent to State Purchasing.

Objective

Improve the accuracy of annual spending report sent to State Purchasing.

Target

Calendar year 2013
Findings and Analysis

* Include who interpreted
* Detailed and clearly relate to specific measures and the achievement of the outcomes/objectives
* Comprehensively analyzed, and interpreted appropriately in relation to targets and limitations
* Discussed with multiple representatives from the unit
* Include relevant data from prior years
Findings and Analysis

* “Target met.”

* “Met – The Bursar’s Office has fully implemented Bill+Pay for student invoices”

These are Findings, not Targets.

Discuss in terms of the Objective. Did you achieve the Objective? Why or why not? What worked well? What didn’t work so well?
Action Plans

- Developed directly from the findings and clearly align with the outcomes/objectives
- Discuss plans from the previous year and for the next year
- Input of multiple people
- Intended to improve the unit’s functions
- May include changes to outcomes/objective/assessment strategies
- Contain a level of specificity that details how, when, and by whom the strategies are to be implemented
Objective: “Attend USG conferences/SHRM or other Diversity/EEO/AA/Title IX conferences to keep up with changes in laws and policies.”

Target: “Attend at least two conferences/training sessions per year.”


Action Plan: “Two conferences/training sessions were attended between July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013. Anticipate attending two conferences in next fiscal year.”
Feedback Examples

Objectives: “Need more specificity” Which objective(s)? What kind of specificity? Sometimes more words don’t do the trick

Implementation Strategies: “No implementation strategies.”
How would this comment help a unit develop adequate strategies? They know it’s blank, too.

Measurement Tools: “Measures are actually implementation strategies. Within this section there are some targets.” Okay, so the unit should……..????
Feedback Examples

Data Collection Process: “Need more specific details.” Such as…..??

Findings and Analysis: “Related to the target….Do not lead to any action plan.” And so the unit should…..???? “Details have been listed.” By whom? For what?

Action Plans: “Will you make changes next year?” (Avoid comments that will lead units to answer the reviewer question(s) in single statements.)
Evolution of Review Process

* Electronic vs. face-to-face feedback
* Larger review team vs. smaller review team
* Plans due in Fall (Mission through Targets)
* One-on-one review with opportunity for feedback
* Finalized plans due before Thanksgiving break
* Final reports, including Findings and Analysis due in June for final review and feedback
Lessons Learned

* Goals/objectives focused on status quo (busy does not equal effective)
* Measures were survey and counting oriented
* VP’s understanding and value toward assessment varies
* Presidential support is essential
What Worked

* The smaller, targeted groups versus the general, larger sessions
* Rubrics and relevant examples
* Building a team from within, or building capacity from within, as opposed to depending on a single expert or small group
* Parallel processes between academic and administrative and student affairs
What Worked cont’d

- The peer review process and the realization that someone *is* actually reading the reports
- Face-to-face conversations as opposed to e-mail conversations
- Recognition of effort
Transforming Culture

- A change in QUALITY: Moving from merely reporting less-meaningful “counts” (i.e. numbers of attendees or workshops offered) to implementing more-meaningful assessment (i.e. outcomes-based)

- Focusing on improvements rather than maintaining the status quo

- Shifting from submitting a required report with little impact to maximizing assessment activities to leverage for multiple purposes
Remaining Challenges

* Evidence from assessment cycles should be used to guide institutional decisions at all levels
  ◦ **Planned Response**: Reports no longer “shelved”, instead action is taken in multiple directions with open communication between levels

* Demonstration of support, importance, and value from upper administration
  ◦ **Planned Response**: Creation of the President’s Assessment Advisory Team and President’s Recognition Symposium
  ◦ Fostering improved Vice Presidents’ understanding of how results can be used
Resources

To access an electronic copy of this presentation or copies of the rubric and template described, go to:

http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/vpie/conference-resources/
References