# DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (COAP) MODEL FOR SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

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# Abstract

In response to the growing need for adopting an organizational perspective in addressing assessment in higher education, this research attempts to lay the foundation for developing and implementing a Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program (COAP) model based on review of related literature as well as a survey of higher education institutions. The ideal elements in the model include: **Leadership Commitment, Establishing a Centralized Office, Culture Development, Partnership with Strategic Planning, Conducting Assessment, Disseminating Results, and Utilizing Results.**

Assessment programs at four-year public institutions in the United States with a minimum enrollment of 8,000 students are evaluated using the proposed COAP model. Two hundred sixty-one surveys were distributed, with ninety-four returned. A secondary method of evaluation included the analyses of institutional web pages, based on the web addresses provided via the survey.

Recommendations are made for an ideal COAP model to be established at Southwest Texas State University based on the results of the research. The findings of the research indicate that the originally proposed model derived from the literature be implemented as presented. Although some of the elements were not actually practiced at the surveyed institutions, responses overwhelmingly indicate that assessment administrators believe each of these elements are important.

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## CHAPTER 1. OVERVIEW

### INTRODUCTION

Are our programs are of high quality? Are we making a positive difference

for our students? Are our graduates in all disciplines proficient in mathematical,

writing, and speaking skills? Do they have a working knowledge of history,

literature, science, and the arts? Are we fulfilling the needs of employers? Are

our graduates competitive with graduates from the best universities in the

country? If so, how do we know this?[1] These are questions that all colleges and

universities are beginning to ask themselves more and more frequently.

> Everyday, more pressures--now coming from students and parents
> and from trustees and employers as well as from state governors,
> legislators, and coordinating board members--are being applied to
> convince academics that they need to provide tangible, systematic
> evidence of what students know and can do as a result of their
> collective college experiences (Banta et.al., 1996, p. xvii).

The solution to addressing these questions is effective planning and assessment

activities. Academic assessment efforts have been underway in higher

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[1]Questions such as these were asked by McClain, President of Truman State University, which
faculty found difficult to answer effectively. See Magruder, et.al., 1997, p. 13.

education for more than two decades in the form of in-class examinations, grade point averages, and the occasional student survey. But, it shouldn't stop there. "...when it comes to higher education, we *all* need to ask not just about the funding, facilities, credentials, and curricula but about *results*" (Hutchings & Marchese, 1990, p. 14).

Historically, the academic side of the house has always considered themselves separate from the administrative side. Faculty like to do their own thing, with no interference from the administration. The terms "academic freedom" and "creative autonomy" have always kept the administration at bay. Thus, the concept of a comprehensive or university-wide assessment process is often resisted by faculty. But, times are changing. Universities are now having to demonstrate their effectiveness in student outcomes, as well as in their programs. "Both state and federal government bodies have increasingly emphasized accountability in recent years, due in part to the spiraling costs of college and the growing concern about the quality and value of a college degree" (Steele, 1996, p. 1). As a result, faculty, staff, and administrators need to unite and work together to make all aspects of their university the best that it can be.

"By assessing at a university level, employees develop a broader, more inclusive understanding of how complex the university is and how they contribute individually to the process" (Banta & Kuh, 1998, p. 46). With the right foundation, a culture can be established to allow the entire university community to embrace assessment and move together toward developing an effectively managed institution focused on creative learning.

# WHAT IS OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT?

"Assessment is 'the systematic collection, interpretation, and use of information on student characteristics, the educational environment, and learning outcomes to improve student learning and satisfaction'" (Gainen & Locatelli, 1995, as cited in Hindi & Miller, 2000, p. 286). Miller (1999, p. 96) also cites "the standard dictionary definitions of the verb 'to assess' are 'to set or determine the amount', and 'to evaluate or appraise'." Assessment activities undertaken at universities, therefore, have the potential to provide a broad range of data and information that will serve multiple purposes.

Muffo (1992, p. 772) cites improved student performance and program effectiveness as the most frequently reported goals of assessment. Similarly, Ory & Parker (1989, p. 379) report that "approximately 80 percent of the universities reporting assessment activities conduct them 'to improve teaching/ learning' and 'to demonstrate institutional effectiveness/ accountability'." If the ultimate purpose of assessment at a university were taken into consideration, a pattern begins to emerge. Assessment in its broadest sense involves both formative and summative evaluation.

> Formative evaluation is undertaken for the purpose of improving
> and developing an activity, program, person, or product.
> Summative evaluation is undertaken for the purposes of
> accountability or resource allocation (in the case of programs), for
> certification, selection, and placement (in the case of students), or
> for decisions about merit increases or promotions (in the case of
> faculty). Similarly, we can say that institutions undertake
> assessment to improve what they are doing (formative) or to make
> decisions about resources, institutions, programs, faculty, or
> students (summative) (Davis, 1989, p. 8-9).

Outcomes assessment, then, "focuses on the *outcomes* [italics added] of the educational process, rather than on the inputs or on the learning environment" (Baker et al., 1994, p. 105). Baker (1994, p. 107) also posits that outcomes assessment begins with developing a mission statement, goals and objectives for the university. "The objectives should be capable of being operationalized, that is, the fulfillment, or lack thereof, of accomplishing the objectives can be measured by outcomes." Karmon & McGilsky (1997, p. 133) agree that

> Accountability requires standards of performance, a means to achieve and maintain those standards, and a way of measuring program outputs. A program's mission and goals are its standards. The educational activities both inside and outside the classroom are the processes used to achieve the program's mission and goals. Assessment activities gather data on the output from the program for use in evaluating the extent to which the program's mission and goals are being met.

Banta (1997, p. 86), as well, defends the need for assessment data to "chart progress toward campus planning goals". These data should be used to develop "indicators of effectiveness". Baker et al. (1994, p. 108) states that "outcomes assessment can provide information on the actuality of the fulfillment of the program's objectives, as opposed to working only on the intentions. Thus, outcomes assessment is a feedback loop which can be used to make changes in both the inputs and the processes." As a result, outcomes assessment is never static, it is constantly changing and moving as institutions advance in their progress towards achieving their missions and goals. As in any type of assessment program undertaken, there are two ultimate "purposes for instituting

outcomes assessment...1) to improve student learning and performance, 2) to improve programs, program planning, and program development" (Underwood, 1991, p. 60).

Only when a clear understanding of outcomes assessment and its purposes is obtained, can an institution move forward in developing and expanding its assessment efforts on campus. First, the history and current status of assessment should be reviewed. The next section in this chapter addresses the history of assessment at universities and how efforts evolved on campuses across the United States.

## A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Assessment in the university environment is not a new concept. Gaither (1996, p. 8) explains that some practice has been in place since the 14th century. "The *doctore* exam at the University of Bologna in the 14th century was awarded on the basis of assessed performance through public declamation of knowledge." Even now, most Ph.D. degrees require an oral exam, a written exam, and a dissertation for completion of the program.

Kimmell et al. (1998) expand the idea further by reporting that higher education in the United States is in its third major period of assessment. In the last quarter of the 19th century, higher education administrators grew concerned with the uneven quality of education, which was the spring board in introducing electives into the curriculum. This new, less structured environment required a thorough review of academic programs, as a whole. The second major period

occurred between World War I and World War II. During this period, the accreditation process was introduced and became a standard. The current third major period of assessment (1980s to Today) emphasizes increased accountability to funding sources, parents, students, and other constituents.

"Evidence of problems in higher education began to mount in the early 1980s...a series of commissions and study groups called for increased accountability and a change in the manner in which programs were evaluated" (Kimmell et al., 1998, p. 853). Also, since the mid-1980s, public policy demands for assessing higher education's effectiveness have been increasing.

> [State] suspicions were increasing that the management of higher education was weak or primitive, with runaway costs, unwillingness to reduce or cut outmoded programs, reduced teaching loads, wasteful duplication of academic programs within each state, lack of focused missions by the institutions, and a growing number of students not completing their baccalaureate degree (Gaither, 1996, p. 9).

Gaither (1996, p. 7) further notes, "In 1986, a report from the National Governors Association titled *Time for Results* urged a new focus on student performance and results rather than on more resources." State officials began requiring reports, using standardized performance indicators, that demonstrated how higher education was performing in several areas. In 1987, the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) initiated the Assessment Forum, a national network that supports higher education efforts.

Legislative mandates that followed were mostly permissive in nature, which allowed universities to develop their own assessment methods (Gaither, 1996, p. 8). By the early 1990s, over ninety percent of all higher education

institutions reported engaging in some form of assessment.[2] Several states

began moving toward more mandatory compliance. Stricter requirements were

developed for assessment of student learning as well as assessment of the

institution, as a whole. "But with rare exceptions, campus leaders and faculty

members were suspicious and resentful of these external demands for

assessment of their teaching effectiveness, and they resisted their

implementation" (Gaither, 1996, p. 8).

Institutions responded by haphazardously collecting data without careful

planning, in order to meet the requirements. Banta (1988, p. 96) reports, "largely

because of pressure from external sources, assessment activities have often

been started without thorough review of all the related research." Wilson (1987,

p. 3) concurs, "...very few institutions have given more than passing attention to

academic support and administrative units."

Without any type of formal assessment process in place, Terenzini (1989,

p. 645) posits that "the 'best' colleges and universities are frequently thought to

be those with high-ability and high-achieving students, more books in their

library, more faculty with terminal degrees, lower student-faculty ratios, larger

endowments and so on." Kimmell et al. (1998) agree, "there are three basic

approaches to assessment: it can be based on reputation, resources, or

outcomes."[3] With the *reputation* approach, a university "collects and

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[2]Based on a survey conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE), as cited in Gaither, 1996, p. 8.

[3]A full discussion of these three approaches can be found in Kimmel et. al., 1998, pp. 856-857.

disseminates the opinions of [its] users and peers. It is generally based on national surveys of college and university administrators, employers and alumni." The *resources* approach focuses on such things as the ACT scores of entering freshmen, the size of the institution's endowment, the physical plant, the number of volumes in the library, and the immensity of faculty salaries. The *outcomes* approach, on the other hand, is centered exclusively on outcome measures such as GRE scores of new graduate students, the percent of graduating seniors pursuing graduate education, and average salary of graduating seniors which will, to some degree, create a cross between the *reputational* and *resource* approaches to assessment (Kimmell et.al., 1998, p. 856-857).

Focusing strictly on resources and/or reputation for assessing education does not provide a clear picture of student learning or program effectiveness to stakeholders, including state policy makers. Spangehl (1987, p. 36) provides a perfect example:

> Imagine a factory run this way demanding that its effectiveness and quality be judged, not by the products it produces, but by the salaries and qualifications of its employees, its physical resources, and like factors that might influence the quality of its products. Then imagine the factory manager asking for an increase in the factory's budget—not because production or quality has increased, but because other, similarly run factories are asking for increases.[4]

It would not be likely, in this case, that the factory manager would receive additional funds. The same philosophy should apply in the higher education

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[4]This is the classic view of the Quality movement. Although faculty adamantly disagree with this philosophy, funding sources may relate to the overall point and the university administration cannot ignore its essential validity.

environment, yet in the past, this is how universities have responded to assessment requirements. But, as is the case with most initiatives, assessment efforts are evolving and growing. The next section in this chapter discusses assessment efforts in their present form.

## ASSESSMENT TODAY

Over the last twenty years, there has been little advancement in assessment efforts in higher education, with the exception of a few institutions. Only very recently, within the past couple of years, have universities begun to seriously review their assessment practices. Many are now beginning to adopt the concept of outcomes assessment. Rogers & Gentemann (1989, p. 346) credit the Commission on Colleges for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) as "a major driving force in the assessment of educational outcomes." This agency was one of the first regional associations to adopt and require "institutional effectiveness" criteria in order "to emphasize the results of education and to focus on the extent to which the institution uses assessment information to reevaluate goals, to make essential improvements, and to plan for the future" (SACS, 1987, p. iii). According to Gaither (1996, p. 7) SACS "now requires as a condition for accreditation that each institution have a strategic plan and an internally developed assessment program to measure progress toward the performance goals in the plan." Similarly, the State of Texas now mandates[5]

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[5]Chapter 2056 of the Government Code requires each state agency to prepare and submit a strategic plan. Senate Bill 1563, enacted during the Seventy-sixth Legislature, Regular Session, requires state agencies to develop customer service standards and implement customer satisfaction assessment plans. Agency and Institution Strategic Plans are the vehicle for submitting a Report on Customer Service required by Sec. 2113.002(c) of the bill.

public institutions to have a strategic plan in place, as well as assessment of the plan's strategies. For the most part, universities have traditionally treated strategic planning initiatives separately from assessment initiatives.

The problem lies in that there is no clear understanding of how to institutionalize assessment. "Despite increasing nationwide attention to the topic of assessment, there is no clear consensus on exactly what topics and processes assessment comprises" (Davis, 1989, p. 7). Sell (1989a, p. 22) reports:

> Most colleges and universities are already doing extensive work in assessment if we define the term assessment as a process for informing decisions and judgments through (1) framing questions; (2) designing or selecting instruments and procedures for collecting data; (3) collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data; and (4) reporting and using information that is derived from qualitative as well as quantitative data.

These processes are key to assessment, but there should be more consideration involved in the "who, what, when, where, and why".

Ory (1992, p. 467) posits that "the initial focus of the current assessment movement was measuring student outcomes for the purpose of student development...Today's campus assessment activities focus on students as well as faculty, programs, and the institution as a whole." Ewell (1987, p. 23) concurs that the character of assessment is shifting. "While the term still means many things to many people, the symbolism of assessment increasingly has moved from instructional improvement to institutional accountability." Many faculty and administrators thought assessment was a passing "fad" that would eventually

disappear. But, this has not been the case. "This is not a simple trend that will quickly disappear as some other academic trends have. Outcomes assessment has quickly been embedded into the way that institutions will have to view themselves, and will trickle down to each and every academic program and its faculty" (Baker et al., 1994, p. 106).

So, where do we go from here? Altschuld & Kumar (1995, p. 5) stress the need for a more systematic approach or model for assessing institutional outcomes as education moves in a new direction. But, no such template exists that can be applied or adopted by all institutions. Every university is unique. There are no standard methods for managing higher education. The first step in the process of establishing assessment initiatives is to begin communicating. "Greater stress must be placed on communicating with staff, seeking their input, and developing a sense of meaning that the process and its results are ultimately important to them" (Altschuld & Witkin, 2000, p. 239). Departments, colleges, divisions and the university, in their entirety, need to collaborate and work together so that data can be collected and presented in an integrated way that benefits everyone. A "community of inquiry"[6] should be formed to examine how the university staff and faculty approach problems, consider data, and communicate with one another (Shields, 2000, p. 1). The more people are informed and involved in planning and assessment, the greater the benefits for the university as a whole (Banta & Kuh, 1998, p. 44). Sell (1989a, p. 22) agrees:

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[6]For a detailed discussion on the concept of "communities of inquiry", see Shields' "The Community of Inquiry: Classical Pragmatism and Public Administration".

An organizational perspective on assessment can have a number
of benefits. It can help reveal relationships among assessment
activities and the use of scarce resources for them. It can help
locate and diagnose competing purposes that assessment serves.
It can help identify constraints as well as opportunities for
assessment in the service of institutions. And it can help formulate
actions to remove barriers and provide support for effective
assessment practices.

In response to the growing need for adopting an organizational perspective in

addressing assessment, this research attempts to lay the foundation for

developing and implementing a comprehensive outcomes assessment program

model based on review of related literature as well as a survey of higher

education institutions. The next section in this chapter presents the formal

research purposes.

## RESEARCH PURPOSE

The Office of Quality & Planning at SWT has recently assumed the

responsibility for university-wide assessment. The Office of Quality & Planning

is interested in finding a new and integrated way of coordinating assessment

activities throughout campus, which includes collaboration and involvement from

all areas of the institution, as well as ties to existing university-wide activities,

such as the strategic planning and quality initiatives. As a result, the purpose of

this research is threefold: (1) to identify the ideal elements in a model for

developing and implementing a Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program

(COAP) at the college or university level; (2) to evaluate assessment programs at

four-year public institutions in the United States with a minimum enrollment of

8,000 students using the COAP model; and (3) to make recommendations for an ideal COAP model to be established at Southwest Texas State University.

## ORGANIZATION OF REPORT

The remaining chapters of this report fulfill the research purposes addressed above. **Chapter 2** reviews assessment literature and develops the ideal elements of a Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program (COAP) model. In **Chapter 3**, the research methodology used for this project is explained and the conceptual framework is operationalized. **Chapter 4** provides the results of the research, while **Chapter 5** summarizes the findings and revises the COAP model based on these findings. This chapter also offers recommendations for Southwest Texas State University in implementing a comprehensive outcomes assessment program. A copy of the survey instrument can be found in **Appendix A**, while **Appendix B** includes the coding sheet used for web analysis. **Appendix C** includes individual comments received in survey responses. In **Appendix D**, guidelines for reviewing web pages are presented, while **Appendix E** provides a list of institutions whose websites were analyzed along with their web addresses.

# CHAPTER 2. ASSESSMENT MODEL

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the ideal elements in a model[7] for

developing and implementing a Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program

(COAP) at the college or university level.  There is vast literature available on

assessment and there are a few characteristics of effective assessment

practices emphasized repeatedly.  In 1992, the American Association for Higher

Education developed a set of assessment principles to guide universities in

developing assessment processes.  These principles were developed based on

members' own campus experiences with assessment practices.

The *Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning*:
1)  The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
2)  Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
3)  Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
4)  Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
5)  Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.
6)  Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.

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[7]The Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program (COAP) model is an example of a "Practical Ideal Type" conceptual framework developed by Shields.  The COAP model is both exploratory (preliminary) and prescriptive (provides guidance for action).

7) Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.

8) Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.

9) Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public (AAHE, 1992, pp. 2-3, as cited by Banta et. al., 1996, p. 2).

In their book, *Assessment in Practice*, Banta et.al. (1996, p. 62) proposed an additional Principle 10, "'Assessment is most effective when undertaken in an environment that is receptive, supportive, and enabling.' (i.e., effective leadership, administrative commitment, adequate resources, faculty and staff development opportunities, and time)." These ten principles have since served as the foundation for most assessment programs established at colleges and universities, and should therefore be considered in developing a model. In researching available literature related to assessment activities underway at many colleges and universities, six major elements were mentioned and discussed repeatedly. A seventh element, although only vaguely addressed in the literature, is key to implementing an assessment program and therefore is incorporated. With regard to the literature, as well as the ten principles discussed above, a proposed model for a comprehensive outcomes assessment program was developed.

The key elements within the model include:

- **Leadership Commitment**
- **Establishing a Centralized Office**
- **Culture Development**
- **Partnership with Strategic Planning Efforts**
- **Conducting Assessment**

- **Disseminating Results**
- **Utilizing the Results**

Each of these elements are discussed in detail throughout the remainder of this chapter.

## LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

Before any type of comprehensive outcome assessment program can be implemented, there must be support for and a firm commitment to the program by the university administration. This commitment includes visible support and involvement in the process by top administrators (i.e., president, vice presidents, deans, and chairs) as well as the willingness to provide the necessary resources needed for implementation.

### Visible Support and Involvement

"The active and visible support of senior executive officers (particularly the president and chief academic officer) is absolutely necessary..." (Terenzini, 1989, p. 649). Because most university environments are autonomous and decentralized by nature, it is critical that faculty, staff, and students see the belief in and commitment of administration while implementing a university-wide assessment program. Hurtgen (1997, p. 60) stresses that upper administration must make a great effort at keeping faculty and staff informed about assessment efforts, as was done at the State University of New York at Fredonia. "This not only helped sustain awareness of what was happening but also sent a clear

message to the campus that this project was a high priority of the college administration."

When Truman State University implemented a university-wide assessment program, it proved successful in part, because of the efforts of its President and Dean of Instruction.

> By deliberately fostering a collegial, low-risk environment, McClain [President, Truman State University] and Krueger [Dean of Instruction, Truman State University] were able to persuade faculty that they were sincere in their efforts to create an improved university and that faculty had nothing to fear from the assessment system. The trust that was developed between the faculty and the administration provided the necessary support for the enterprise (Magruder et. al., 1997, p. 19).

Ball State University is also noted for its successful institutional assessment efforts. Again, there was a strong and visible commitment from the administrative leaders. Palomba (1997) notes that assessment efforts at Ball State have been successful, in part because of the clear vision of the university president from the outset, as well as from the solid commitment of both the provost and associate provost to see that assessment efforts were understood and practiced across the university.

According to Terenzini (1989), this commitment and support by all areas of leadership within the university needs to be continuous and vigorous. He posits that the commitment does not end once the assessment program has been implemented. Leadership commitment should be seen even after assessment results have been disseminated and the data is used for improvement of processes. Assessment is a continuous cyclical activity. "The

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temptation for leaders to delegate the assessment processes to others can quickly make assessment just one more report to read" (Magruder et al., 1997, p. 26). The leadership commitment needed for successful assessment efforts requires more than just visible support, it also requires the continuous allocation of resources to support these efforts.

## Providing Resources

Assessment is an activity with real costs. University leaders must provide reasonable resources, both financial and material, to support these activities if they are to be successful. Resources needed to develop and maintain a successful assessment program can include financial support for purchase and development of the instruments, funds for administrative costs for coordinating and maintaining activities, and funds for the costs of tabulating and analyzing the results. Other necessary resources can include funds for training and education in the form of travel and registration fees for external conferences and workshops on assessment.

There are also costs associated with incentives for participating in assessment activities. For example, at Ball State University, students are randomly selected for cash prizes or free books for one semester as incentives for participating in assessment (Palomba, 1997, p. 42). Faculty at Ball State receive stipends and/or mini-grants for designing or implementing assessment activities (Palomba, 1997, p. 40). Again, the commitment of resources is more than a one-time fund allocation until the assessment program is well underway.

"Some resources must be earmarked for improvement efforts so that plans

based on assessment findings can actually be implemented rather than put off to

a future year" (Banta, 1997, p. 90). Scarce resources often force university

administrations to limit improvements suggested by assessment data.

Nevertheless, Miller (1999, p. 94) maintains that administrative leaders must

follow through with their commitment to assessment by providing the resources

for activities that have the greatest impact on the institution [p. 94].

## ESTABLISHING A CENTRALIZED OFFICE

Whether a university establishes a new office or reorganizes an existing

office, university-wide assessment efforts must be coordinated. There must be

control and organization of the many activities that are occurring simultaneously

throughout the institution.

> The development of assessment at Ball State has been greatly
> shaped by the existence of a central office. This allows for an
> administrative structure that has continuity and that can focus
> exclusively on assessment issues. The staff of the office have
> been available as a resource for assessment efforts throughout the
> campus. They have also been available to develop assessment
> materials...the very existence of the office makes a clear statement
> about the commitment of the university to assessment (Palomba,
> 1997, p. 43).

Some of the primary functions of this centralized office could include: preparing

an inventory of existing assessment activities; developing, administering, and

analyzing activities; providing training and education; and consulting on

assessment activities conducted at the discipline level. Ewell (1988, p. 18)

supports the establishment of a centralized office for coordinating assessment

activities. He describes the ideal centralized office as "generally small, employing at most one or two individuals, but they generally also report to relatively high administrative levels of authority." Ewell also supports the idea that permanent and funded offices of this kind "are symbolic of institutional commitment [to assessment]."

## Inventory of Existing Activities

Once it is determined that a comprehensive outcomes assessment program will be implemented, it is pertinent that information be collected on assessment activities that are already occurring within the institution. Assessment experts[8] agree that determining what's out there is the first step in the assessment process. As Ory (1992, p. 471) states, "Often the necessary data for an assessment activity already exist on a campus but in a variety of places. Assessment staff can better respond to the information needs of their audiences by being knowledgeable of all campus offices and the type of information collected and maintained by each." This step is often accomplished via a survey of all academic and non-academic administrators.[9]

Once an inventory is developed, activities should be coordinated by the centralized office to avoid duplication of efforts. A calendar must be established to reduce the number of assessment surveys occurring simultaneously. When

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[8]See for example Banta et.al. (1997), Ewell (1988), Terenzini (1989), Ory (1992), Williford (1997), and Underwood (1991).

[9]See Underwood (1991) for detailed techniques on developing an assessment inventory.

people receive many surveys at once, they often fail to respond to all of them.

A coordinated calendar of activities would, in turn, stabilize the response rates.

Details of the inventory should be distributed to appropriate personnel across the

campus for informational purposes. If pertinent administrators are aware of

existing activities that are occurring and the potential audiences for these

activities, they may be in a better position to collaborate with other offices to

develop joint projects, and thus reduce the number of surveys distributed.

## Developing, Administering, and Analyzing Activities

Depending on the type of office established within the institution,

responsibilities could include actually developing, administering, and analyzing

university-wide assessment activities. For example, at The Ohio State

University, assessment activities are coordinated through the Office of

Institutional Research, which played a pivotal role in implementing a university-

wide process (Banta, 1997, p. 85). Gray and Diamond (1989, p. 91) discuss the

activities of Syracuse University's Center for Instructional Development. As a

support unit to the university, the Center is responsible for designing and

conducting studies at the request of many different academic units and

administrative offices. It is their belief that

> A centralized office that conducts studies relative to all areas can
> be extremely valuable in helping to avoid duplication of effort by
> coordinating study implementation and fostering the integration of
> study findings. Having a centralized office is also cost-effective
> since it permits specialized talents to be used campus-wide, thus
> reducing the need to add evaluation and research specialists to
> many different campus units.

## Consulting on Assessment Activities

Even though it would be ideal for all assessment activities to be coordinated university-wide, there are some instances where assessment will occur at the department level, as with discipline-specific studies. The established centralized office could serve in the capacity of consultant and advisor to academic departments that conduct discipline-specific assessment activities within their colleges for accreditation purposes. Ewell (1988) argues that administrative staff within the established centralized office should include trained experts in the field of assessment. Thus, they would be available to assist in the development of survey instruments or provide training and education to faculty and staff involved in assessment.

## CULTURE DEVELOPMENT

One of the most important elements in a comprehensive outcomes assessment program is to establish a culture that embraces assessment throughout the campus. Administrators and leaders need to lay the foundation for undertaking such an expansive effort. Methods of establishing culture include integrating assessment into the university's mission and values, creating an atmosphere of open communication and positive perceptions, encouraging everyone's involvement in the process, and establishing university-wide policies and procedures for assessment activities. Banta and Kuh (1998) concur and suggest that if the university values assessment and rewards assessment activities, more collaboration will occur. Encouraging professional development,

recognition and rewards, model development as a group, etc. produces more collaboration, trust, personal rapport and a sense of ownership of the process.

## Open Communication and Perceptions

All of the authors[10] agree that creating an atmosphere of open communication and collaboration among all university constituents — from the president, through to the faculty, to the students — is essential if the culture for an assessment program is to be established. Altschuld & Witkin (2000, p. 239) suggest that, "Greater stress must be placed on communicating with staff, seeking their input, and developing the sense of meaning that the process and its results are ultimately important to them." Negative perceptions are curtailed if people are able to openly question and discuss assessment and its outcomes.

> Assessment yields information that has power and influence in any organization. It is particularly important that faculty view assessment as a tool for their own personal growth more than as a necessary and evil chore that allows the institution to judge them (Braskamp, 1989, p. 45).

## Involvement in the Process

Another important component of establishing a culture supportive of assessment within the university environment is the inclusion of all stakeholders

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[10]See Altschuld & Witkin (2000); Baker et.al. (1994); Banta (1988); Banta (1997); Banta & Kuh (1998); Banta & Pike (1989); Banta et.al. (1996); Braskamp (1989); Brown (1989); Davis (1989); Dennison & Banda (1989); Ewell (1987); Ewell (1988); Gaither (1996); Gopinath (1999); Gray (1997); Hindi & Miller (2000); Hurtgen (1997); Hutchings & Marchese (1990); Karmon & McGilsky (1997); Kimmell et.al. (1998); Magruder et.al. (1997); Marchese (1988); Miller (1999); Miller (1988); Muffo (1992); O'Neill et. al. (1999); Ory (1989); Ory (1992); Ory & Parker (1989); Palomba (1997); Rogers & Gentemann (1989); Sell (1989a); Sell (1989b); Shields (2000); Spangehl (1987); Steele (1996); Stewart & Carpenter-Hubin (2000); Terenzini (1989); Underwood (1991); Williford (1997); Wilson (1987)

in the process. The purpose of a comprehensive outcomes assessment program is to gather and share data in all areas of the university community in order to improve processes and create excellence throughout. This endeavor can only succeed if every member of the campus — faculty, staff, students, administrators — is willing to become involved in the process. As more people across the campus become involved in planning and assessment, they will begin to recognize the benefits for the university of collaborating and working together (Banta & Kuh, 1998, p. 44). Kimmell et.al (1998, p. 858) maintain that in order to be successful, "assessment must be a joint activity of the various 'stakeholders' in higher education: faculty, administrators, students, parents, recruiters, and in public institutions, taxpayers." [p. 858] "When a person plays a role in establishing goals for the tasks to be performed and the standards of acceptable performance, investment in accomplishing the tasks increase" (Braskamp, 1989, p. 46).

All of the authors of the literature[11] agree that the most crucial involvement needed is that of the faculty. Banta and Pike (1989) maintain that a successful assessment program should involve faculty from the beginning in determining the purpose of assessment, the parameters to be assessed, what tools to use,

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[11]See Altschuld & Witkin (2000); Baker et.al. (1994); Banta (1988); Banta (1997); Banta & Kuh (1998); Banta & Pike (1989); Banta et.al. (1996); Braskamp (1989); Brown (1989); Davis (1989); Dennison & Banda (1989); Ewell (1987); Ewell (1988); Gaither (1996); Gopinath (1999); Gray (1997); Hindi & Miller (2000); Hurtgen (1997); Hutchings & Marchese (1990); Karmon & McGilsky (1997); Kimmell et.al. (1998); Magruder et.al. (1997); Marchese (1988); Miller (1999); Miller (1988); Muffo (1992); O'Neill et. al. (1999); Ory (1989); Ory (1992); Ory & Parker (1989); Palomba (1997); Rogers & Gentemann (1989); Sell (1989a); Sell (1989b); Shields (2000); Spangehl (1987); Steele (1996); Stewart & Carpenter-Hubin (2000); Terenzini (1989); Underwood (1991); Williford (1997); Wilson (1987)

and how the findings will be used. "Faculty members play the single most important role in assessment. Successful assessment programs create an atmosphere in which faculty not only learn about but take ownership of institutional assessment efforts" (Banta et. al., 1996, p. 36). Banta (1997) posits that the lack of faculty support has been identified as the most significant barrier to successful implementation of outcomes assessment.

Not only is faculty involvement important, but also student support. After all, students are the reason universities exist. They are the people that are being served. Students should be learned from and well as taught.

> One unique aspect of the university's [Truman State] assessment program is that every student participates in assessment...If only a sample of students were used, a message would be suggested that assessment is strictly for university and accountability purposes and is not directly relevant to students...It has been the institution's experience that sustaining a student-centered focus in the assessment program has been a critical element in continuing student support and participation in the process (Magruder et.al., 1997, p. 21).

Not all institutions can involve every single student in their assessment activities. This may be dependent on the size of the student population. Every effort and every avenue should be utilized to gather the perceptions of as many students as possible, in order to get an accurate sense of what is happening at that institution.

## Setting Policies and Procedures

Brown (1989) suggests that as the institutional assessment process is established, it is useful to develop specialized instruments or identify standard

instruments that are used routinely in every review. This would contribute to the

consistency of the evaluations across departments. University policy areas

addressed include procedures for beginning an assessment activity, appropriate

avenues for data collection and dissemination, the role and responsibilities of the

centralized office, public access to information obtained through assessment

activities, etc. It should never be assumed that all assessment practitioners will

automatically know what the university's policies are unless they are clearly

stated and widely distributed. Palomba (1997, p. 32) describes written

procedures developed at Ball State University,

> ...the administration realized that the university's program of
> assessment needed to become formalized through a set of written
> materials. The roles of various constituencies needed to be
> articulated, and the concepts and ideas of assessment needed to
> be supported throughout the institution.

## Training and Education

Before any assessment activities should even take place or any new

assessment programs implemented, the university community needs to be well-

informed and educated about what assessment means to the institution. A

culture cannot be established and integrated into the university environment

without educating every person about the program. Internal workshops and

training sessions should be developed to introduce the concept to the

community. Student orientations should address the program and its

expectations to the students.

Resources should be provided to allow faculty and staff to attend external

classes and conferences on assessment. Professional journals and publications

should be purchased and provided for everyone involved in the process.

Palomba (1997, p. 32) describes Ball State University's training efforts, "In order

to establish the culture, assessment was introduced to the disciplines. Travel

funds were provided to faculty members for attending regional and national

conferences." The more educated and informed that employees are, the more

willing they will be to embrace the assessment driven changes.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORTS

Hand in hand with culture development is establishing a partnership with

existing strategic planning efforts within the institution. Although much of the

literature[12] briefly mentions developing assessment plans based on university

missions and goals, there is no real discussion about tying assessment efforts

directly to university, college, and department specific strategic plans where the

goals and measures are established. It is imperative, however, that

administrators and assessment practitioners throughout the university consider

their desired direction and desired outcomes before developing assessment

efforts to track and assess their progress towards achieving these outcomes.

Linking assessment activities to the university's mission and value statements,

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[12]See Altschuld & Witkin (2000); Baker et.al. (1994); Banta (1988); Banta (1997); Banta & Kuh (1998); Banta & Pike (1989); Banta et.al. (1996); Boyer et.al. (1987); Braskamp (1989); Brown (1989); Dennison & Banda (1989); Ewell (1988); Ewell (1996); Gaither (1996); Hindi & Miller (2000); Magruder et.al (1997); Muffo (1992); O'Neill et.al. (1999); Palomba (1997); Rogers & Gentemann (1989); Steele (1996); Stewart & Carpenter-Hubin (2000); and Williford (1997).

goals, objectives, strategies, and intended outcomes will assist in planning for the use of results of assessment outcomes, as well as guide the institution in it's desired future direction. By partnering strategic planning and assessment efforts, universities can take advantage of an established and complimentary process.

There is much activity that is duplicated for strategic plan development and assessment plan development. Both involve developing a mission and/or vision statement, creating goals and objectives, determining intended outcomes, identifying methods to assess whether the goals and objectives are being accomplished, implementing the plan, and utilizing the results for program improvement. Both are developed at all levels of the institution, from the university level to the division, college, department and program levels. Both involve conducting an inventory before beginning. Both encourage active involvement of all members of the institution throughout the process.

## Mission and Values

The first step in laying the foundation is to integrate assessment into the university's mission and core values. When Ball State University implemented its university-wide assessment program, the mission statement was immediately amended to call for "constant and vigorous self-assessment" (Palomba, 1997, p. 31). This, alone, will not immediately change the mind set within the institution. There must be a solid commitment throughout the institution (top to bottom). "Assessment cannot and should not take place in the absence of a clear sense

as to what matters most at the institution. In order for assessment to lead to improvements, it must reflect what people are passionate about, committed to, and value" (Banta et. al., 1996, p. 5). By laying this preliminary foundation, the institution's culture and its members can embrace the solid commitment to planning and assessment. When strategic planning and assessment are woven into the actual mission and values of the university, a solid commitment is established to ensure these initiatives are embraced by the university community. Standards are set for how things will be accomplished within the institution.

## Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Intended Outcomes

Karmon and McGilsky (1997, p. 134) maintain that there are five key elements of strategic planning. The elements include:

> (1) a clearly stated mission and accompanying goals; (2) processes to implement the mission and goals; (3) assessment of the outcomes of the program; (4) evaluation of the assessment data; and (5) actions to maintain effective elements of the program and improve ineffective elements.

These five elements are reflective of what is involved in assessment activities suggested within the literature. Institutions must tie assessment to their mission and value statements. Assessment efforts must reflect the goals of the institution. Assessment involves evaluating program outcomes and disseminating the data gathered. Activities require the utilization of assessment results to improve programs. There is an obvious connection between strategic

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planning and assessment. It only makes sense, then, that these two initiatives be partnered to occur simultaneously and collaboratively.

Once the culture is developed and the mission is in place, university strategic goals are developed. In an effort to integrate planning and assessment activities at the institutional level, one major strategic goal should address self-assessment. By clearly specifying assessment as a goal, all other areas, both academic and administrative support, are able to develop specific assessment strategies within their plans that are directly linked to the university's strategic plan. Academic department strategic plans can include strategies that specifically address desired student learning outcomes. Administrative support departments can include strategies that address desired customer service outcomes. Each of these developed assessment strategies must include: intended outcomes, assessment methods, time lines, costs involved, funding sources, person(s) responsible, stakeholders, and actual assessment results as progress is made. As this occurs, an assessment plan is also, in essence, developed.

By integrating assessment activities and strategic planning activities into one formal plan, there is less duplication of paperwork for different needed reports. There is less time involved than with monitoring and tracking two different and separate activities. Assessment, as strategic planning, will become embedded into the organization's culture and will become a day-to-day way of life for all members of the organization. Assessment and strategic planning can

also be linked to a larger Quality initiative for continued process improvement if this type of initiative exists within the university.

## CONDUCTING ASSESSMENT

Assessment activities at most colleges and universities generally fall into three broad categories: university-wide, general education, and discipline-specific (Palomba, 1997, p. 33). Generally, university-wide activities are conducted through a centralized office. General education activities can either be conducted by the centralized office or by a specific college. Discipline-specific activities are usually conducted by faculty within the college or academic department. Regardless of where these activities actually occur, methods of assessment used must be considered and assessment plans need to be developed prior to undertaking the activity.

### Assessment Methods

There are a number of methods for gathering data about students for assessment purposes. These can include: standardized tests, home-grown tests, senior assignments, student surveys, capstone courses, graduate/ employer surveys, professional portfolios, entrance/exit interviews, focus groups, comprehensive oral exams, student advisory councils, fieldwork evaluations, and licensing/certification test scores, to name a few. Practitioners in the field of assessment need to be aware of these methods, understand when each applies, and research the benefits of each. An excellent reference source for assessment methods is *Assessment in Practice* by Banta et. al. (1997).

When considering the type of assessment method to use for a particular study, practitioners need to remain focused on the type of outcomes information they are interested in gathering. Different methods can produce different outcomes. Some are more credible and valid than others. The majority of the experts agree that using multiple methods to collect data increases the reliability and validity of the data. Multiple methods that reveal consistent results enable greater confidence in the results.[13]

## Developing Assessment Plans

All departments responsible for conducting assessment activities should develop assessment plans for each of the projects conducted. Like any good applied research effort, universities must take into account norms of empirical research prior to engaging in assessment activities. Brown (1989, pp. 96-100) identifies seven elements that should be taken into account: 1) purpose of evaluation; 2) level of analysis; 3) constituents to be included; 4) domains of activity to be considered; 5) time frame; 6) type of data utilized; and 7) comparisons to other units. Ory (1989, p. 72) maintains that, "To strengthen audience and evaluator confidence in the quality of information, all parties should agree on minimally acceptable standards for instrument development, data collection procedures, and interpretation of data." Also, once the activity is implemented, documenting the entire process aids in future assessments.

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[13]See Altschuld & Witkin (2000); Banta (1997); Gray & Diamond (1989); Magruder et.al. (1997); Ory (1989); Sell (1989a); and Terenzini (1989)].

# DISSEMINATING RESULTS

Once assessment activities are completed and results are analyzed, they

should be distributed to appropriate audiences for use in improvements. Banta

(1997, p. 88) argues that in communicating the results of assessment efforts,

> comprehensive reports are needed for campuswide decision
> makers, whereas short summaries are appropriate for small groups
> with a particular, well-defined interest. Comparative data from
> other institutions or from the same institution at previous points in
> time should be included.

While Kimmell et.al. (1998, p. 863) believe that data must be widely circulated.

At Ball State University,

> In order to provide an overview of assessment projects, a summary
> report of assessment findings from several projects is updated
> annually. These reports contain a brief description of each project
> along with important project findings. They are sent to senior
> administrators, deans, and department chairs. Department chairs
> circulate the reports to their faculty (Palomba, 1997, p. 39).

Authors of assessment studies should take into account that assessment results

are viewed and used differently by different audiences. Even though a

discipline-specific activity is conducted by one college, the results might prove

useful for another department within the university.

With the continuing advances in web technology, opportunities for

disseminating assessment results are greatly enhanced. Query systems of

existing databases can be developed for sharing and individualizing data to

serve specific needs.

## UTILIZING RESULTS

The assessment process is not complete after the results are distributed.

In fact, this could be considered the starting point of the process (Dennison &

Banda, 1989, p. 53). Data actually needs to be used for improvement. This is

the step in the process where other models often fail. If the atmosphere and

culture is not properly established within the university environment, results are

likely buried for fear of repercussions from negative outcomes and all

assessment efforts would have occurred for naught. At Truman State University,

> One of the most salient factors for the successful implementation of
> the university's assessment culture was the actual integration of the
> results of the assessment program into the management and
> operation of the institution. Unless faculty and students can see
> evidence that the results of their assessment efforts actually make
> a substantive difference in their work, it is very difficult to move
> beyond a potentially cynical compliance mode of operation
> (Magruder et. al., 1997, p. 22).

As Braskamp (1989, p. 49) so eloquently states, "Just as diagnosis without

treatment is not very helpful to a sick patient, assessment without analysis and

action can do little for an institution." For example, many accrediting boards

require documentation that programs conduct assessment activities and use

data information for the purpose of program changes and improvements.

Assessment results should be used in external activities such as program

reviews, accreditation processes, fund-raising, and legislative reporting.

Internally, the data can be used in the planning and budgeting processes, for

presentations, academic program development , and student and faculty

recruiting, to name a few. In order for a comprehensive outcomes assessment

program to succeed, the cycle must go full circle and the outcomes must be used for improvement.

One example of accreditation requirements for actually utilizing assessment results is the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). This program accreditation requires documentation of how Masters in Public Administration (MPA) programs conduct assessment activities and use resulting assessment data information to make program changes and improvements. This documentation is required each year. The following excerpt is lifted from the NASPAA General Instructions for the Self-Study Report:

2.3 Guiding Performance

*The program shall use information about its performance in directing and revising program objectives, strategies, and operations.*

    A.    Guiding Performance: Report the use of information to guide the program. Briefly report on the experience of the program in directing and revising program objectives, strategies and operations based on information about program performance. [This should be a general report; it does not need to get into the detailed findings or results. The substance of the information will be discussed under each relevant standard below.]

    B.    Program Changes: Please describe changes in the institutional environment and program changes, both short-term and long-term. Please tie these into the program mission, assessment processes and guiding performance.

## SUMMARY OF THE MODEL

In summary, *leadership commitment* is the most critical component for convincing faculty, staff and students that their administration believes in and is committed to implementing a university-wide assessment program. The *establishment of a centralized office* to coordinate assessment activities should also be an noteworthy consideration. It is vitally important to develop and *establish an appropriate culture* for acceptance of a comprehensive outcomes assessment program by the university community. Creating a *partnership with strategic planning efforts* will assist in planning for the use of results of assessment outcomes, as well as guide the institution in it's future direction. The actual *conducting of assessment activities* is the entire purpose of the program and involves developing assessment plans for each department, as well as selecting appropriate assessment methods to be used. *Disseminating the results* of assessment efforts to all appropriate personnel and actually *utilizing these results* for improvements are where universities seem to "drop the ball". In many instances, once assessment activities are conducted and reports are developed, they are put away into some file and only distributed when someone asks for proof of accomplishments within the department. These seven elements, as a whole, comprise the ideal model for developing a comprehensive outcomes assessment program at any institution.

Table 2.1 below provides a link between these elements and the literature reviewed. It should be noted that elements of the proposed model are not

exclusive or exhaustive of each other. There is considerable overlap and they can and should occur simultaneously.

**Table 2.1:  Conceptual Framework of Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program (COAP) Model**

| *Ideal Element* | *Related Literature* |
|---|---|
| **Leadership Commitment**<br>• Visible Support and Involvement<br>• Providing Resources | Altschuld & Witkin (2000); Banta (1988); Banta (1997); Banta & Kuh (1998); Banta et.al. (1996); Davis (1989); Gaither (1996); Ewell (1988);  Gray (1997); Gray & Diamond (1989); Hurtgen (1997); Karmon & McGilsky (1997); Magruder et.al. (1997); Marchese (1988); Miller (1999); Miller (1988); Palomba (1997); Sell (1989a); Spangehl (1987); Steele (1996); Stewart & Carpenter-Hubin (2000); Terenzini (1989); Underwood (1991); Williford (1997) |
| **Establishing a Centralized Office**<br>• Inventory of Existing Activities<br>• Developing, Administering, and Analyzing Activities<br>• Consulting on Assessment Activities | Banta (1997); Dennison & Banda (1989); Ewell (1987); Ewell (1988);  Gray & Diamond (1989); Karmon & McGilsky (1997);  Magruder et.al. (1997); Marchese (1988); Miller (1988); Ory (1989); Ory (1992); Ory & Parker (1989); Palomba (1997); Rogers & Gentemann (1989); Sell (1989a); Terenzini (1989); Underwood (1991); Williford (1997); Wilson (1987) |
| **Culture Development**<br>• Open Communication and Perceptions<br>• Involvement in the Process<br>• Setting Policies and Procedures<br>• Training and Education | Altschuld & Witkin (2000); Baker et.al. (1994); Banta (1988); Banta (1997); Banta & Kuh (1998); Banta & Pike (1989); Banta et.al. (1996); Braskamp (1989); Brown (1989); Davis (1989); Dennison & Banda (1989); Ewell (1987); Ewell (1988); Gaither (1996); Gopinath (1999); Gray (1997); Hindi & Miller (2000); Hurtgen (1997); Hutchings & Marchese (1990); Karmon & McGilsky (1997); Kimmell et.al. (1998); Magruder et.al. (1997); Marchese (1988); Miller (1999); Miller (1988); Muffo (1992); O'Neill et. al. (1999); Ory (1989); Ory (1992); Ory & Parker (1989); Palomba (1997); Rogers & Gentemann (1989); Sell (1989a); Sell (1989b); Shields (2000); Spangehl (1987); Steele (1996); Stewart & Carpenter-Hubin (2000); Terenzini (1989); Underwood (1991); Williford (1997); Wilson (1987) |

| Partnership with Strategic Planning Efforts<br>•     Mission and Values<br>•     Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Intended Outcomes | Altschuld & Witkin (2000); Baker et.al. (1994); Banta (1988); Banta (1997); Banta &Kuh (1998); Banta & Pike (1989); Banta et.al. (1996); Boyer et.al. (1987); Braskamp (1989); Brown (1989); Dennison & Banda (1989); Ewell (1988); Ewell (1996); Gaither (1996); Hindi & Miller (2000); Karmon & McGilsky (1997); Magruder et.al. (1997); Muffo (1992); O'Neill et.al. (1999); Palomba (1997); Rogers & Gentemann (1989); SACS (1987); Steele (1996); Stewart & Carpenter-Hubin (2000); Williford (1997) |
|---|---|
| Conducting Assessment<br>•     Assessment Methods<br>•     Developing Assessment Plans | Altschuld & Witkin (2000); Banta (1988); Banta (1997); Banta & Pike (1989); Banta et.al. (1996); Brown (1989); Davis (1989); Ewell (1988); Gaither (1996); Gopinath (1999); Gray & Diamond (1989); Hindi & Miller (2000); Hutchings & Marchese (1990); Kimmell et.al. (1998); Magruder et.al. (1997); Marchese (1988); Miller (1999); Muffo (1992); O'Neill et.al. (1999); Ory (1989); Ory (1992); Palomba (1997); Sell (1989b); Stewart & Carpenter-Hubin (2000); Terenzini (1989); Underwood (1991); Wilson (1987) |
| Disseminating Results | Altschuld & Kumar (1995); Altschuld & Witkin (2000); Banta (1988); Banta (1997); Banta & Kuh (1998); Davis (1989); Dennison & Banda (1989); Ewell (1988); Kimmell et.al. (1998); Magruder et.al. (1997); Marchese (1988); Ory (1989); Ory (1992); Palomba (1997); Sell (1989a); Williford (1997) |
| Utilizing Results | Altschuld & Witkin (2000); Baker et.al. (1994); Banta (1988); Banta (1997); Banta & Kuh (1998); Banta & Pike (1989); Banta et.al. (1996); Braskamp (1989); Davis (1989); Dennison & Banda (1989); Ewell (1987); Ewell (1988); Gray & Diamond (1989); Hindi & Miller (2000); Hurtgen (1997); Hutchings & Marchese (1990); Karmon & McGilsky (1997); Kimmell et. al. (1998); Magruder et.al. (1997); Marchese (1988); Muffo (1992); O'Neill et. al. (1999); Ory (1992); Ory & Parker (1989); Palomba (1997); Sell (1989a); Sell (1989b); Spangehl (1987); Steele (1996); Stewart & Carpenter-Hubin (2000); Williford (1997); Wilson (1987) |

Now that the elements of the comprehensive outcomes assessment program model have been established, they will be compared to the actual assessment practices occurring at higher education institutions throughout the United States. The next chapter discusses the research methodology used for collecting the needed data. The chapter also operationalizes the conceptual framework developed for this project.

# CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

## PURPOSE

This chapter examines the research methods used for evaluating assessment programs at four-year public institutions in the United States with a minimum student enrollment of 8,000 using the Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program (COAP) model developed in Chapter 2. Survey research was the primary method of collecting data on Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program elements. In order to increase validity and reliability of results, content analysis of websites was selected as a secondary method of collecting data. The survey sample and research methods are discussed in detail. The chapter also operationalizes the elements in the model with the research methodology (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2).

## SAMPLE

The population of this research includes four-year public institutions in the United States with a minimum student enrollment of 8,000 (n=261). This population was selected in order to gain a broad view of what is happening at four-year public institutions, rather than limit the sample only to SWT in-state and out-of-state peers. If the sample was limited, SWT would have only a narrow peer perspective on assessment activity elsewhere. Ninety-four survey

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responses were returned of the 261 distributed, for a response rate of 36%. A total of forty-five (17%) web addresses were provided. A comprehensive list of the websites analyzed can be found in Appendix E.

## RESEARCH METHODS

### Survey Research

Survey research was the primary method used to collect data on the Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program (COAP) elements. A questionnaire (see Appendix A) was mailed, along with a cover letter and self-addressed envelope, to presidents/chancellors at these four-year public institutions. The questionnaire consisted of fourteen two-part questions. The first part of each question asked if the institution used or practiced the element of the COAP model, while the second part of each question asked the respondent to rate the importance of the element in assessment practices. A five-point Likert scale was used for the ratings, where "1" indicated "Not at all important", "2" denoted "Of little importance", "3" signified "Don't Know", "4" expressed "Somewhat important", and "5" indicated "Very Important". The questionnaire was pre-tested by distributing copies for completion to members of the Institutional Effectiveness Team at SWT. This team consists of the chief planning and assessment officer, as well as planning and assessment officers for each vice presidential division within the University.

Some strengths of survey research is that it is relatively easy to develop and provide direct evidence about the experience of the respondent.

"Surveys are also excellent vehicles for measuring attitudes and orientations in a large population" (Babbie, 2001, p. 238). In this case, a larger population provides better evidence of effective assessment practices. Weaknesses of survey research include the fact that surveys measure perceptions rather than detailed performance. Also, respondents know they are being studied and this may influence their responses. As a result, surveys are generally weak in validity.

The survey was operationalized using the COAP model. Table 3.1 shows the explicit link between the questionnaire (see Appendix A) and the model.

**Table 3.1: Survey Operationalized Conceptual Framework of Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program (COAP) Model**

| Ideal Element | Institutional Practice | Attitude of Administrator |
|---|---|---|
| **Leadership Commitment**<br>• Visible Support and Involvement<br>• Providing Resources | Question (#3*) | Question (#3a) |
| **Establishing a Centralized Office**<br>• Inventory of Existing Activities<br>• Developing, Administering, and Analyzing Activities<br>• Consulting on Assessment Activities | Questions (#4-5) | Questions (#4a-5a) |
| **Culture Development**<br>• Open Communication and Perceptions<br>• Involvement in the Process<br>• Setting Policies and Procedures<br>• Training and Education | Questions (#6-9) | Questions (#6a-9a) |

| Partnership with Strategic Planning Efforts<br>    •   Mission and Values<br>    •   Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Intended Outcomes | Questions (#10-11) | Questions (#10a-11a) |
|---|---|---|
| Conducting Assessment<br>    •   Assessment Methods<br>    •   Developing Assessment Plans | Questions (#9,12) | Questions (#9a,12a) |
| Disseminating Results | Question (#13) | Question (#13a) |
| Utilizing Results | Question (#14) | Question (#14a) |

*Note that Item #1 of the questionnaire is for preliminary screening and Item #2 is for identifying appropriate web addresses for content analysis review.

## Content Analysis of Websites

Because multiple measurement is desirable to counterbalance weaknesses of one method with the strengths of another, content analysis was used as a secondary method of data gathering. Websites identified through the survey instruments were reviewed and compared to written survey responses for additional information and clarification using a coding sheet (see Appendix B) developed from the conceptual framework. The web analyses provided support for the first of the paired questions in the survey instrument (about the criteria of the elements). Web analysis in addition to surveys can correct the validity of responses to surveys. Content analysis is economical in terms of both time and money and it is an unobtrusive method of gathering data. According to Babbie (2001, p. 315), "...the concreteness of materials studied in content analysis strengthens the likelihood of reliability." Website analysis also enables finding possible "best practices" that are occurring.

Weaknesses of the content analysis of websites include the fact that the sites could possibly be limited because the web technology is new and not all institutions post assessment information of this sort on their websites. It does however, offer a window into what is going on in a particular institution. Appendix D provides guidelines for content analysis of web pages. These guidelines were developed by Cherry Beth Luedtke during the completion of her applied research project in March 2000. Appendix E includes a comprehensive list of the institutions reviewed for content analysis, along with their web addresses.

The content analysis was operationalized using the COAP model. Table 3.2 shows the explicit link between the coding sheet used (see Appendix B) and the model.

**Table 3.2: Content Analysis Operationalized Conceptual Framework of Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program (COAP) Model**

| *Ideal Element* | *Source of Evidence* |
|---|---|
| **Establishing a Centralized Office**<br>• Inventory of Existing Activities<br>• Developing, Administering, and Analyzing Activities<br>• Consulting on Assessment Activities | Coding Sheet (#2-7*) |
| **Culture Development**<br>• Open Communication and Perceptions<br>• Involvement in the Process<br>• Setting Policies and Procedures<br>• Training and Education | Coding Sheet (#8-11) |
| **Partnership with Strategic Planning Efforts**<br>• Mission and Values<br>• Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Intended Outcomes | Coding Sheet (#12-13) |

| Conducting Assessment<br>    •     Assessment Methods<br>    •     Developing Assessment Plans | Coding Sheet (#14-15) |
| --- | --- |
| **Disseminating Results** | Coding Sheet (#16) |

*Note that item #1 in the coding sheet is for preliminary screening.

## STATISTICS

Statistical results collected include simple descriptive statistics of

quantitative data including means and percentages. Qualitative data such as

comments (both negative and positive) are included as an attachment to the

final report (see Appendix C).

## SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the research methodology used in

collecting assessment data. The sample and operationalization for the research

was also discussed. The next chapter presents the overall results of the data

analysis.

# CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate assessment programs at four-year public institutions in the United States with a minimum student enrollment of 8,000, using the comprehensive outcomes assessment program (COAP) model developed in Chapter 2. Evaluations of these institutions are based on responses received to the survey instrument (see Appendix A), as well as review of assessment websites maintained by responding institutions using the coding sheet found in Appendix B. Actual responses are compared to the practical ideal type created from the literature.

The overall results of the study overwhelmingly give evidence that after over twenty years of activity, there is still an avid interest in assessment in higher education. This is evidenced by the fact that over 70 percent of the survey respondents asked to receive a copy of the survey results. Cumulative findings indicate that every identified element and sub-element within the proposed COAP model was found to be of importance to the responding institutions. In fact the modal response was 5 or "very important" in twelve of the thirteen elements and sub-elements presented, with the remaining response of 4 or "somewhat important".

## COMPREHENSIVE/UNIVERSITY-WIDE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

As a preliminary screening mechanism, the first question in the survey
instrument (see Appendix A) asked if the institution has a comprehensive or
university-wide outcomes assessment program in place. Of the ninety-one
responses to this question, 61 (67%) reported having a program of this type in
place (see Table 4.1 below). This number may be somewhat inaccurate. Based
on the overall survey responses, it appears that there were different
interpretations of what "comprehensive" and "university-wide" means. Many of
the respondents were academic administrators, and as such, felt that a
coordinated *academic* assessment program encompassed a comprehensive or
university-wide program. Comments received to this question indicate that
most responding institutions "sort of" have one or that one is "in progress".
Appendix C provides a complete list of comments received.

**Table 4.1** *Institutional Assessment Practices - COAP*

| Survey Question | Total Responses | % Yes |
|---|---|---|
| Does your institution have a **comprehensive** or **university-wide outcomes assessment program** in place? (Survey) | 91 | 67 |

In conducting the website analyses, twenty-nine (64%) of 45 websites address
comprehensive or university-wide assessment programs (see Table 4.2). The
similarities in percentages of surveys and website reviews, 67% and 64%
respectively, suggest the accuracy of the findings.

Table 4.2 *Web Analysis - COAP*

| Issue Addressed in Website n=45 | % Yes |
|---|---|
| Comprehensive program in place (Web) | 64 |

When asked about the importance of having a comprehensive outcomes
assessment program at their institution, 68 of 91 respondents rated it as "very
important". The mean rating for this was 4.7 on a scale of 1 to 5, with "1"
indicating "Not important at all" and "5" indicating "Very important" (see Table
4.3 below).

Table 4.3 *Importance - COAP*

| How important is... (n) | Not at all 1 | Of little 2 | Don't know 3 | Some-what 4 | Very 5 | Mean | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| it for an institution to have a comprehensive outcomes assessment program? (n=91*) | 0 | 2 | 2 | 18 | 68 | 4.7 | 5 |

*One person responded with a 4.5 rating, which was included in calculating the mean.

## LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

In evaluating the first element of the proposed COAP model, *Leadership
Commitment*, the questionnaire asked if top leaders provided support for
assessment activities in the form of direct involvement and allocating resources.
Table 4.4 below indicates that seventy-eight (91%) of 86 respondents believe
that leadership support is in place at their institutions. Comments received (see

Appendix C) indicate that support is mainly in the form of resources, rather than direct involvement.

Table 4.4 *Institutional Assessment Practices-Leadership*

| Survey Question | Total Responses | % Yes |
|---|---|---|
| Do **top leaders** in your institution **provide support** for assessment activities in the form of direct involvement and resources? (Survey) | 86 | 91 |

When asked about the level of importance of leadership support, seventy-seven of 90 respondents rated it as "Very important", for a mean response rate of 4.8 (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 *Importance-Leadership*

| How important is... (n) | Not at all 1 | Of little 2 | Don't know 3 | Some- what 4 | Very 5 | Mean | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **leadership commitment in assessment activities?** (n=90) | 0 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 77 | 4.8 | 5 |

## ESTABLISHING A CENTRALIZED OFFICE

The second element within the proposed COAP model involves *Establishing a Centralized Office* to coordinate assessment activities across the institution. This office could maintain responsibilities for conducting an inventory of existing assessment activities; providing training; consulting; and/or developing, administering, and analyzing data. Table 4.6 demonstrates that

fifty-five (61%) of the 90 responses have some type of centralized office in place at their institutions. Results also indicate that 80% of respondents have conducted some type of inventory of existing assessment activities across their university. Comments received suggest that most universities have only one person that coordinates assessment activities or that responsibilities are shared between a council and various existing offices, such as Institutional Research and Academic Affairs. Comments also indicate that although assessment activities are tracked informally, no "official" collection of activities have been conducted. Some reported that they are "planning to" conduct an inventory.

**Table 4.6 *Institutional Assessment Practices-Centralized Office***

| Survey Question | Total Responses | % Yes |
|---|---|---|
| Does your institution have a **centralized office** that coordinates assessment activities across the university (i.e., training; consulting; developing, administering, and analyzing data)? (Survey) | 90 | 61 |
| Has your institution ever conducted an **inventory of existing assessment activities** across the university? (Survey) | 88 | 80 |

In reviewing relevant websites, 42% discussed a centralized office available for assistance with assessment activities. Items addressed in the website that are available through this office include: developing assessment activities (38%); administering assessment activities (36%); analyzing assessment activities (27%); and consulting on assessment activities (40%). Only 27% of websites addressed have a formal inventory of all assessment activities conducted

throughout their university (see Table 4.7). A reason for the discrepancies between the survey results and the web analyses could be because web pages are vague and do not provide great detail about specific activities. Many of the respondents indicated on the survey that their websites are also in the development stages or are being modified. Southwest Missouri State University and North Dakota State University are two examples of excellent websites that specifically address the majority of the elements and could be considered to have "best practices".

**Table 4.7 *Website Analysis-Centralized Office***

| Issue Addressed in Website n=45 | % Yes |
|---|---|
| **Establishing a Centralized Office** | |
| Centralized office in place | 42 |
| Inventory of existing activities conducted | 27 |
| Developing assessment activities | 38 |
| Administering assessment activities | 36 |
| Analyzing assessment activities | 27 |
| Consulting on assessment activities | 40 |

Table 4.8 displays the administrators' responses regarding the importance of having a centralized office in place. Results indicate that 69 of 88 respondents feel that it is important, while 17 didn't know if it was or not, for an overall mean of 4.2. Seventy-one of 86 respondents felt it is important to have an inventory of assessment activities, with a mean response rate of 4.2, as well. Again, the majority of the respondents found this element of the COAP model to be very important.

**Table 4.8** *Importance-Centralized Office*

| How important is... (n) | Not at all 1 | Of little 2 | Don't know 3 | Some-what 4 | Very 5 | Mean | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| it to have assessment activities **centrally coordinated by one office**? (n=88) | 0 | 2 | 17 | 29 | 40 | 4.2 | 5 |
| it to have an **inventory** of this type? (n=86) | 1 | 2 | 12 | 31 | 40 | 4.2 | 5 |

## CULTURE DEVELOPMENT

Element three in the proposed comprehensive outcomes assessment program model involves *Culture Development*. Areas such as open communication with employees, positive perceptions about assessment activities, employee involvement, established policies/procedures or guidelines, and training/education opportunities are relevant in developing the appropriate culture for introducing assessment at the university level. Table 4.9 presents the responses to four questions regarding their institutional practices in these areas of culture development. Sixty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they have established assessment policies and that they provide assessment training and education to employees. Seventy-three percent indicated that all employees at their institution have the opportunity to become involved in assessment activities. When asked about open communication/positive perceptions, only 67% felt that their institutions practiced this.

Comments received suggest that universities have open communication about assessment activities, but there are still not positive perceptions about it.

It is also indicated that mostly faculty are involved in assessment efforts, with little staff included. Respondents do not feel that enough training and education is provided, and when it is provided it occurs sporadically and is limited (see Appendix C).

**Table 4.9 *Institutional Assessment Practices-Culture***

| Survey Question | Total Responses | % Yes |
|---|---|---|
| Do you believe there are **open communication/ positive perceptions** among faculty, staff, and administration regarding assessment efforts at your institution? (Survey) | 75 | 67 |
| Do all employees (faculty, staff, administrators) have the opportunity to become **involved in assessment** activities at your institution? (Survey) | 86 | 73 |
| Does your institution have established university-wide **policies/procedures or guidelines** regarding assessment activities? (Survey) | 88 | 68 |
| Does your institution provide **training and education** to employees on assessment and assessment methods? (Survey) | 88 | 68 |

Table 4.10 provides the results of the web analyses regarding established culture at universities. Seventy-one percent of the sites reviewed demonstrate the open discussion of activities, while only 42% discussed training and education. There were only 47% that had policies and procedures included and 27% that addressed employee involvement. Again, one reason for these discrepancies in percentages between the questionnaire and web analyses could be because of the limited information available on the web pages.

**Table 4.10** *Website Analysis-Culture*

| Issue Addressed in Website<br>n=45 | % Yes |
|---|---|
| **Culture Development**<br>Open discussion of assessment activities<br>Employee involvement<br>Policies/procedures included<br>Training/education addressed | 71<br>27<br>47<br>42 |

Results of the questions regarding the importance of these areas in culture development indicate that respondents felt that all were important. Communication/perceptions rated 4.8, employee involvement rated 4.0, having established policies/procedures or guidelines rated 4.4, and offering training rated 4.5 (see Table 4.11).

**Table 4.11** *Importance-Culture*

| How important is... (n) | Not at all 1 | Of little 2 | Don't know 3 | Some-what 4 | Very 5 | Mean | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **communication** efforts and **perceptions** in implementing assessment initiatives? (n=90) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 18 | 71 | 4.8 | 5 |
| the **involvement** of all employees in assessment activities? (n=89) | 2 | 5 | 14 | 39 | 29 | 4.0 | 4 |
| it to have established **policies/procedures or guidelines** on assessment? (n=87**) | 2 | 0 | 10 | 24 | 50 | 4.4 | 5 |
| it for institutions to offer **training** on assessment? (n=87) | 0 | 3 | 4 | 33 | 47 | 4.5 | 5 |

**One person responded with a 6.0 rating, which was included in calculating the mean.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORTS

The fourth element, *Partnering Assessment with Strategic Planning*, was addressed in the questionnaire with two questions. The first asked if institution's mission and/or value statements specifically addressed assessment activities, while the second asked if their assessment practices were directly linked to university planning processes. Table 4.12 presents the responses to these two questions. Seventy-four percent (64 of 84) indicated that these two processes were linked. On the other hand, only 39% of respondents indicated that assessment was addressed in their institution's mission and/or value statements. Comments received suggest that there is some linkage to planning, but there is no formal or direct relationship between the two activities. In other words, assessment results are used to guide program activities that occur, but strategic planning does not affect the types of assessment activities conducted. When discussing mission and/or value statements, comments received suggest that assessment is implied, but not directly stated. Others indicate that assessment is directly stated in "faculty handbooks, student bulletins, or established polices/procedures" (see Appendix C).

Table 4.12 *Institutional Assessment Practices-Strategic Planning*

| Survey Question | Total Responses | % Yes |
|---|---|---|
| Does your institution's **mission and/or value statements** specifically address assessment activities? (Survey) | 88 | 39 |
| Are your assessment activities **linked to your university planning** process? (Survey) | 86 | 74 |

In reviewing web pages, only 13% (6 of 45) demonstrated direct verbiage in their institution's mission and/or value statements regarding assessment. The percentages regarding linkage to strategic planning were pretty evenly distributed. Table 4.13 below indicates that 51% of sites addressed ties to strategic planning, while 49% did not.

Table 4.13 *Website Analysis-Strategic Planning*

| Issue Addressed in Website<br>n=45 | % Yes |
|---|---|
| **Partnership with Strategic Planning Efforts**<br>Assessment clearly addressed in mission/ values statements<br>Tied to strategic planning | <br>13<br>51 |

Eighty-one of 86 respondents believed that it is important to link assessment activities to their strategic planning process, for an overall mean of 4.7. On the other hand, only sixty-one of 88 felt it was important to address assessment in their institution's mission and/or value statements, with a mean of 3.9 see Table 4.14).

Table 4.14 *Importance-Strategic Planning*

| How important is...<br>(n) | Not<br>at all<br>1 | Of<br>little<br>2 | Don't<br>know<br>3 | Some-<br>what<br>4 | Very<br>5 | Mean | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| it to address assessment in an institution's **mission and/or value statements**? (n=88) | 2 | 7 | 18 | 30 | 31 | 3.9 | 5 |
| it to **link assessment and planning**? (n=86) | 0 | 1 | 4 | 18 | 63 | 4.7 | 5 |

# CONDUCTING ASSESSMENT

Element five in the proposed comprehensive outcomes assessment

program model involved actually *Conducting Assessment* activities.

Respondents were questioned about individual assessment plans in place for all

departments across campus, both academic and administrative.  Table 4.15

shows the overall responses to this question.  It is interesting to note that only

44% (39 of 88) of respondents claim to have individual assessment plans in

place for all areas of the university.  Comments received (refer to Appendix C)

indicate that all academic departments have plans, but few administrative

departments do.  This is consistent with the literature review, which suggests that

historically, only academics are involved in assessment activities because they

focus primarily on student learning, and little on program effectiveness.  There

were also comments that indicated that this is being "worked on", but "not yet"

and that some had plans in place but they were "inactive" or not current.

**Table 4.15** *Institutional Assessment Practices-Conducting*

| Survey Question | Total Responses | % Yes |
|---|---|---|
| Do all departments (administrative and academic) within your institution have individual **assessment plans** in place? (Survey) | 88 | 44 |

The review of institutional web pages involved identifying the discussion of

assessment plan criteria, as well as information about assessment methods.

Table 4.17 presents results of this web review.  Overall, sixty-two percent of the

sites discussed assessment methods, while 69% provided guidelines for developing assessment plans.

**Table 4.16** *Website Analysis-Conducting*

| Issue Addressed in Website n=45 | % Yes |
|---|---|
| **Conducting Assessment** <br> Assessment methods discussed <br> Assessment plans discussed | <br> 62 <br> 69 |

Eighty-one of the 87 respondents indicated that it is important to have individual assessment plans in place for each department, with an overall mean of 4.6. Five respondents indicated that they didn't know if this was important, while only one felt it was of little importance (see Table 4.17).

**Table 4.17** *Importance-Conducting*

| How important is... (n) | Not at all 1 | Of little 2 | Don't know 3 | Some-what 4 | Very 5 | Mean | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| it to have **assessment plans** for each department? (n=87) | 0 | 1 | 5 | 23 | 58 | 4.6 | 5 |

## DISSEMINATING RESULTS

*Disseminating Results*, the sixth of seven elements in the COAP model, was addressed in the survey instrument with a question specifically asking if results are disseminated throughout their institution. Surprisingly, only sixty-five percent (57 of 88 responses) indicated that assessment results were

disseminated (see Table 4.18). The comments (found in Appendix C) identified the web as being the primary source for disseminating information on assessment results, while others stated that results are distributed "from the vice presidents, to the deans, to the chairs" of departments.

**Table 4.18** *Institutional Assessment Practices-Disseminating*

| Survey Question | Total Responses | % Yes |
|---|---|---|
| Are assessment **results disseminated** throughout your institution? (Survey | 88 | 65 |

Fifty-three percent of the websites reviewed included established procedures for disseminating assessment results, as is noted in Table 4.19 below.

**Table 4.19** *Website Analysis-Disseminating*

| Issue Addressed in Website n=45 | % Yes |
|---|---|
| **Disseminating Results**<br>Established procedures included | 53 |

Table 4.20 displays the distribution of ratings of the importance of disseminating assessment results throughout the university. Results indicate that 67 of 87 respondents felt it is important to disseminate the data, with an overall mean rating of 4.2. Surprisingly, five respondents did not feel that this element was important and fifteen did not know if it was important or not.

Table 4.20 *Importance-Disseminating*

| How Important is... (n) | Not at all 1 | Of little 2 | Don't know 3 | Some-what 4 | Very 5 | Mean | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| it to have established procedures for **disseminating assessment results** throughout the institution? (n=87*) | 3 | 2 | 15 | 25 | 41 | 4.2 | 5 |

*One person responded with a 4.5 rating, which was included in calculating the mean.

## UTILIZING RESULTS

The final element in the COAP model, *Utilizing Results*, was addressed in the questionnaire by asking if assessment results are utilized for program improvement or modification at their institution. Table 4.21 indicates that ninety-five percent of the respondents believed that assessment results are utilized at their institution. Many of the comments received identified academic program review as one of the uses of assessment results, while only a few indicated that results were used in the strategic planning process. Some comments indicated that departments are "asked or directed to use the results" or that they "hoped so".

Table 4.21 *Institutional Assessment Practices-Utilizing*

| Survey Question | Total Responses | % Yes (n) |
|---|---|---|
| Are assessment **results utilized** for program improvement or modification at your institution? (Survey) | 86 | 95 |

Eighty-six of the 88 respondents indicated that actually utilizing assessment

results is important to an institution, for a mean rating of 4.7 overall (see Table

4.22 below). Amazingly, one respondent felt it was not at all important to utilize

assessment results.

Table 4.22 *Importance-Utilizing*

| How important is... (n) | Not at all 1 | Of little 2 | Don't know 3 | Some- what 4 | Very 5 | Mean | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| it to visibly **utilize assessment results** throughout the institution? (n=88) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 18 | 68 | 4.7 | 5 |

## SUMMARY

The remaining four tables below summarize the responses for the model

in its entirety. Portions of these cumulative tables were presented as tables

throughout the previous sections of this chapter and are organized using the

individual elements within the comprehensive outcomes assessment program

model. Table 4.23 presents overall responses to questions regarding

institutional assessment practices, while Table 4.24 shows results of whether

these practices are addressed on university web pages. Table 4.25

demonstrates the cumulative ratings of importance of the individual elements

within the model, as indicated by the respondents. Table 4.26 presents the

combined results of the survey responses. It includes the percentage of

institutions that practice the elements, the mean importance of the elements, and the mode responses for the elements in the COAP model.

**Table 4.23** *Cumulative Institutional Assessment Practices*

| Survey Question | Total Responses | % Yes |
|---|---|---|
| Does your institution have a **comprehensive or university-wide outcomes assessment program** in place? | 91 | 67 |
| **Leadership Commitment** <br> Do top **leaders** in your institution provide **support** for assessment activities in the form of direct involvement and resources? | 86 | 91 |
| **Establishing a Centralized Office** <br> Does your institution have a **centralized office** that coordinates assessment activities across the university (i.e., training; consulting; developing, administering, and analyzing data)? | 90 | 61 |
| Has your institution ever conducted an **inventory of existing assessment activities** across the university? | 88 | 90 |
| **Culture Development** <br> Do you believe there are **open communication/ positive perceptions** among faculty, staff, and administration regarding assessment efforts at your institution? | 75 | 67 |
| Do all employees (faculty, staff, administrators) have the opportunity to **become involved** in assessment activities at your institution? | 86 | 73 |
| Does your institution have established **university-wide policies/procedures or guidelines** regarding assessment activities? | 88 | 68 |
| Does your institution provide **training and education** to employees on assessment and assessment methods? | 88 | 68 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Partnership with Strategic Planning Efforts**<br>Does your institution's **mission and/or value statements** specifically address assessment activities? | 88 | 39 |
| Are your assessment activities **linked to your university planning process**? | 86 | 74 |
| **Conducting Assessment**<br>Do all departments (administrative and academic) within your institution have individual **assessment plans** in place? | 88 | 44 |
| **Disseminating Results**<br>Are assessment results disseminated throughout your institution? | 88 | 65 |
| **Utilizing Results**<br>Are assessment **results utilized** for program improvement or modification at your institution? | 86 | 95 |

**Table 4.24** *Cumulative Web Analysis Results*

| Issue Addressed in Website n=45 | % Yes |
|---|---|
| Comprehensive program in place | 64 |
| **Establishing a Centralized Office** | |
| Centralized office in place | 42 |
| Inventory of existing activities conducted | 27 |
| Developing assessment activities | 38 |
| Administering assessment activities | 36 |
| Analyzing assessment activities | 27 |
| Consulting on assessment activities | 40 |
| **Culture Development** | |
| Open discussion of assessment activities | 71 |
| Employee involvement | 27 |
| Policies/procedures included | 47 |
| Training/education addressed | 42 |
| **Partnership with Strategic Planning Efforts** | |
| Assessment clearly addressed in mission/values statements | 13 |
| Tied to strategic planning | 51 |
| **Conducting Assessment** | |
| Assessment methods discussed | 62 |
| Assessment plans discussed | 69 |
| **Disseminating Results** | |
| Established procedures included | 53 |

**Table 4.25** *Relative Importance of Elements Within COAP Model*

| Element (n) | Not at all 1 | Of little 2 | Don't know 3 | Some-what 4 | Very 5 | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program (n=91*) | 0 | 2 | 2 | 18 | 68 | **4.7** |
| <u>Leadership Commitment</u> (n=90) | 0 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 77 | **4.8** |
| <u>Establishing a Centralized Office</u><br>Centralized Office (n=88) | 0 | 2 | 17 | 29 | 40 | 4.2 |
| Inventory of Existing Activities (n=86) | 1 | 2 | 12 | 31 | 40 | 4.2 |
| <u>Culture Development</u><br>Open Communication/Positive Perceptions (n=90) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 18 | 71 | **4.8** |
| Employee Involvement (n=89) | 2 | 5 | 14 | 39 | 29 | 4.0 |
| Established policies/procedures or guidelines (n=87**) | 2 | 0 | 10 | 24 | 50 | 4.4 |
| Training and Education (n=87) | 0 | 3 | 4 | 33 | 47 | 4.5 |
| <u>Partnership with Strategic Planning Efforts</u><br>Addressed in Mission and/or Value Statements (n=88) | 2 | 7 | 18 | 30 | 31 | 3.9 |
| Linked to Strategic Planning Process (n=86) | 0 | 1 | 4 | 18 | 63 | **4.7** |
| <u>Conducting Assessment</u><br>Individual Assessment Plans (n=87) | 0 | 1 | 5 | 23 | 58 | 4.6 |
| <u>Disseminating Results</u> (n=87*) | 3 | 2 | 15 | 25 | 41 | 4.2 |
| <u>Utilizing Results</u> (n=88) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 18 | 68 | 4.7 |

*One person responded with a 4.5 rating, which was included in calculating the mean.
**One person responded with a 6.0 rating, which was included in calculating the mean

**Table 4.26 Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program (COAP) Model Summary Results**

| Element | Practiced at Institution %Yes* | Importance Mean** | Mode (n) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program | 67 | 4.7 | Very Important |
| **Leadership Commitment** | 91 | 4.8 | Very Important |
| **Establishing a Centralized Office** Centralized Office | 61 | 4.2 | Very Important |
| Inventory of Existing Activities | 80 | 4.2 | Very Important |
| **Culture Development** Open Communication/ Positive Perceptions | 67 | 4.8 | Very Important |
| Employee Involvement | 73 | 4.0 | Somewhat important |
| Policies/Procedures or Guidelines | 68 | 4.4 | Very Important |
| Training and Education | 68 | 4.5 | Very Important |
| **Partnership with Strategic Planning Efforts** Addressed in Mission and/or Values Statements | 39 | 3.9 | Very Important |
| Linked to Strategic Planning Process | 74 | 4.7 | Very Important |
| **Conducting Assessment** Individual Assessment Plans | 44 | 4.6 | Very Important |
| **Disseminating Results** | 65 | 4.2 | Very Important |
| **Utilizing Results** | 95 | 4.7 | Very Important |

*Actual sample size can be found in Table 4.23
**Actual sample size can be found in Table 4.25

# CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

## CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this paper, several questions were posed that colleges
and universities must be able to respond to. The solution proposed to address
these types of questions was effective planning and assessment activities. If the
Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program (COAP) model developed by
the research were utilized as a foundation for implementing planning and
assessment activities, questions of these types would be easily answered.

The purposes for undertaking this research were: (1) to identify the ideal
elements in a model for developing and implementing a Comprehensive
Outcomes Assessment Program (COAP) at the college or university level; (2) to
evaluate assessment programs at four-year public institutions in the United
States with a minimum enrollment of 8,000 students using the COAP model; and
(3) to make recommendations for an ideal COAP model to be established at
Southwest Texas State University. Each of these purposes has adequately been
fulfilled. In chapter 2, the elements and sub-elements of the COAP model were
identified. Chapter 4 presents the results of an evaluation of assessment
programs at the 94 responding public institutions. This chapter will make the
final recommendation on the model to be established at Southwest Texas State
University.

This chapter summarizes the results of the research conducted for this report compared to the proposed Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program model. The COAP model identified in Chapter 2 will possibly be modified based on responses to the survey instrument (see Appendix A), as well as evaluation of identified institutional websites using a coding sheet (see Appendix B).

Survey results indicate that all of the elements in the proposed Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program (COAP) model are practiced to some extent (see Table 4.23). *Leadership Support* and *Utilizing Results* occurred most often in practice (over 90%). Most of the remaining elements were employed less often (at least 65%) in practice. The two major exceptions included "individual assessment plans" (44%) and "addressing of assessment in mission/values statements" (39%). It is believed that the reason for the low percentage of respondents answering yes to the question regarding individual assessment plans is because institutions have historically implemented assessment activities solely in academic areas, with little or no activity on the administrative side. The comments received did suggest that institutions are working to remedy or modify current practices. Regarding the specific addressing of assessment in mission and/or values statements, it is possible the importance of this had never been considered previously by the respondents.

The use of web analysis as a secondary research method for gathering data on the seven elements of the COAP model may not have been appropriate

for increasing the validity or reliability of the data collected via the survey instrument. This is suggested based on the results presented in Table 4.24 - *Cumulative Web Analysis Results.* The overall results were very spread out and there was no consistency with the survey results. In reviewing individual assessment websites, it was clear that some were much better presented than others. It appeared that some sites were in the very early stages of development, as some of the comprehensive assessment programs were in their early stages of development. Because the Web is a relatively new technology, institutions may not yet be utilizing websites. Another possible reason for the inconsistency in site reviews is the fact that assessment responsibilities at some institutions are shared by multiple offices and/or university committees, and the web address provided could have been only part of what was actually available at that institution. There is no set standard of what should be included on an assessment website, so there are no "bad" sites, per se.

In Table 4.25 - *Relative Importance of Elements Within COAP Model,* overall ratings of the importance of the COAP model elements indicate that each are "somewhat" to "very important". The importance of the seven major elements within the proposed model were as follows: Leadership Support (4.8); Establishing a Centralized Office (4.2); Culture Development (4.4[14]); Partnership with Strategic Planning Efforts (4.7); Conducting Assessment (4.6);

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[14]This figure was calculated by averaging the four means of the sub-elements within this element (4.8, 4.0, 4.4, and 4.5, respectively), since there was no direct question addressing the primary element of Culture Development.

Disseminating Results (4.2); and Utilizing Results (4.7). Overall, every element and sub-element rated over 4.0 on a 5-point scale, with the exception of "how important is it to address assessment in an institution's mission and/or values statements", a sub-element of *Partnerships with Strategic Planning Efforts*, which rated a 3.9. As was mentioned earlier, one possible reason for this lower rating could be lack of consideration or forethought on the impact of specifically addressing assessment in university mission and/or values statements, as indicated by the eighteen respondents who "don't know" how important it is.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the overall results of the questionnaire, as well as the websites reviewed, it is recommended that the Office of Quality & Planning at Southwest Texas State University begin implementing the concept of a university-wide or comprehensive outcomes assessment program by utilizing the original COAP model developed initially from the literature and supported through the response of 94 other institutions. The majority of the respondents rated all elements and sub-elements of the model as somewhat or very important.

In particular, a direct linkage of assessment practices to strategic planning initiatives, from the very beginning, is key to the overall success of the program. If assessment is addressed when developing goals, objectives and strategies for a department's plan, there would be no need for a separate assessment plan. As was indicated in Chapter 2, the literature reviewed provided very little information about linking strategic planning and assessment.

Nevertheless, with the scarce resources available at most universities these days, it is necessary to streamline processes and avoid duplication of efforts. In laying the proper foundation for a successful assessment program that ties to strategic planning, specifically addressing the value of assessment to a university in it's mission statement and/or values statements, is critical in order for faculty, staff, administrators, and students to embrace the concept. Despite the fact that the research did not support the need for this, it is recommended that it be included in the model introduced.

In conclusion, the results demonstrate that every element in the proposed model is of great importance in laying the proper foundation for an assessment program that will grow and adapt to the constantly changing environment of a university.

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# APPENDIX A

## Survey of Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Programs (COAP)

Part 1. General Information

1.  Does your institution have a comprehensive or university-wide outcomes assessment program in place?

    Yes _____        No _____

1a.  How important do you believe it is for an institution to have a comprehensive outcomes assessment program?

| Not Important | Of little Importance | Don't Know | | Somewhat Important | Very Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | | 4 | 5 |

2.  Does your institution have a website that addresses assessment?

    Yes _____        No _____

    If so, what is the web address?_____

Part II. Elements of a Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program

3.  Do top leaders in your institution provide support for assessment activities in the form of direct involvement and resources?

    Yes _____        No _____

    If yes, please explain_____

    _____

3a.  How important is leadership commitment in assessment activities?

| Not Important | | Don't Know | | Very Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

4.    Does your institution have a centralized office that coordinates assessment activities across the university (i.e., training; consulting; developing, administering, and analyzing data)?

Yes _____          No _____

If yes, what is the office name?_____ budget size?_____

Office reporting line?_____number of staff?_____

4a.    How important is it to have assessment activities centrally coordinated by one office?

| Not Important | | Don't Know | | Very Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |


5.    Has your institution ever conducted an inventory of existing assessment activities across the university?

Yes _____          No _____

5a.    How important is it to have an inventory of this type?

| Not Important | | Don't Know | | Very Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |


6.    Do you believe there are open communication/positive perceptions among faculty, staff, and administration regarding assessment efforts at your institution?

Yes _____          No _____

6a.    How important are communication efforts and perceptions in implementing assessment initiatives?

| Not Important | | Don't Know | | Very Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |


7.    Do all employees (faculty, staff, administrators) have the opportunity to become involved in assessment activities at your institution?

Yes _____          No _____

7a.  How important is the involvement of all employees in assessment activities?

| Not<br>Important | | Don't Know | | Very<br>Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

8.  Does your institution have established university-wide policies/procedures or guidelines regarding assessment activities?

Yes _____        No _____

8a.  How important is it to have established policies/procedures or guidelines on assessment?

| Not<br>Important | | Don't Know | | Very<br>Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

9.  Does your institution provide training and education to employees on assessment and assessment methods?

Yes _____        No _____

9a.  How important is it for institutions to offer training on assessment?

| Not<br>Important | | Don't Know | | Very<br>Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

10.  Does your institution's mission and/or value statements specifically address assessment activities?

Yes _____        No _____

If yes, please describe_____

_____

10a.  How important is it to address assessment in an institution's mission and/or value statements?

| Not<br>Important | | Don't Know | | Very<br>Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

11. Are your assessment activities linked to your university planning process?

Yes _____        No _____

If yes, please explain_____

_____

11a. How important is it to link assessment and planning?

| Not Important | | Don't Know | | Very Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

12. Do all departments (administrative and academic) within your institution have individual assessment plans in place?

Yes _____        No _____

12a. How important is it to have assessment plans for each department?

| Not Important | | Don't Know | | Very Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

13. Are assessment results disseminated throughout your institution?

Yes _____        No _____

If yes, how are they disseminated?_____

13a. How important is it to have established procedures for disseminating assessment results throughout the institution?

| Not Important | | Don't Know | | Very Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

14. Are assessment results utilized for program improvement or modification at your institution?

Yes _____        No _____

If yes, please explain_____

_____

14a.   How important is it to visibly utilize assessment results throughout the institution?

| Not Important | | Don't Know | | Very Important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

General Comments:


If you would like to receive a copy of the survey results, please check here _____

Your name/title:_____Telephone number: (      )_____

Mailing address:      _____
                      _____
                      _____
                      _____

**Thank you for your time**.  **Please return the completed survey in the enclosed envelope by March 8, 2001.  If you have any questions, please call Ana Lisa Garza at (512) 245-2780 or e-mail at AG02@swt.edu.**

# APPENDIX B.

## Coding Sheet for Web Analysis

Institution: _____

Web Address: _____

| | Addressed in website |
|---|---|
| **General**<br>1.  Comprehensive program in place | Yes _____    No _____ |
| **Establishing a Centralized Office**<br>2.  Centralized office in place<br>3.  Inventory of existing activities conducted<br>4.  Developing assessment activities<br>5.  Administering assessment activities<br>6.  Analyzing assessment activities<br>7.  Consulting on assessment activities | <br>Yes _____    No _____<br>Yes _____    No _____<br>Yes _____    No _____<br>Yes _____    No _____<br>Yes _____    No _____<br>Yes _____    No _____ |
| **Culture Development**<br>8.  Open discussion of assessment activities<br>9.  Employee involvement<br>10. Policies/procedures included<br>11. Training/education addressed | <br>Yes _____    No _____<br>Yes _____    No _____<br>Yes _____    No _____<br>Yes _____    No _____ |
| **Partnership with Strategic Planning Efforts**<br>12.  Assessment clearly addressed in mission/values statements<br>13.  Tied to strategic planning | <br>Yes _____    No _____<br><br>Yes _____    No _____ |
| **Conducting Assessment**<br>14. Assessment methods discussed<br>15. Assessment plans discussed | <br>Yes _____    No _____<br>Yes _____    No _____ |
| **Disseminating Results**<br>16. Established procedures included | <br>Yes _____    No _____ |

# APPENDIX C.

## Survey Comments

### *General*

#### Comprehensive Outcomes Assessment Program
- University-wide outcomes assessment program is sort of in place - It's in place, has been for some time, but participation among departments is kind of spotty. We're trying to remedy this.
- Depending on what you mean by program - policy/strategy=yes; specific program=no.
- We feel it doesn't work and is not relevant for a large research institution.
- Each academic department has an outcomes based assessment program.
- In theory it is very important, in reality it is somewhat important.
- In process.
- On paper.
- Important - especially for accreditation.
- In progress: we have a policy now in place that requires each unit to evaluate itself, but results are not complete yet.
- University wide outcomes assessment in specific areas.
- We sort of have one, it's evolving over time.
- Under development
- Sort of, we have a plan, and are in the process of implementing
- Very important - especially for accreditation purposes
- Primarily IR deals with student outcomes but there is some effectiveness assessment in various units/divisions. There has lately been a move toward coordinating those efforts.
- Largely

#### Miscellaneous
- While we have 20 years of assessment activities at _____, they have not been at the level of learning outcomes. We are still formulating how we will organize to carry out these responsibilities. It is clear, however, that while the primary responsibility has to lie with the faculty, there will need to be centralized leadership and support from academic affairs with the assistance of Institutional Research.
- I suggest that you read the literature on assessment now being promulgated by ACE.
- We have a comprehensive review of academic departments — "Program Review"
- Please note I am the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs who has responsibility for coordinating and training in academic assessment. My responses are biased.
- Working on a website.

- These responses are based on the leadership work of a previous Provost and the current strategic plan. Currently, we are between Provosts and the President will be exercising increased leadership for the next strategic planning cycle.
- An expectation for continual efforts to improve, along with reasonable accountability is important.
- We are still learning how to do this. We have lots of efforts going on but figuring out what it all means is complex.
- We access excellent assessment websites at other universities.
- We are in the process of re-designing our assessment website.
- Our university has a long history in assessment. As an AQIP and Baldrige institution we have found the payoff in assessment to be huge. I'd be glad to speak with you in detail if it will help your research...our findings greatly exceed the questionnaire space.
- We have a decentralized assessment program. In effect, there are eight separate college-based programs, loosely coordinated by the Office of the Vice Provost for undergraduate programs. There is also a limited university-wide effort.
- Responses to this questionnaire surely must be affected by the size and nature of the institution, to assume that a 1500 student liberal arts institution would handle these issues the same as a 25,000 student research university is crazy.
- The focus of all assessment at _____ is on the key skills and concepts of each program.
- Bad questionnaire design. Bad questions some activities need to be centralized some do not.
- I think a sentence defining what you mean by assessment would strengthen the survey.

## *Leadership Commitment*

- Vice President for Academic Affairs has provided leadership for training sessions on program assessment.
- Funding a Director position, providing "moral" support.
- Assigned time of 3 WTUs is given to the assessment coordinator in each dept. The Office for Teaching and Learning gives regular workshops and provides support.
- Assessment is in Office of Undergraduate Studies. Have budget for support.
- Funding for new faculty assessment coordinator, workshops, surveys, etc. It's been a budget priority for years.
- Provide budget and participate in meetings to discuss outcomes.
- If "top" is an associate vice chancellor, that's what we have now.
- Leadership commitment is very important to avoid the kind of spotty participation we have.
- Provide resources but not involved day-to-day

- President, VPS., and Deans are all interested in assessment activities and provide funding for the assessment function.
- Resources are allocated for an Office of Institutional Assessment
- Assessment handbook has letter of support and guiding principles approved by top leaders. Provide funding for assessment instruments.
- Assessment director reports to the Provost and receives budgetary support from her.
- Committee reports to VP Academic Affairs.
- The VCAA assigns a staff member to coordinate assessment activities; funds travel to appropriate conferences; and is willing to collect some assessment data centrally, as a way of easing the workload for departments.
- Communication of importance of assessment and assessment activities campus wide.
- Associate Provost directs assessment of general education which is coordinated through the Office of Institutional Research and Planning.
- The Assessment Office reports directly to the Provost. The Director of the Assessment Office works with the President, Provost, and other senior administrators on assessment issues.
- We allocate about $20,000 to assist.
- Have a university-wide assessment committee appointed by President, chaired by Associate Provost.
- Low level, individual requests
- Associate Provost has responsibility for chairing Assessment Coordinating Council which oversees assessment activities & responsible for addressing this for accreditation.
- The university has established an assessment budget line, and assessment activities are support through the Office of Academic Affairs and the Senior Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- Funding - assessment budget; direct involvement - verbal, written communication with university faculty in support.
- We (in this case the "we" is the Associate Provost {me} along with the Provost and E.D. for Planning, Budget, and Analysis) are presently involved in training chairs in assessment.
- Monitoring, encouragement, financial resources
- Kinda - verbal support; encourage academic departments to reprioritize budgets to accommodate assessment.
- We are just starting to develop a plan. Our entire executive team supports this effort.
- AVP Academic Affairs charged with organizing assessment - Budget of $30,000/year.
- Provost is directly involved, includes assessment director in his Academic Council and supports an Academic Information & Assessment office.
- Provost is currently recruiting for Assessment Coordinator. IR office does some assessment.

- Provost & VP for Undergraduate Affairs build assessment language into policy, etc. Chancellor provides budget for campus-wide surveys, which feed into system-wide survey program.
- Participation in University Planning Council and dollars for survey research.
- Involvement - attends assessment functions, hosts recognition dinners. Resources - funds assessment coordinator (half-time), uses assessment results in budgeting.
- More resources than direct involvement; resources are generally agreed to be inadequate.
- President & Provost monitor closely; coordination is by Associate Provost.
- Pretty good - verbal support. State has funding source by student fee. Working toward assessment results supporting budget decisions.
- Funding will be needed in future years. We are developing measures now.
- Fund Office of Outcomes Assessment and Performance Funding.
- Provost chairs committee that coordinates assessment, Chancellor chairs Planning Committee. Both communicate support regularly.
- Assessment activities are lead by Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs. Money funded at university level - $30,000/year budget.
- President is active in assuring that there is proper implementation of these activities.
- A dollar amount is set aside each year to be awarded by Institutional Effectiveness Committee for departmental assessment projects.
- Continued support via email and memo as process begins each year.
- Senior Vice President and Provost has established an office for Institutional Effectiveness.
- Assessment at _____ is supported through a University Committee that the President meets with annually; assessment has a budget; vice presidents report to IAC on status of assessment in each division.
- Funding to send faculty and staff to assessment conferences and/or bring speakers here.
- Memos and public pronouncements
- Resources are provided
- Staff time, web development, clerical assistance
- Provost is very involved. Funding is adequate.
- Support of Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, guest speakers giving workshops, etc.
- Money is provided
- Outside speakers; funds for specific assessment such as NSSE
- Faculty report less than satisfactory support in CO Education and Human Services and Liberal Arts
- Funding, sponsor workshops, distribute materials, etc.
- Assoc. VP for Academic Affairs, VP for Student Affairs lead faculty dev. funded through Center for Teaching Excellence. Office of Institutional Analysis data collection

- Direct involvement. Chairs & Deans are some of our biggest proponents. We are currently developing a mechanism to support assessment with more resources.
- Substantial budget, line item support, visibility, use of assessment language internal & external audiences, presentation of national assessment conferences, advancement of North Central Association AQUIP agenda.
- (1) Assistant VP of Academic Affairs coordinates, (2) major faculty release time for Assessment/GE faculty coordinator, (3) web of committees oversee individual areas.
- This involvement is largely in the hands of the Deans. Some do and some don't.
- Require annual reporting on use of results of OA. Budget = $25,000 annually for operating expenses, not salaries.
- The Vice Chancellor supports assessment activities and he is second in command to our Chancellor.
- ½ time campus assessment coordinator, Academic Senate Assessment Committee; Approx. $130,000/year budget.
- Resources
- Assessment office: 2.25 FTE staff, 1 grad asst., 3 undergrad assts.; support for projects on proposal basis.
- Assistant Vice Provost position was created to coordinate assessment activities and provide leadership.
- We routinely conduct a wide range of assessment projects through IR office.
- Provost office has provided both leadership and funding of assessment.
- Had office of assessment which was closed in 1994. Re-established with support from top administration in 2001.
- Monetary support, workshops, leadership/committee structures for targeted assessment (e.g., general education)
- I push it all the time.
- Assessment Council of Deans or Asst. Deans provides grants to departments wishing to improve assessment processes.
- VPs provide funds for gen. Ed. assessment (standardized tests), surveys and approve summaries of assessment to be posted on the web site.
- Assessment costs are covered centrally. There is a campus-wide assessment committee that top leaders serve on.
- The President has written to deans supporting assessment activities; the Director of Assessment is a full-time position with a non-salary budget of approximately $110,000.
- Funded Assessment Coordinator position and graduate assistant.

## Centralized Office

- Office of Associate Provost (overall), Center for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (training).

- Our office — Planning, Budgeting, and Analysis — has two staff with some assessment coordination involvement, but it's almost entirely consulting. They (depts.) come to us as needed.
- Not yet - so far, simply added to the workload of one staff member.
- Our office coordinates plans and initiates training and distributes funds. But this is only a minor part of all I do. So—I think it would be great to have more time to devote to it. But, it is a department function.
- One person with primary responsibility but viewed as part of planning assessment-program review team.
- Not really - Institutional Research is responsible for university level assessment (for most part undefined) and technical/advice to academic and administrative units.
- Importance of a centralized office depends on the institution's culture.
- University Planning & Analysis - part of responsibilities include assessment. Office also handles Institutional Research and university-level planning.
- Provost's office coordinates along with institutional data segment of budget office.
- Somewhat important for a centralized office to serve as a clearinghouse and consultant.
- Through my office (Institutional Effectiveness) will be bench marking in future.
- We have two offices — academic assessment is coordinated by the Academic Assessment Coordinator; we also have a Coordinator of Institutional Assessment in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.
- Under development
- Have a university-wide Assessment Council that coordinates assessment activities; supported by Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Programs.
- Assessment is one of the responsibilities of the Office of Institutional Research. Director reports to Vice Chancellor.
- Assessment - we act as facilitators to departments. We collect assessment info. from depts. But are not directly involved in their assessment efforts. We are responsible for assessing the entire gen. ed. Program.
- We have a coordinator (myself) who reports to an associate vice chancellor in academic affairs. No specific budget, there is money for travel and resources. No staff.
- IR - there is some overlap with Budget Office which is much larger.
- Depends very much on institutional culture
- Yes, but individual units also conduct projects.
- Re-established in February 2001.
- Functions are dispersed among various offices, levels
- Assessment is coordinated by the Vice Provost but several offices are responsible for assessment.

Inventory

- Implicitly important - they all submit reports to our office, we post on our website, so we have a pretty good idea what they're doing, although we don't really consider it an "inventory".
- Planning to this summer
- Very important at the outset
- Only important for reporting to externals and internal sharing.
- No formal inventory — but we have coordinated with vice presidents and directors.
- It's important to know, "how you find out" depends on institution.
- We keep a catalog of planning and evaluation "resources" as part of MEASURE - the acronym for our assessment system.
- Although we don't call it an inventory per se, but when we submit biennial legislation reports, we need to describe assessment within Academic Affairs.
- Not formally. We have a good idea of existing assessment activities via our reporting process and recent NCA visit
- We annually ask all colleges to submit reports of assessment activities in their units.
- We don't call it an inventory, but we get information as part of the annual effectiveness process.
- In the beginning (10 years ago), existing measures were catalogued. This focus on measures was not useful. We learned that we first had to develop intended learning outcomes and then focus on measures.
- Only for assessment of student learning.
- Doing it now
- You would get more information by using a Likert scale here instead of just "yes" and "no".
- Very important - but it could be constant coordination over time.

## *Culture Development*

Open Communication/Positive Perceptions

- Somewhat — the situation is improving.
- Assessment and antagonism towards it clouds everything.
- Some faculty are still resistant after 9 years of implementation.
- Some are open; many are resistant.
- There is open communication, but no positive perceptions.
- Mostly!
- There is open communication, but not positive perceptions.
- Varies a great deal — no open hostility, generally willing compliance.
- Open communication yes, perceptions vary. Communication is very important. If you have it and do other things right, eventually you'll have positive perceptions. They don't just happen overnight!

- Overall institutional awareness of assessment is probably fairly sketchy, but we are trying to improve that.
- Open, not all see assessment as positive.
- Probably, but it has taken a long time.
- Need more!
- Among some, it is positive. Others are still resistant.
- Some cases no and in some cases yes, depends on if the leadership (deans/chairs) value the activity and who has responsibility for implementing assessment process in their unit.
- Somewhat
- It varies!
- Generally true, I'm sure there are some, at all levels, who hold negative perceptions.

## Involvement
- Faculty yes, staff only on a limited basis.
- Deans and dept. heads are protective of faculty time and involvement.
- Limited
- In principle, not in practice — little staff input.
- Yes, from the perception of the assessment coordinator
- Encouraged and expected, but no consequences of no involvement.
- In principle yes. In practice, involvement is spotty.
- It should be a goal, it doesn't "just happen" either!
- Primarily faculty and administrators
- Not classified staff
- Varies by unit
- Don't know
- Don't know
- I think everyone should be watching something!
- To a degree, and this varies by area.

## Policies/Procedures/Guidelines
- Academic only.
- Left to individual units; reviewed by Senate Committee.
- Important but not absolutely necessary
- General guidelines and policies; no specific procedures every unit must follow.
- Guidelines are very important, but strict standard procedures are of little importance.
- Guidelines for some things/not others.
- Very important to a certain degree; leave room for creativity.
- In development.
- Depends on size and complexity of institution.
- We have a new policy, but guidelines are still being established.
- Under development

- We believe in giving depts. autonomy. However, they must meet NCA guidelines.
- Very general, we allow each unit to identify own outcomes and methods by which they will be assessed. Needed for clarify purpose and expectations for faculty.
- Currently developing guidelines.
- Yes, however each dept. has much latitude within the guidelines.
- Outdated
- Just the 5 step model used by the Southern Assoc.

## Training & Education
- Not provided systematically — we're here as needed, though.
- Offered, but not often enough.
- Limited, though
- Not provided, however, plans are to conduct a retreat for administrators and faculty for this purpose.
- Provided if asked.
- In some areas, but not overall.
- Under development
- Provided sporadically
- We are in the beginning stages of this.
- Individual colleges may have done this to some extent but not ongoing or formulated.
- Through workshops
- Little
- But only when needed - not as regular as it should be.
- There is no systematic training, however our office is always available for consultation and discussion.

## *Partnership with Strategic Planning Efforts*

## Mission/Value Statements
- There's official policy that addresses it, but I'm not sure that's what you mean by mission/value statement.
- Best practices are implemented, accountability is ensured, and stewardship of public resources is fostered. Excellence in all areas; personal growth and professional success.
- Provides indicators of success in strategic plan initiatives..
- Stated in faculty handbook, student bulletin, requirements for academic program review.
- The "values statement" within the Mission Statement includes the commitment to excellence which implies assessment is valued.
- It is part of our initiative to build premier learning communities.
- Indirectly address assessment

- The university will establish priorities through planning and assessment processes that anticipate our needs and focus our efforts and resources in support of our mission and goals.
- Not directly.
- Part of a goal in university strategic plan.
- Explicit language in most recent 5-year strategic plan.
- If not addressed in value statement, assessment could be ignored.
- Our new strategic plan addresses the importance of assessment.
- Some units and levels stress assessment-based planning, but it's not part of institution-wide mission/value statements.
- Mission statement contains language addressing assessment and process improvement.
- Assessment mentioned at CUNY level - less so at our institution.
- Indirectly addressed
- Strategic goals include measurable objectives.
- Strategic goals are benchmarked; assessment integrated.
- Should be addressed when mission is revised.
- From ___ goals: As a public institution, the University of _____ will hold itself accountable for the dollars it receives, will demonstrate its responsiveness to the needs of the State, and will not only show that it is capable of change, but that it is a leader in defining what those changes must be.
- Mission statement contains the following phrase: "and to evaluating consistently and responsibly the effectiveness of instructional programs."
- It's important to assess the mission, but I'm not sure how important it is for the mission to explicitly mention assessment.
- The university mission statement includes language concerning evaluation of accomplishments against goals and systematic assessment.
- Implied rather than stated
- Assessment language is in the university's mission statement.
- Assessment is addressed in the University's strategic plan.
- Faculty handbook addresses assessment activities.
- Extensive - far exceeds this space. Assessment appears in mission statement, focus, and vision statement, policy manuals.
- At a large, diverse institution such as ours, need a broad statement. In addition assessment integrated with idea quality education rather than separate process.
- Assessment is implied in the university mission.
- Multi-year objectives; program review guidelines.
- Inappropriate to a mission statement, can speak to outcomes. Outcomes - O.T. will produce leaders and lifelong learners. Very important to address desired outcomes — not activities.
- The mission authorizes common intended learning outcomes. The Strategic Plan refers to outcomes assessment as a tool.
- Focus is on student learning, which is also the focus of assessment.
- Direct statement about assessment in university mission statement.

- No, but it is written in the strategic plan. It's more important to have it in the culture. Having it written there does not necessarily make it happen nor does a successful assessment program have to be explicitly stated in the mission. Not correlated.
- The strategic plan contains an annual report (assessment) on progress.

## Linked to Planning
- Goals and objectives of academic programs linked to institutional strategic goals.
- We hope to be moving toward linkage.
- ____'s Cornerstone document - our campus's strategic plan includes assessment.
- This is the key for us — all assessment stems from the strategic plan.
- Outcomes are used annually in budget allocation and academic long-range planning.
- Feed into program review which feeds strategic plan.
- Planning-Budgeting-Assessing is at core of planning process.
- Assessment is part of our strategic planning cycle.
- Are part of annual May planning meeting and 5-year Program Review process.
- Not systematically linked to planning process
- Assessment related achievements and needs are detailed in unit planning documents, which filter into university-wide planning and budgeting activities.
- Part of program review decisions.
- Starting to be — departments undergoing program review (every seven years) are expected to use annual assessment data for program evaluation and improvement, as well as for longer-term planning
- Departmental budget allocations are linked in part to activities related to student learning outcomes assessment and institutional effectiveness
- Through articulation of mission statements.
- In most cases.
- Results of assessment used in planning needed changes— in strengthening/improving areas needing improving — ex: Student Affairs areas.
- Not as well as could be.
- We are looking at our core curriculum (Gen. Ed) and trying to link budget and hiring decisions to these needs as well as programmatic needs.
- They are linked to some extent.
- Very important to link to academic planning. Caution against too close linkage to budgeting.
- Part of key department indicators.
- They will be, but are not yet directly related.
- Program Review process feeds recommendations to strategic planning budgeting process.
- Planning->Implementation->Assessment->Improvement->Budget cycle.

- Important if assessment is used for improvement.
- Actually it will be linked.
- Trying to incorporate it into Academic Program Review and planning.
- Through Academic Council participation.
- Definitely linked to college and overall academic affairs planning, less clearly linked to planning in other divisions or campus-wide.
- Planning process chart cites assessment activities and shows feedback loop into department planning activities.
- Primarily through budgeting.
- Will soon be linked (new planning procedures began last year)
- Same person responsible - commitment to use assessment findings as an indicator for planning.
- Will be soon.
- University wide evaluation committee "feeds" results into planning and budgeting processes.
- Data received is funneled directly to the university planning committees.
- Each area's annual plan must include the method(s) of assessing achievement of its goals and resulting changes made.
- Cycle - annual
- We have created a calendar that allows a cycle of assessment which informs Planning and Goals which leads to budget decisions which lead to implementation which leads to assessment.
- Processes are linked through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness which administers Strategic Planning Committee, the Institutional Assessment Committee, the Campus Facilities Planning Council, and generally coordinates planning and evaluation efforts.
- Annual reports from deans should reflect assessment within colleges and how future goals are impacted by assessment data.
- Somewhat linked at the deans' level.
- The assessment results are used to inform the planning process and measure accomplishment.
- Linked to planning through program review and accreditation
- Assessment is a part of accountability and most other planning processes.
- Starting to do so.
- I have requested to be included and have not been.
- Units indicate how their assessment results will be used to make curricular and instructional changes. These are reported to Deans and Vice Chancellor along with budget implications.
- Several examples of outcomes linked to institutional change. Formal linkage needs to be strengthened, more explicitly recognized and stated.
- Not currently linked, but we are moving in that direction
- Linked at all levels of budget and planning.
- Assessment results give programs the data they need to justify changes and resource requests
- Units are asked to incorporate information about assessment plan and evidence into their five year Academic Program Review.

- Somewhat linked, not much
- Plans are, in part, based on assessment.
- Not yet linked, but soon.
- Somewhat linked, but could possibly be better.
- Annual reports contain assessment updates. Program Review uses assessment.
- In principle yes. Outcomes assessment is a tool for measuring success in the Strategic Plan.
- By structure and function - would anyone answer "no" to this?
- Current plan is being developed.
- Same senior academics officer - Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Assessment.
- All units are required to provide unit-appropriate performance indicators as part of annual strategic plans updates.
- University priorities will have measurable outcomes in this planning cycle.
- The strategic plan contains an annual report (assessment) on progress.
- Yes, but CAUTIOUSLY — linking directly to budget would lead (we think) to phoney assessment results.
- Minimally — assessment used to justify plans more than guiding them.

## Conducting Assessment

### Individual Assessment Plans
- I assume you're referring to undergrad outcomes, which is entirely academic. If you mean it more broadly, we have an enormous state "Quality Indicators" system that covers every unit on campus.
- Each of our degree programs conducts their own assessment — all do it but don't necessarily do the same thing.
- All academic departments do, not all administrative departments.
- College and departments have individual plans.
- Academics do
- Many have active plans, some have inactive plans, a few have no explicit plans.
- Assessment included in planning documents.
- Academics do, administrative departments don't.
- 98% do
- Very important for SACS.
- Probably not yet, but that is the intent of the new policy.
- No, but this is forthcoming — we're about 50-60% there.
- Not yet, but working on it.
- Academic yes, administrative no.
- Not yet.
- Don't know
- SACS 3.1, 3.2
- At one time, virtually all units had plans. Most have moved beyond this stage to developing assessment programs.

- All academic departments and some others.
- Many do.
- Almost all
- We are moving to this, but not yet.
- All academics do.

## *Disseminating Results*

- Institutional assessment report on web site of our Planning Council.
- Copies of reports
- Web pages
- Abstracts, reports, newsletters, website
- Annual follow-up report
- Paper, web
- From VCAA to deans, from deans to chairs
- Reported generated by Institutional Research and Assessment
- The results are disseminated to the academic deans and they are responsible for disseminating them within their schools.
- Via website materials
- Some, not all. Reports, Program Review materials
- Through appropriate vice presidents from there to deans, supervisors, etc.
- Some years better than others.
- Not yet - a future objective
- Exemplary assessments are posted on web site.
- To deans and chairs - summary of results with specific comments.
- Reports, newsletters, webpage
- Via our website
- Results are distributed if chosen by faculty; not throughout the institution, maybe shared with Senate Committee.
- Important if not perceived as a threat.
- To administration only
- Via website
- Campus-wide results via web. Unit-level results via various means.
- It is important that results are disseminated, but less important that it be done in a standard manner.
- Web
- Back to reporting department.
- Annual report plus meetings with assessment coordinators.
- To deans and chairs for their area.
- Yes, but not well. Plan a data warehouse to improve.
- Printed summaries working on website.
- Reports to major committees.
- General memoranda. Faculty & staff meetings.
- In the future, will be on the web.
- Some are, through OIE reports and other documents.
- Web site - but more could be done.

- Web, paper reports
- Website, hard copy reports
- Through various publications and announcements
- Via reports
- As written reports/oral presentations
- "State of Assessment Report" annually
- In summary form via annual report to faculty governance and administration
- Reports to deans and directors
- Annual Assessment Progress Report mailed to Deans, Chairs, available online for faculty.
- Paper, web, seminars, workshops, new faculty orientation, chancellor's speeches, etc.
- They go to the relevant units
- Results are to be used by the unit for their own improvement rather than accountability. If the assessment process is about accountability rather than improvement they shouldn't be assessed.
- Some are disseminated
- Surveys and some academic results are disseminated. Major Field Test is not, might reveal individual information. Compendium of Survey & Test Results is published annually and is on website.
- Not yet
- Newsletter, documents, web, presentations
- We are beginning to focus on dissemination through newsletters, articles in student paper, presentations at meetings.
- Hard copy, web
- Assessment matters newsletter, reports to constituencies
- Not at this time. But it is key.
- Variety of reports — through strategic planning process, faculty senate, etc.
- If the data are used for improvement. I'm not sure how far it needs to be disseminated.
- Very often. On web site, in seminars and through meetings — e.g. core curriculum committee.
- Web, research reports, and student/staff newspapers
- Assessment results are distributed to the appropriate units.
- Piece by piece to interested parties.

## *Utilizing Results*

- Annual reports must describe use of results in program improvement.
- Academic programs use assessment results in program review and provide plans of action based, in part, on assessment results.

- This is a departmental matter, not a university matter. Departments use results to improve programs, enhance teaching, etc. Not for public dissemination.
- In 5 year Program Review - Certification of GE Courses.
- Assessment results influence budget priorities which provides incentive for improvement.
- Departments are expected to act on recommendations for improvement.
- Supposed to be — varies from department to department, though.
- Feed into program review which feeds strategic plan.
- Mostly on administrative side — beginning to make headway on academic side.
- Part of the on-going strategic planning process and annual program review process.
- Program review process
- Each academic uses the results from their follow-up report for programmatic and curricular changes.
- Part of program review
- Program review done cyclically — which incorporates the analysis of assessment data — is designed to enhance the quality and efficiency of our programs.
- As part of 5-year program review process.
- Departments undergoing program review (every seven years) are expected to use annual assessment data for program evaluation and improvement, as well as for longer-term planning.
- Program modification/curricular change is left to the discretion of individual schools and departments.
- Limited at this time.
- In some cases. Many departments use results of our Student Needs & Satisfaction survey to make changes or support funding.
- Example: Student Affairs — all departments are required to incorporate assessment results in plans/activities for improvement.
- Just starting this. What's the point of assessment if you're not going to use the info.
- Assessment results are the basis of on-going program improvements in the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.
- Each department/unit examines assessment data analyses and makes improvements based upon them.
- SACS requires institutions to "use the results" of assessment to make improvements.
- Have example of curricular change and specific projects to help students as a result of assessment.
- They are incorporated into the program review process.
- All improvements/changes at _____ have been driven by assessment of one kind or other.
- Planning->Implementation->Assessment->Improvement->Budget Cycle
- Only at local levels.

- Theoretically, this is the whole purpose of department assessment and one of our goals.
- Particularly in academic and support departments.
- Extent and quality of use varies from unit to unit.
- Feedback loop used to modify subsequent plans.
- Used for curricular changes.
- Departments are expected to do so.
- In some offices/departments, not all.
- All programs are reviewed on cycle with results factored into budget.
- Units must show evidence of linkage between results and improvement in finalized plan.
- Each department or unit is asked to utilize this results to state revisions or propose new goals and action plans for next year.
- If goals are not met, methods may need to be revised for tackling the goals.
- Next years IE plan determined by this years results.
- One of the questions asked at budget presentations and divisional presentations to the IAC is about the use of the results to improve operations.
- For academic departments, program review and goal-setting includes assessment results.
- We hope so. Each department reports on their goals, their assessment methods and changes made to programs as a result.
- Various uses; recorded biennially in a report on changes connected with the use of assessment results.
- Programs must include an assessment component
- Data collected is used to make changes to curriculum
- We try!
- 89% of programs have plans and about 50% of these use results for planning
- Units use assessment results to add new courses, change programs, change instructional activities, etc.
- See NCA outcomes report, final on web
- Initial results reports indicate departments are using their results to make changes to their curriculum
- We've been in business for 14 years — extensive and continuous evolution. Huge curricular pay offs.
- Assessment results give programs the data they need to justify changes and resource requests.
- Each unit is responsible for developing a process that informs them about student learning in the program and can be used by faculty for improving the program. Seeing how other have benefitted from assessment can encourage units that have not fully developed the process.
- All academic and student support units report annually on this.
- Description of how assessment is used to improve programs is requested in the planning process.

- Not yet
- Somewhat, but could probably be better.
- Lots of examples
- At the department level, faculty use results to improve instruction and curricula.
- By structure and function — would anyone answer "no" to this?
- Each department must show how assessment results have been used to improve their programs.
- Curriculum changes, program review.
- Recent overhaul of gen. Ed. relied upon assessment data to inform decisions.
- Particularly assessment of student learning is used for curriculum redesign and academic department planning.
- Often. Area of greatest weakness (financial aid) indicated by student surveys, improved its calendar and many of its procedures to get out awards faster.
- Assessment results are to be included in all annual reports and are part of the program review process.
- We hope so — we're just beginning.
- But not uniformly — perhaps done well in 25% of units.

# APPENDIX D

## CONTENT ANALYSIS
# WEB PAGES



> Focus on your 'target'. If your conceptual framework requires an analysis of the availability or text of specific documents -- focus on content. Formatting, page design, etc., are **not** the primary concern. You may choose to make note of specific items you feel are significant examples.

> Test a small sample of the selected population and record the amount of time required to evaluate each Web site. Use the average amount of time to estimate the total amount of time needed to evaluate all the Web sites in the population. Look at the schedule Dr. Shields' has provided -- calculate the MINIMUM number of sites you will need to evaluate each day to meet deadlines.

> Develop a basic understanding of the computer and system of delivery that will be your primary research tool. How much RAM, ROM, virtual memory do you have? Are you using a telephone or cable modem? Each of these factors influences your ability to search quickly and easily.

> Create a Web page (or a Word document) with links to each Web site in your analysis. Use this as your starting point. Save this document on a diskette--you will be able continue your search from any location. And you can use this as a location for quick notes: "this site is a good example"; "need to review pages on....."; "stopped at item 16"

> If you find the best Web page you have ever seen--save a copy. Don't assume it will be on the Web site to print out later. No diskette available? Not at your home computer? Both Netscape and Explorer have a "send this page" feature.

> Complete a coding sheet for each member of the population. In addition to the conceptual elements, document the URL and the date and time of the search. Document 1) the browser used (Explorer? Netscape?) 2) whether you used a modem, cable modem, etc. 3) other factors that may influence the quality of your search or your ability to access specific pages. This information will be used in either the results or the conclusion chapter.

# CONTENT ANALYSIS
# WEB PAGES



- ➢ What are the specific ideas defined by the conceptual framework? Identify and define the components of a Web page/site that will collectively answer your research question(s). Determine whether your search will focus on one or more of the following: 1) availability of selected documents such as policies or procedures, 2) selected text within documents, 3) page design, 4) page accessibility, 5) specific aspects such as color, graphics, 6 other

- ➢ Use the conceptual framework to develop a coding sheet.

- ➢ The elements of the coding sheet are linked to the research question. The data you collect for each element will be analyzed and used to provide information that answers the research question. Look at each element as an individual component of the research question/answer. Is it significant? Is it relevant? Will the information provided present an accurate and valid representation of the population?

- ➢ Will your research focus on the availability or text of specific documents? If yes, identify words or phrases that represent the concepts you used to develop the framework and the elements of the coding sheet. In this example, the researcher is looking for evidence that state agency Web sites provide information on employee compensation. The table defines words or phrases an agency might use to as 'pointers' or links on the home or internal pages to related documents.

| | |
|---|---|
| human resources | payroll |
| personnel | benefits |
| employee | salary |
| compensation | staff |
| classified | |

# APPENDIX E

## WEBSITES ANALYZED

| Institution | Web Address |
|---|---|
| Boise State University | www2.boisestate.edu/iassess/ |
| California State Univ.-Fresno | www.csufresno.edu/CETL/assessment/assmnt.html |
| California State Univ.-Long Beach | www.csulb.edu/~senate |
| California State Univ.-Sacramento | www.csus.edu/acaf/assplng.htm |
| East Tennessee State Univ. | www.etsu.edu |
| Eastern Illinois University | www.eiu.edu/~assess/ |
| Ferris State University | ferris.edu/htmls/academics/gened/gened.html |
| George Mason University | assessment.gmu.edu |
| Georgia Tech | www.academic.gatech.edu/assessment/ |
| Indiana State University | web.indstate.edu/oirt/assessment/home.html |
| Indiana University-Purdue | www.ipfw.edu/vcaa/assessment/assmntinfo.htm |
| Iowa State University | www.vpundergraduate.iastate.edu |
| Kansas State University | www.ksu.edu/apr/ |
| New Mexico State University | www.nmsu.edu/research/iresearc/outcomes/ |
| North Carolina State University | www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/assmt/ |
| North Dakota State University | www.ndsu.nodak.edu/oia/assessment/index.shtml |
| Northern Arizona University | www3.nau.edu/libstu |
| Northern Illinois University | www.niu.edu/provost/acadprog/assmthm.htm |
| Old Dominion University | web.odu.edu/webroot/orgs/AO/assessment.nsf/pages/homepage |
| Southeastern Louisiana Univ. | www.selu/edu/administration/inst_research/IE/policy.htm |
| Southern Illinois University | www.siue.edu/~deder/assess/ |
| Southwest Missouri State Univ. | www.smsu.edu/assessment |
| SUNY-Albany | www.sysadm.suny.edu/provost/whatsnew/assess.htm AND www.albany.edu/ir |

| | |
|---|---|
| Troy State University | spectrum.troyst.edu/~oirpe/ |
| University of Central Arkansas | www.uca.edu/assess/ |
| University of Central Oklahoma | www.busn.ucok.edu/assessment/ |
| Univ. of Colorado-Boulder | www.colorado.edu/pba/outcomes/ |
| University of Florida | www.ir.ufl.edu/aaubench.htm |
| University of Houston | www.uh.edu/ie/ |
| University of Kansas | www.ukans.edu/~provost/assess_rpt.shtml |
| University of Michigan | www.umich.edu/~provost/slfstudy/ir/assessment. html |
| University of Mississippi | www.olemiss.edu/ |
| University of Montana | www.umt.edu/provost/assessment |
| Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln | www.unl.edu/svcaa/priorities/assessment.html |
| Univ. of North Carolina-Wilmington | www.uncwil.edu/oir |
| Univ. of Southern Indiana | www.usi.edu/depart/instires |
| Univ. of Texas-Pan American | www.oie.panam.edu AND www.panam.edu/committees/iac/ |
| Univ. of Texas-San Antonio | ia.utsa.edu/ |
| Univ. of Wisconsin-Eau Claire | www.uwec.edu/admin/acadaff/policies/assessment |
| Univ. of Wisconsin-LaCrosse | www.uwlax.edu/provost/assessment/assessing.html |
| Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison | www.wisc.edu/provost/assess.html |
| Univ. of Wisconsin-Oshkosh | www.uwosh.edu/facultystaff/mihalick/assessment. html |
| University of Wyoming | uwadminweb.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/ |
| Weber State University | www.weber.edu/assessment |
| Western Washington Univ. | www.ac.wwu.edu/~assess/ |