

Oberlin Assessment Workshop

March 1, 2005

Goals for the Workshop

Through group and break-out sessions, you will begin developing an assessment program for your department. This process will give you a model for conducting similar discussions with your colleagues resulting in agreement/validation of your departmental goals, development of means to measure achievement of those goals and how to use the results from those activities to understand better, and suggest strategies for improving, student learning. Each department and program will be able to develop one measure – a senior survey – to be administered later this spring.

Defining Assessment

First, it is something we *have* to do in order to maintain our accreditation. Simply put, assessment is the process of measuring the achievement of program level (general education) departmental and course goals. Through assessment, we can formally determine the extent to which Oberlin provides an effective teaching and learning environment. A successful assessment process provides evidence of student learning and useful information that can lead to improvements in teaching and learning.

Goals=>Measures=>Results=>Changes (if any)
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Group Session – Share and discuss departmental goals for student learning for both majors and non-majors.

- Discuss extent to which goals relate to specific skills and competencies, are clearly articulated and understood, are measurable and communicate specific intentions. Do they adequately express what you expect your students to learn?
- Commonalities across disciplines
- Committee members and participants share current methods of measuring goal achievement

Breakout Session – Begin designing a survey for graduating majors that captures information related to your departmental goals

Group Session - You should be ready to create a survey which is a good *indirect* measure. Other examples of indirect measures include graduate follow-up studies; job and/or graduate school placement data; and retention studies. Indirect measures are usually easy to adopt and provide very useful information.

A successful assessment program contains at least one *indirect* and one *direct* measure. Direct measures involve assessment of student work by someone other than the student. Some examples include locally developed tests (or questions on existing examinations)

that are aligned with departmental goals; evaluation of a capstone experience; juried exhibitions and performances in the arts; and to some extent, graduate school admission tests. An important guiding principle for both types of measures is that they are explicitly aligned with the goals of the department. Discussion of examples used by various departments.

During the 2005-06 academic year your department will identify an appropriate direct measure and use that in combination with the survey (and other methods you may select) to complete your assessment program. The final step will be to communicate the results and any changes that may be considered in light of the results in your 2005-06 departmental annual report.

Where To Go From Here

You may wish to schedule three department meetings

1. Formulate/re-formulate/validate departmental goals
2. Adopt a senior survey
3. Determine the best way to administer the survey and compile and communicate the results.

In the fall, you'll want have similar meetings to discuss direct measures you wish to use.

Support

Each department and program has a liaison from the Assessment Committee to help you. The Office of Institutional Research is also prepared to offer assistance and to provide data where appropriate. Additionally, Institutional Research undertakes many activities that have an assessment component and many can be used to augment departmental initiatives:

Surveys

Survey of American Freshmen (SAE) – Administered every year during enrollment. Provides baseline data on attitudes, expectations and experiences of students entering college for the first time.

College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) – Administered every three or four years to a sample of students enrolled in Arts and Sciences. Collects information on what students do and how often they do it. This includes both academic and non-academic activities. Information on general satisfaction is also collected. Last administered in 2001.

COFHE Enrolled Student Surveys – Generally administered in years CSEQ is not. Includes a survey written by COFHE members as a response to National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Other instruments are also used that collect some CSEQ-type

experiential information but focus more on skills and knowledge enhancement. Last administered in 2003.

COFHE Senior Survey – Administered at least every four years and generally every two years. Collects information on the entire college experience and contains some questions similar to SAE to track student changes. Last administered in 2004.

Your First College Year (YFCY) – Developed by the same people as the SAE and designed to track changes occurring during the first year of college by matching records from the SAE. Oberlin has not yet administered this survey but will probably do so in spring 2005.

COFHE Alumni Survey – Administered every five years, usually to graduates ten and twenty years out. In addition to collecting information on skills and knowledge enhancement, community engagement issues are addressed among other things. Last administered in 2000. Will administer in spring 2005.

Career Services Survey – A one-year-out survey collecting information on employment and graduate school information. Currently suspended.

General Education Questionnaire – This was designed by the last assessment committee. Each department was to administer this to their graduating majors every year. Soon after the last re-accreditation it was orphaned as the assessment committee disbanded. Something should be developed to replace it.

Program Review Alumni Questionnaires – Sent to a sample of alumni from departments undergoing program review. In addition to evaluating departments, some general education questions are asked.

HERI Faculty Survey – Another survey developed by the SAE people but designed for faculty. Collects some of the same attitudinal information but focuses more on faculty behavior, workload, satisfaction, expectations for students etc. Last administered in 1995. Will administer in fall 2004.

Third Party Data Sources

Graduate Record Examinations – The scores of Oberlin graduates are collected and summarized periodically. Data are matched to Oberlin student records to enrich the analysis.

National Science Foundation Doctorate Records Files – This is the source for data on the baccalaureate origins of PhD's.

National Student Loan Clearinghouse – The authoritative database of subsequent enrollments of our graduates. Currently, graduate degrees received are unavailable.

Law and Medical School Associations – Provides data on admission and enrollments.

National Science Foundation Fast-Lane Program – Database of NSF Fellowship recipients.

Institutional Data

Persistence to Graduation – Periodic analysis and regular reporting of persistence and graduation.

Alumni Records – Periodically gleaned for information on educational and career trajectories.

Student Records – Track student navigation through the curriculum, analyze course loads, grading patterns, etc.

Oberlin College

Assessment Committee Liaisons

Department or Program	Div	Chair	Liaison
African American Studies Dept	SS	Yakubu Saaka	Richards
Anthropology Dept	SS	Jack Glazier	deWinstanley
Art Dept	HU	Susan Kane (History)	Kayln
Art Dept	HU	Nanette Macias (Studio)	Kayln
Athletics	EX	Vin Lananna	Kayln
Biology Dept	NS	Robin Treichel	Thornton
Chemistry and Biochemistry Dept	NS	Albert Matlin	Colley
Cinema Studies Prog	HU	Jeff Pence	Cooper
Classics Dept	HU	Tom Van Nortwick	Gay
College Music Major Comm	HU	Steven Huff	Kayln
Comparative American Studies Prog	SS	Jan Cooper	Cooper
Comparative Literature Prog	HU	Tim Scholl	Gay
Computer Science Prog	NS	Rich Salter	Colley
Creative Writing Prog	HU	Pamela Alexander	Cooper
East Asian Studies Prog	HU	Suzanne Gay	Gay
Economics Dept	SS	Barbara Craig	deWinstanley
English Dept	HU	Nick Jones	Cooper
Environmental Studies Prog	Var	Roger Laushman	Thornton
French and Italian Dept	HU	Nelson De Jesus	Gay
Gender and Women's Studies Prog	SS	Ann Cooper Albright	Richards
Geology Dept	NS	Bruce Simonson	Colley
German Dept	HU	Heidi Tewarson	Gay
Hispanic Studies Dept	HU	Ana Cara	Gay
History Dept	SS	Heather Hogan	Colley
Jewish Studies Prog	HU	Shulamit Magnus	Richards
Mathematics Dept	NS	Michael Henle	Colley
Neuroscience Dept	NS	Denny Smith	Thornton
Philosophy Dept	HU	Al MacKay	Thornton
Physics and Astronomy Dept	NS	John Scofield	Richards
Politics Dept	SS	Ben Schiff	deWinstanley
Psychology Dept	SS	Karen Sutton	deWinstanley
Religion Dept	HU	James Dobbins	deWinstanley
Rhetoric and Composition Prog	HU	Len Podis	Cooper
Russian Dept	HU	Tom Newlin	Gay
Sociology Dept	SS	Clovis White	deWinstanley
Theater and Dance Prog	HU	Roger Copeland	Kayln

Assessment Committee Members:

Susan Colley	Andrea Kalyn
Jan Cooper	Ross Peacock
Patty deWinstanley	Bruce Richards, chair
Susanne Gay	Jan Thornton

