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Assessing a Library Within a University Context

Assessment at Ole Miss

- Formal campus wide program in place since 1994
 - Created under the direction of James O. Nichols, then Director, University Planning and Institutional Research
- Every unit and program assessed biannually.
- University Assessment Committee evaluates each unit's work

Process

- Plan due in February
- Report due August of the next year
- Assessment can cover the entire two year period or any amount of time therein

Components

- Objective Statements
 - Based on University Mission, unit mission, national standards, etc
- Means of Assessment
 - At least two per objective
 - Encourage more than just satisfaction surveys
 - Use of rubrics, metrics or other measures
- Criteria for Excellence (Success)
 - Clearly defined

Assessment Evaluation

- Three person subcommittee evaluates each assessment plan and report.
- Initially used a checklist

**The University of Mississippi
University Assessment Committee
Check-List-Review of the 1999-2001 Assessment Record**

Program/Unit Reviewed: University Libraries

Relationship to University Mission

1. The Record utilizes the University's *statement of purpose* (focus statement and University goal(s) for instructional units; University goal(s) and unit mission for educational support and administrative units).

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Statement of Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes or Administrative Objectives

2. a. The Record states 3-5 outcomes or objectives that seem appropriate to assess.
 b. The Record states 3-5 outcomes or objectives that seem measurable for purposes of assessment.
3. Instructional Units: The statements are formulated in terms of what students should be able to think, know, or do.
4. Educational Support and Administrative Units: The statements describe what the Unit would accomplish, what services it would provide to its clients, or what its clients would think, know or do after the provision of services.

Means of Assessment and Criteria for Success

5. The means of assessment appear to measure the accomplishment of the intended outcomes or objectives.
6. The means of assessment appear feasible and appropriate in terms of resources.
7. Multiple means of assessment are described for most outcomes or objectives.
8. Criteria for success are established by the Unit for each of the means of assessment.

Assessment Results

9. The Record includes sufficient data to determine whether assessment actually took place.
10. There was sufficient analysis or reflection for the Unit to judge the success of outcomes or objectives.

Use of Assessment Results

11. There is evidence of Unit faculty/staff involvement in deciding how to use assessment results.
12. The described uses of assessment results appear reasonably likely to foster the intended outcome or objective.

Assessment Evaluation

- Three person subcommittee evaluates each assessment plan and report.
- Initially used a checklist
- In 2005-06 added a rubric for evaluation
 - Rubric has evolved every year since.

The University of Mississippi Assessment Evaluation Rubric for Administrative & Educational Support Units
(Including Research & Public Service Units)

	3 (excellent)	2 (acceptable)	1 (in need of improvement)
PLAN: Outcome Statement			
<i>An appropriate Outcome measures unit's services and processes</i>	Outcome is stated in terms of current services or processes or what clients know or are able to do as a result of services	Outcome statement is not clearly stated in terms of current services or processes or learning outcomes (what clients know, or can do as a result of services)	Outcome is stated in terms of unit characteristics or inputs or in terms of unit's strategic Outcomes (future oriented), or directly relates to individual's performance
<i>An Outcome Statement should be focused</i>	Statement describes a single, focused Outcome	Statement describes two or more Outcomes that are related	Statement describes multiple, unrelated Outcomes
<i>Unit must have some responsibility/control for Outcome</i>	Unit has full or significant responsibility/control for Outcome	Unit has modest responsibility/control for Outcome	Unit has little or no responsibility/control for Outcome
PLAN: Means of Assessment			
<i>Multiple Means of Assessment (MOA) strengthen findings</i>	More than one Means of Assessment are proposed	One Means of Assessment is proposed	No Means of Assessment is proposed
<i>Means of Assessment (MOA) must be valid to assess services, processes, or learning</i>	At least one MOA directly measures services using rubrics, counts, percentages, or other appropriate measures	Means of Assessment use only client surveys that are indirect measures.	Means of Assessment measure strategic Outcomes or pose "yes/no" results
<i>Means of Assessment must be linked to the Outcome</i>	Means of Assessment reasonably measure all aspects of the Outcome statement	Means of Assessment reasonably measure some, but not all, aspects of the Outcome	Means of Assessment not directly linked to, and will not measure the desired Outcome
<i>Means of Assessment likely to identify specific areas for improvement</i>	Means of assessment and method of summarizing data will likely provide data detailed enough to identify improvements (e.g., item or component analyses).	Means of assessment or method of summarizing data will likely identify only general areas for improvement (e.g., overall scores on a survey).	(not applicable)
PLAN: Criteria for Success			
<i>Criteria for Success should be established</i>	Specific Criteria for Success are proposed	Criteria for Success are proposed but vague	Criteria for Success are missing
RESULTS: Data			
<i>Sufficient data reported</i>	Sufficient data reported in adequate detail to confidently assess the Outcome	Data reported, but more data and/or detail would increase confidence in the results	Inadequate data were collected to assess the Outcome
<i>Data should be linked to the Criteria for Success</i>	Whether or not the collected data meet the Criteria for Success is clear	Unclear whether data are linked to Criteria for Success; or, incomplete report	Data not linked to Criteria for Success
RESULTS: Use of Results			
<i>Assessment results spark specific improvements</i>	Specific unit improvements that clearly stem from assessment results and seem likely to improve services and/or client satisfaction are described; or, no specific improvements are described	Vague statements are made of unit improvements	No unit improvements related to assessment results were proposed, even though Criteria for Success were not met
<i>Improvements should already have been implemented</i>	At least one unit improvement is already in place; or criteria for success were met	Unit improvements have been identified and are scheduled for implementation	Needed program improvements have not been identified
OVERALL: Entire Report			
<i>Staff should be involved in the assessment planning and implementation process</i>	Broad staff involvement in the assessment planning and implementation process is clearly evident	Some staff involvement in the assessment planning and implementation process	Staff involvement in the assessment planning and implementation process appears to be lacking
<i>Report should be clearly written</i>	Clearly written and concise	Generally well written, but parts are not clear	Poorly written, rambling, or opaque
<i>Assessment results should be used to make program improvements</i>	At least one substantial improvement stemming from assessment has been implemented; may be service, assessment process/tool, policy, or other unit-related improvement that should lead to improved services, processes, or student/client learning	Improvement stemming from assessment has been partially implemented; may be service, assessment process/tool, policy, or other unit-related improvement that should lead to improved services, processes, or student/client learning	No substantial improvement stemming from assessment has been partially or completely implemented
<i>Evidence that previous program modifications improved services</i>	Results indicate that the implemented improvements actually improved services, processes or student/client learning (may require examination of results across assessment cycles)	Results do not show improved services; however, additional improvements are proposed or additional time is required before results likely to show improvement	(not applicable)

Objectives

- Overarching statements based on university mission and library mission
 - These priorities are often established in strategic planning
- Used to direct assessment priorities

1993-95 Objectives

- Collection Development - acquiring core collections of information resources to support both curriculum and research needs
- Information Access
 - Via online public access catalog, open access shelving, and knowledgeable staff at service points
 - Superior Interlibrary Loan service
- Bibliographic Instruction – both formal classroom and informal point of use instruction.

2009-11 Objectives

- Library will provide adequate collections
- Library will provide adequate facilities
- Library will provide adequate services to all uses
- Library will demonstrate student learning from Information Literacy initiatives

Means of Assessment

- Assessment effort specifically related on one of the library objectives.
- Means of Assessment (MOA) must be valid to assess services, processes, or learning
 - At least one MOA must directly measure services using rubrics, counts, percentages, or other appropriate measures
 - Can not rely solely on client surveys

Student Learning (examples)

- 1997 – survey of students following bibliographic instruction session
 - 50% could answer 2 of 4 questions about how to find a book
 - 60% could answer 2 of 5 questions about how to find a journal article
 - 90% correctly indentified where to go for help in the library

Student Learning (example)

- EDLD 101 – 8 sections of a course for at risk students
 - Clickers used as active learning tool in instruction sessions
 - Criteria for success – 80% accuracy rate
 - Results – 70% of the questions answered correctly by 75% of the students
 - Use of Results – program revised to include pre and post tests to augment use of clickers

Problematic MOA

- Compare library facilities to standards in *Planning Academic and Research Libraries* by Leighton and Weber
- Criteria for Success – 90% of each standard
- Library Seating – standard is 25-30% of residential students which would be 3805.
- Actual seating for 925
- Resulted in comment in 2008 SACS accreditation

Problematic MOA

- Compared circulation rates to monographic allocations
 - Broke numbers down by general subject areas: Humanities, Social Sciences, Science, Business
 - Circulation by relevant call number ranges
 - Conducted the study twice – for 2007 and 2009 reports
 - In the end there were so many other pertinent variables that the means was abandoned because it did not result in usable data.

Use of Results

- Program requires an improvement to services whenever the criteria for success was not met with at least one per report
- Improvement to the assessment process is an acceptable use of results
- Requires campus wide use of evidence based practice

2007 Use of Results

- Reorganization of furniture in the library with the removal of large tables from the third floor in response to LibQual comments asking for more quiet study space
- Explore new models of revenue development including partnering with other academic units to enhance the collection to meet ongoing faculty dissatisfaction with the collections in regards to their research needs.

Program of Assessment

- Focus on university strategic priorities and mission
- Establish objectives the library, or units within the library, need to meet in order to further the university's mission
- Organize assessment efforts around those objectives
- Not all assessment effort yield usable results and that's OK
- Make changes to processes or services based on assessment results