

Assessment

Student Learning Outcomes and/or Behavioral Outcomes

Learning outcomes are designed to help support student learning and are based on Astin's input-environment-outcome (IEO) framework. This framework suggests that both a student's background as well as the institutional environment have an effect on their learning. By assessing the effect of the institution on students' learning, the institution can shape their offerings (services, programs, and experiences) to enhance student learning. The assessment of student learning outcomes has come to serve as a strong basis for supporting and documenting learning experiences. Learning outcomes assessment projects can be helpful in determining to what degree respondents are achieving key learning goals in higher education.

Types of assessment. (2010). Retrieved March 2, 2012, from Student Voice Web site:

<https://www.studentvoice.com/app/wiki/>

Tracking Usage

A usage assessment examines the frequency with which a department, office, location, or activity is used. This particular type of assessment is valuable in determining the degree to which various populations are utilizing services and programs offered by the college. As an example, a college may do a usage study to better understand how often students participate in late-night programming. Paired with demographic information, a usage assessment can assist staff in better understanding who attends and who does not attend. Frequently this type of assessment is paired with satisfaction or needs assessments.

Types of assessment. (2010). Retrieved March 2, 2012, from Student Voice Web site:

<https://www.studentvoice.com/app/wiki/>

Needs Assessment

Needs assessments are the systematic exploration of the way things are currently and the way they should be in the future. Typically they are coupled with satisfaction assessments; however, the information gathered from needs assessment is often used to determine the allocation of resources to better serve those needs. As an example, campuses may do a needs assessment related to dining services sustainability to determine what the perceived interests/needs of students are when it comes to environmental choices and considerations within dining services. Needs assessments are usually associated with organizational and/or individual performance and can also be used to identify needs of universities as well.

Types of assessment. (2010). Retrieved March 2, 2012, from Student Voice Web site:

<https://www.studentvoice.com/app/wiki/>

Satisfaction Study

Much of higher education is focused on the services provided to constituents; as a result, many assessments seek to gather information regarding the satisfaction of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and parents. The desired result of these projects is to inform higher education professionals as to whether their services are meeting quality standards.

Schuh & Upcraft, (2001). Assessment Practice in Student Affairs. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

Assessment of Culture/Climate

Campus climate surveys can be extremely useful to educational leaders as they work to develop effective diversity plans. Campus climate is a measure — real or perceived — of the personal, academic and professional interactions that occur. In a healthy campus climate, groups generally feel welcomed, respected and valued. Research has shown that a diverse environment can increase educational benefits for all, and a healthy campus climate can enhance diversity. In order to attract and retain impressive students, staff, and faculty, the campus climate must be both inclusive and welcoming.

Campus climate assessment to address tolerance. (2010). Retrieved March 2, 2012 from University of Southern California Website:

<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/article/24082>

Benchmarking

A benchmark can be defined as the practice of setting up standards for comparison. It allows for comparison across organizations/units. Benchmarking allows institutions or departments to document what they are doing well (in comparison to other data), as well as document opportunities for improvement. There are two types of benchmarking:

External benchmarking: Comparing data to peer institution

- Operational benchmarking – comparing institutional, divisional, or departmental staffing, facilities, programs, and budgets
- Student data benchmarking – comparing student responses

Internal benchmarking: Campus specific comparisons

- Same project over time with different respondents – e.g., comparing satisfaction data from 3 years of an orientation survey.
- Same project over time with the same respondents (Pre/Post-Test) – e.g., comparing learning data from a survey administered to the same group of RAs before and after RA training
- Between programs – e.g., comparing data from several different small workshop evaluations that ask a set of the same questions
- Between populations – e.g., comparing data from the same survey administered to leaders and non-leaders

Types of assessment. (2010). Retrieved March 2, 2012, from Student Voice Website:

<https://www.studentvoice.com/app/wiki/>

Assessment of Physical Environment

An assessment of the physical environment of a campus can include the facilities, architecture, natural elements such as trees or beaches, proximity to major cities, overall cleanliness of the campus, etc. Strange and Banning (2001) explain that, “the campus physical environment is an important feature that influences students’ attraction to and satisfaction with a particular institution” (p. 12).

Strange, C. C. & Banning, J. H. (2001). Educating by design: Creating campus learning environments that work. San Francisco: Jossey Bass

Program/Department Review

A program or department review involves the use of assessment findings to judge program/department effectiveness. A program review provides information about how a unit is performing, including the progress that has been made since previous reviews. Additionally, short- and long-term goals of the program are addressed, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The review process also provides an opportunity to determine whether the program meets the goals of the institution, and facilitates the establishment of corrective actions if necessary. Program review can also provide a basis for documenting and acknowledging excellence in teaching, research, and service by the faculty and staff.

Program review, (2012). Retrieved March 5, 2012, from the Southern Illinois University

Web site: <http://assessment.siuc.edu/programreviewoverview.html>

Measuring Effectiveness Relative to Professional Standards (e.g. CAS)

CAS was founded as a profession-wide entity to establish standards to guide practice by student affairs, student development, and student support services providers employed by institutions of higher learning. CAS lays out steps for performing a self-study that measures effectiveness relative to professional standards, beginning with establishing the self-assessment team. The team members then rate the criterion measures presented in the CAS Functional Area Self-Assessment Guide (SAG) to judge how well the program meets the criteria. The next step is to identify and summarize evaluative evidence, followed by identifying discrepancies between the assessment criteria and practice. The team then identifies areas for corrective action, and opportunities for program enhancement. Finally, an action plan is made.

Miller, T. K. (2001). The book of professional standards for higher education.

Washington, DC: Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education.