

UT MARTIN ASSESSMENT NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2016

Open Forum and Preparations for the Site Visit October 4-6

Our SACSCOC visiting team will be on campus October 4-6 to interview faculty and staff, discuss our report, and write a recommendation to SACSCOC concerning our probationary status. To help us prepare, you are all invited to attend an **open forum on Thursday, September 15, 3:30-4:30, in Watkins Auditorium**. During this forum, we will discuss preparations that UT Martin is taking and how you can get ready for any questions that may come your way.

The reports and supporting documentation were mailed to the SACSCOC visiting committee members August 24. Our visiting team consists of reviewers from the College of William and Mary, the University of North Georgia, Morehead State University, and Coastal Carolina University. Our SACSCOC staff representative, Dr. John Hardt, will also be part of the team and will be working with us to set up individual and small group meetings for the visiting team members.

UT Martin will receive the final decision from SACSCOC in December.

Quick Tips for Preparing

We expect our visiting team members' questions to center on what we are doing institutionally and within our units with assessment, data collection, and making data-informed decisions. Here are some quick tips to help you prepare:

- *Know what we have done on the institutional level:* UT Martin has provided training, hired consultants and an assessment coordinator, developed templates, developed a website, developed an assessment calendar, and

provided other resources and information to help you learn how to tell your assessment story. Which of these resources have you used? Did you find the resources helpful?

- *Know what your unit has done in terms of assessment, data collection, and making data-informed decisions.* Be able to tell your unit's story (or stories). What assessments did you use? What data told you there was an opportunity to improve what you were doing? What decisions did you make based on that data? Did your decisions make a difference in your unit's services? Remember that your assessment stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end—what your data told you, what you did about it, and whether your actions made a difference. And, just like some movies, some of your stories will have sequels that describe other opportunities that the data results of your actions revealed.

From Data to Decisions

This month, we are sharing more assessment stories.

Students in the **Department of Communications** need to be able to communicate effectively in written form, and the proper use of grammar is crucial to their work. Faculty noticed that students had a low success rate on a particular grammar exam, with only 35% of the students scoring at least 75% on the exam in Fall 2015. In Spring 2016, the faculty implemented guided instruction using modules on the proper use of grammar in one of their required courses. Student performance on the grammar exam increased, with 97% of the students scoring at least 75% on the exam.

University Relations wanted to increase student participation in the university's Instagram account. In 2014, staff had noticed that the account had stagnated at approximately 250 followers for more than a year. Staff members began posting to Instagram more often and tailored content around activities and events that would be of interest to current and prospective students. In addition, the Instagram icon and account information were included in printed publications and advertisements. Finally, staff members created Captain Skyhawk-themed promotional pieces to advertise the Instagram account. Staff members report that the Instagram account has gained an average of 136 new followers per month since these changes were implemented in June 2014.

In the **Department of Family and Consumer Sciences**, faculty wanted to ensure that each faculty member engaged annually in research, scholarly, or creative activity by either giving a professional research presentation, receiving a grant, or publishing a refereed research article. Data from 2014-15 showed that 83% of their faculty participated in at least one of these activities. During their Fall 2015 retreat, the faculty collectively developed a departmental plan and individually determined plans to support the departmental plan in this area. These plans were analyzed in January 2016 to determine progress made and to make adjustments as needed. By May 2016, 100% of the faculty had participated in at least one of these activities. In particular, faculty worked with each other and collaborated with faculty from other departments to present their scholarly research. Faculty are now considering ways to involve students in their research.

We in the assessment office have been excited to hear how you are using what you have learned. A few weeks ago, a staff member shared with us that staff in her unit had been inspired by Educational Student Services' using their website to make available information that had been requested frequently by students. They are now identifying information that consistently is requested from their area to post on their website.

Faculty in one department have been intrigued by the scholarly activity and service data collected from faculty and are interested in collecting service data for students and analyzing the data to find ways to determine the impact of these students' efforts on our communities.

Have you used ideas you have learned from other units to improve your area? Let us know!

Where Are We Now and Where Are We Going?

We don't have a nice chart this month, but we do have some updates for you.

First, the Third Monitoring Report (without the supporting documentation) is available to you on the UT Martin Assessment website. Go to <http://www.utm.edu/assessment/>, then click on "Assessment" in the grey box on the left. Scroll to the bottom of the page to UT Martin Institutional Effectiveness Reports and log in using your university credentials. Once you've logged in, look for the "SACSCOC Documents" library. The Third Monitoring Report is the last document listed in this library.

While you are in this set of libraries, take note of the libraries of reports that are now available to you, including our new library of MILE Program reports. Back in 2012, UT Martin was asked to create and implement a quality enhancement plan (QEP) as part of our original SACSCOC report. We have been tracking data ever since and providing reports to administrators. These reports are now available to you through our assessment website.

Finally, we would like to remind you that the **UT Martin Assessment Day** will be held in May 2017 (date to be determined). Interim Chancellor Robert M. Smith has committed the Chancellor's Office to sponsor prizes including \$5000 Best in Show, \$2500 First Place, \$1500 Second Place, and \$1000 Third Place prizes for the units providing the top institutional effectiveness innovations. Details about Assessment Day and eligibility for the awards will be coming in the spring semester.