

UT MARTIN ASSESSMENT NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2017

What a Difference a Year Makes!

This issue begins the second year of Assessment Newsletters. Take a moment and look back to see at how far we have come since the first newsletter in February 2016. In that issue, we were just introducing you to our new Assessment Coordinator and our assessment website (which was still under construction). Our first progress chart clearly illustrated how far we needed to progress.

Now, we are working on unit-level guidebooks to formalize the assessment process within each unit. We are looking ahead to identify ways we can improve what we do. Everyday conversations about decisions that need to be made begin with discussions of the data we have and how we can use that data to help us make those decisions. Our website has become a model for other institutions seeking to instill a culture of evidence on their campuses. (In fact, our reporting templates are being used as classroom examples for documenting institutional effectiveness by at least one professor who teaches graduate classes focusing on assessment in higher education.)

Because of your efforts, we have made a wholesale change in our campus culture in an unbelievably short amount of time. As we move through the next year, we will continue to find innovative ways to improve the quality of services and academics we provide to our students. Thank you for what you do every day!

**REMINDER! ASSESSMENT
GUIDEBOOKS ARE DUE MARCH 31!**

Results from the Campus Survey on the January Workshops, External Training on Assessment, and Assessment Day

In late January, we asked you to complete a survey regarding the January Workshops, the possibility of providing travel money for workshops on accreditation and assessment, and opinions on how prizes should be awarded on Assessment Day. A total of 142 people completed the survey—thank you!

Reaction to the January Workshops was very positive, with many of you indicating that you appreciated the Chancellor's address, upcoming SACSCOC reporting requirements, and information on the Gallup-Purdue Index. Over 80% of the respondents indicated that their units had identified ways to incorporate high impact practices and thought the Assessment Guidebooks would be helpful to their units. Suggestions for future workshops included creating valid and reliable measures (26.67%), creating and using rubrics (16.19%), and high impact practices (14.29%). A few suggested that we incorporate some time to provide the basics of assessment for new faculty and staff who are unfamiliar with the assessment process on our campus—a great idea! Several of you noted that you would like to have had the option to choose more than one area; we will keep that in mind for future surveys!

For the question regarding whether respondents would be interested in participating in workshops or conferences on assessment and accreditation if travel money was available, results were split almost evenly (yes—33.64%; maybe—33.64%; no—32.73%). We are pleased to

report that, because there is enough interest in this type of training, UTM will be supporting two faculty and/or staff members to attend the SACSCOC Summer Institute in Austin, TX in July (for more information, see <http://www.sacscoc.org/institute.asp>) and two more to attend the SACS Annual Meeting in Dallas, TX in December (see <http://www.sacscoc.org/aamain.asp>). If you are interested in attending either of these conferences, please let Stephanie Kolitsch (styler@utm.edu) or Patty Flowers (pflowers@utm.edu) know.

Finally, preferences for how Assessment Day prizes should be awarded were mixed. The “popular vote of attendees” option received 27.36% of the respondents’ preferences, the “single judge from outside UTM” option received 21.70%, and the options “a committee of people from UTM” and “a committee of people outside UTM” each received 19.81%. These results will be presented to the Assessment Coordination Committees for their consideration as we finalize the guidelines for Assessment Day.

From Data to Decisions: Spotlight on Campus Recreation

In its latest assessment report, the Campus Recreation program included some excellent examples of not only using data to improve their program but also ways to incorporate high impact practices into nonacademic units. Here are a few highlights:

For their goal of increasing student employees’ knowledge of cultural differences as it applies to their jobs, Campus Recreation provided staff training in Fall 2015 that focused on cultural appreciation and human differences via the descriptors one uses and a person’s choice of music. Pre- and post-surveys showed a slight increase in knowledge. However, professional staff observed students openly engaged in conversations about cultural differences and sensitivities to different

cultures. An additional training was held Fall 2016 and focused on International Program students. The session addressed issues that international students face in the adjustment process in regards to family, English, academics, and other areas. A student panel discussion included students from Japan, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and China. Staff have observed an increase in interaction between student employees and international students. This training supports the high impact practice of diversity/global learning.

Campus Recreation’s student employees are meeting the intent of an internship in that they are having direct experiences in a work setting with the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. To support this high impact practice, Campus Recreation provides and encourages training in various skill sets related to sport, fitness, and leisure activities. One of their goals is that the student staff as a whole will obtain 90% proficiency in CPR knowledge and skills. Individual training sessions were offered throughout each semester. In the past year, the student staff obtained a 93% proficiency in their CPR knowledge and skills. Another goal focuses on student instructors teaching group exercise. As a benchmark, Campus Recreation encourages all student fitness instructors to acquire their Aerobics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA) Primary Group Fitness Certification and/or Specialty Certification. In the past year, four of six student instructors acquired their certification. Results from the written portion of the certification highlighted a need for additional training specific to exercise science content. The skills these students are learning through their employment at Campus Recreation are transferable to other jobs outside of their degree.