

# UT MARTIN ASSESSMENT NEWSLETTER

## JULY 2016

### *Notes from the SACSCOC Summer Institute on Assessment*

Patty Flowers and Stephanie Kolitsch attended the SACSCOC Summer Institute on Assessment in Grapevine, Texas in July. There were over 1000 attendees from colleges and universities all over the southeast region meeting to discuss assessment and how we can improve our institutions. Here are some trends from the conversations:

1. *There is a move away from the reliance on national exams and towards “home-grown” measures for student learning, such as rubrics, portfolios, and artifacts of student work.* National measures give a global perspective of student learning, while “home-grown” measures allow faculty to pinpoint specific areas where student learning can be improved. But—experts cautioned that “home-grown” measures need to be demonstrably valid and reliable.
2. *Assessment should be useful, ongoing, and outcome-driven.* There is no reason to conduct an assessment if you are not planning to use the results. Assessment just for the sake of assessing is a waste of time. Choose to assess things that really matter.
3. *Assessment should be a movie, not a snapshot.* Your assessment should tell a story. There should be a beginning (“here’s the data that told us we had a problem or an opportunity”), a middle (“here’s what we did to address the

problem or take advantage of the opportunity”), and an end (“here’s the data that tells us we were successful or that we have more work to do”). Your assessment reports help us tell your stories.

4. *The Principles of Accreditation are under revision.* The Principles of Accreditation are the standards we must meet to be accredited with SACSCOC. We are not expecting a complete revision of the standards, but there will be some changes to some existing standards, some new standards triggered by federal inquiries, and maybe even the deletion of a standard or two. It is fairly certain that the institutional effectiveness assessment standards are not going away; there is even talk that some of the other standards will transition to focus on institutional effectiveness as well.

### *From Data to Decisions*

As promised in the June newsletter, here are two of our assessment stories:

**Educational Student Services** receives a lot of email inquiries from their students about licensure requirements, program requirements, and other program-related issues. Staff noted the most frequent email requests and used those frequently asked questions to determine information that should be posted on the Educational Student Services website. They then advertised the existence of this information to their students. They noted that between May 2015 and May 2016:

- website hits on program and other check sheets increased from 965 to 3,118;

- hits on information regarding the Praxis exam increased from 366 to 1,518;
- hits on information regarding program forms increased from 153 to 2,811;
- total page views increased from 4,003 to 21,231; and
- the average time spent on web pages went from 2:05 minutes to 2:14 minutes.

Furthermore, staff estimates that email requests for this information decreased by about 50%.

**Environmental Health and Safety**, among other things, is responsible for maintaining the 980 fire extinguishers on campus. Each extinguisher is inspected monthly. In the past, inspectors were required to print a checklist, go to the building to be inspected, complete the checklist, then manually upload the information onto the server. Uploading the information took approximately 45 minutes each day. Training of inspectors required between two weeks and a month. Environmental Health and Safety implemented a new inspection and documentation program that used iPads and QR codes. The new system allows the inspector to use the iPad to enter the inspection data. Now it

takes only 2 minutes per day to upload the information and training the new inspectors takes only a few days to one week.

### *Where Are We Now and Where Are We Going?*

We have almost completed the draft of the Third Monitoring Report, and we spent all day July 26 with our consultants reading and improving the report. We should be able to send the report to the printers in a few weeks. Both of our consultants noted the progress UT Martin has made and were very impressed with the good things our community is doing.

We are beginning to plan for our October site visit with the SACSCOC committee. We will share information, upcoming deadlines, talking points, anticipated questions, etc. in future newsletters.

The chart below shows our updated information as of July. Note that the vast majority of our reports are meeting all of the conditions of our rubrics. **THANK YOU for all your hard work!**

