

UT MARTIN ASSESSMENT NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2018

New Mission Statement!

UT Martin has a new mission statement:

The University of Tennessee at Martin educates and engages responsible citizens to lead and serve in a diverse world.

The new mission statement was approved by the UT Board of Trustees last week. To see an outline of our new strategic plan along with the new mission statement, please see the presentation Dr. Carver made to the Board: http://www.utm.edu/strategic/docs/UTM%20Strategic%20Plan_FINAL%20v6.pdf.

With the upcoming implementation of the new strategic plan, this is a great opportunity to review your unit's mission statement, goals and learning outcomes, bylaws/handbooks, and assessment guidebook. Here is a short checklist to get you started:

- Does your unit's mission statement align with the new UTM mission statement?
- How do your goals and/or student learning outcomes align with or support the university goals outlined in the strategic plan? (Pay particular attention in the strategic plan to references to high-impact educational experiences, development of essential life skills, mentoring, research, internships, etc.)
- Do your unit's bylaws, handbooks, or guidebooks mention UTM's mission statement?
- If you revise your unit's mission statement, don't forget to change bylaws, handbooks, guidebooks, AND web pages to reflect your new wording.
- **Revise your Assessment Guidebook** to reflect UTM's new mission statement and any changes you make to your unit's mission statement, goals, and outcomes.

Revisions to your Assessment Guidebook(s) should be submitted with your annual assessment reports. Due dates for 2018-19 are:

- Academic Units: October 1, 2018
- Non-academic Units: December 31, 2018
- Student Affairs: January 31, 2019.

Update on Fifth Year Interim Report

UT Martin received its official notification letter from SACS COC regarding Fifth Year Interim Report requirements. The new Report includes 22 standards to be addressed as well as a ten-page report on our QEP, the MILE Program. We must also submit a report describing our progress on each of the five standards from our Monitoring Report. All of these reports are due in mid-March, 2019. We have included a chart at the end of this Assessment Newsletter detailing our progress on writing the Fifth Year Interim Report, the MILE Program report, and the follow-up to our Monitoring Report.

In addition to these reports, UT Martin has been asked to provide financial audits and accompanying correspondence for the two most recent fiscal years (2016-17 and 2017-18). The request is in response to some financial information we submitted to SACS COC as part of our institutional profile. In the last few years, UT Martin has made some investments in scholarships and recruiting; some of the money invested has come from a pot of money called "reserves" that is used for emergencies, etc. This change in reserves has been included as part of our financial reports, which we believe is the primary impetus behind this request from SACS COC. Recent recruiting data show that these investments are beginning to pay off. As enrollment grows, UT Martin will replace the money in these reserves and future financial reports will reflect this growth. Petra McPhearson is working with the SACS Accreditation Office to provide the needed reports for this portion of the process.

From Data to Decisions

The impact of the Supplemental Instruction (SI) program is measured as part of the **Student Success Center**'s annual assessment report. To measure the impact, the GPAs of students who are enrolled in and attend SI sessions are compared with the GPAs of students who do not have access to SI sessions. SI personnel noticed that attendance at SI sessions was often irregular, so they delved into the SI data for the Fall 2017 semester and looked at the mean GPAs of students who never attended SI sessions; attended 1-4 sessions; attended 5-9 sessions; or attended 10 or more sessions. They found that:

- avg. GPA for those who never attended: 1.90
- avg. GPA for those attending 1-4 sessions: 2.28
- avg. GPA for those attending 5-9 sessions: 2.62
- avg. GPA for those attending 10+ sessions: 2.91

If you have an SI for one of your classes, please encourage your students to attend the SI sessions regularly. Data show that this attendance pays off.

In the **January Assessment Workshop** for academic units, Stephanie Kolitsch shared the idea of “Transparent Design” for assignments, which includes three components: the *purpose* of the task, the *task* itself, and the *criteria* that will be used to determine the successful completion of the task. Stephanie incorporated this design into two sections of Math 191, one of the math

content courses for future elementary teachers, in the Spring 2018. Journal assignments were revised to provide a context regarding how the journal assignments supported the development of pedagogical content knowledge. Homework assignments were revised to include references to current Tennessee State Standards for Mathematics in grades K-8. An accompanying Canvas course was developed as a repository for handouts and resources.

Results from the class were promising. Journal responses changed from a (typically) short paragraph to covering 1½ -2 pages and were generally more thoughtful and insightful than in previous semesters. Student complaints about journals as “busy work” were eliminated. A comparison of class journal grades from Spring 2014 (the last time Stephanie taught the course) and Spring 2018 showed that the mean journal grade jumped from 78.67% (2014) to 87.5% (2018) and the median grade jumped from 78% (2014) to 93.5% (2018). Overall final grades jumped from 60% receiving A's and B's in 2014 to 81% receiving A's and B's in 2018. While there are a number of other factors that could contribute to these changes, the results are encouraging and warrant further investigation into the effects of transparent design.

Did you incorporate transparent design into one of your classes? Let us know your results, and we may include your results in a future Assessment Newsletters.

