

# UT MARTIN ASSESSMENT NEWSLETTER

## OCTOBER 2016

### *SACSCOC Site Visit Update*

Earlier this month, a visiting team of four institutional effectiveness experts, along with the SACSCOC Vice President assigned to UT Martin, visited our campus for three days to clarify and verify UT Martin's Third Monitoring Report. THANK YOU to everyone involved with the site visit, including:

- Staff, faculty, and administrators who met with the team;
- Staff who organized visiting team schedules;
- Staff from the University Center, Physical Plant, and Sodexo who made site preparations before and during the visit;
- Staff and faculty who covered classes and other duties for those involved with meetings; and
- Everyone involved with collecting and analyzing data and providing reports for the Third Monitoring Report.

We have seen a preliminary copy of the visiting team's report to SACSCOC, and the tone of the report was very positive. The visiting team cited several examples in their report that were not highlighted in the original Third Monitoring Report. It was clear from reading the visiting team's report that the examples provided by those of you who met with the team members were well received.

The visiting team's report, along with our Third Monitoring Report, will be submitted to SACSCOC and will be assigned to two readers for final review. These two readers will make the final recommendation to the

Commission Board. The SACSCOC final decision will be made public December 6.

In the meantime, as we continue to serve our students and region, we will continue to monitor our outcomes, collect and analyze data, and make data-informed decisions that will improve our services. Current efforts include:

- Administrative Support Services reports are due December 15;
- Student Support Services reports are due January 15;
- The Faculty Senate Committee on Instruction is using data to explore options for focusing and streamlining general education student learning outcomes;
- Our assessment coordinator, Patty Flowers, is exploring formats for the creation of assessment handbooks;
- Assessment Coordination Committees will be meeting in November;
- The Winter Assessment Workshop will be held in January (more details to come);
- The First Annual Assessment Celebration will be held in May (more details to come; prizes will be awarded); and
- We are gearing up and beginning to identify data needed for the SACSCOC Fifth Year Interim Report due in 2018.

### *Site Visit By the Numbers*

The SACSCOC site visit represented the culmination of months of preparation and included:

- 5 members of the visiting team;
- 21 scheduled meetings with visiting team members; and
- 83 staff, faculty, and administrators participating in those meetings.

To prepare for the site visit, we provided:

- 9 prep sessions preceding the site visit.

We also prepared new thumb drives for the members of the visiting team that included:

- The original Third Monitoring Report along with all of the supporting documentation;
- 449 samples of course syllabi; and
- 167 reports collected from academic units October 1 that reflected updates to faculty accomplishments, general education data, and program reports.

### *From Data to Decisions*

Faculty in the **Department of Chemistry and Physics** have restructured many of their assessments in general education chemistry and have raised many of their benchmarks. On one particular student learning outcome in Chemistry 112, faculty were using a particular laboratory exercise to measure student attainment of the outcome and noted in Spring 2016 that the average score on the exercise was 69.1%. Faculty analyzed the laboratory exercise and noticed that the exercise did not align well with the lecture topic. Faculty realigned the lab exercise and the lecture topic to provide greater synchronicity between the two experiences. In Fall 2016 the average score on this particular lab improved to 94.1%.

Faculty in the **Department of Agriculture, Geosciences, and Natural**

**Resources** have looked at student learning in several different courses. Geosciences faculty have been monitoring student performance on a series of questions covering the basic principles of geology. Data collected in Fall 2015 showed that the average score on these questions was 56%. Faculty noted the questions that were missed most often and expanded lecture coverage on the topics addressed by those questions. Data from Spring 2016 showed some improvement, with the students' average score being 62%. While this result is still below the department's benchmark, the improvement suggests that the changes the faculty have already made have had an impact on student success. Faculty will continue to note questions that are frequently missed and will consider additional coverage of the topics and/or clarifying the questions that are being asked on the assessment.

Natural Resources Management faculty noted low scores in several areas in Spring 2014 and Fall 2015. Faculty have expanded classroom discussions in wilderness preservation, Kellert's typology of values, and advocacy, which has resulted in students meeting benchmarks in Spring 2016 for these outcomes. Faculty are also considering raising the benchmark for one student learning outcome that has been consistently met.



For more information, please contact Stephanie Kolitsch, SACS Accreditation Coordinator, at [stycler@utm.edu](mailto:stycler@utm.edu), or Patty Flowers, Assessment Coordinator, at [pflowers@utm.edu](mailto:pflowers@utm.edu).

Thanks to University Relations for the use of the photo on page 2.