Anecdote to Analysis
Using Data to Improve Assessment Practice

Madeline Smith, Ph.D., Director of Assessment
Allan Aycock, Senior Director for Accreditation & Institutional Effectiveness
Maggie Parker, Associate Director for Accreditation & Institutional Effectiveness

Agenda

• Participant Learning Outcomes
• Institutional Context
• Moving from Anecdotal Evidence to Action
• Data Collection and Analysis – The Hard Way (Manual)
• Data Collection and Analysis – The Easier Way (Xitracs)
• Sustaining the Assessment Loop, Year after Year
• Q&A

Participant Learning Outcomes

• Identify sources of data and information to inform improvements in assessment practice.
• Utilize assessment management systems to gain meaningful analytical insights from student learning outcomes achievement data.
• Analyze student learning outcomes achievement data in order to provide meaningful feedback to academic programs.
• Plan for assessment policy changes based on analytical insights gained from program- and institution-level assessment data.
**Institutional Context**

- 38K enrollment
- 75% undergraduate
- 17 schools and colleges
  - notable autonomy
- 450+ academic programs
  - baccalaureate, masters, specialist, doctoral, certificates
- 5 campuses + online

**Historical focus on excellence in undergraduate education**

- study abroad, service learning, research, first-year seminar, freshman college, learning communities, experiential learning

**Institutional Context—2016**

- SLOA Reporting Tool
  - Academic Planning System—electronic filing cabinet
- SLOA Evaluation & Compliance
  - 7-year Program Review
- FYIR is imminent . . . 2018
Data Collection & Analysis – The Hard Way (Manual)

• Moving from anecdotal evidence to action.

• Collecting Actionable Data - Open every LOA plan and report in the system checking for:
  • Written SLOs
  • Assessment Plan
  • Evidence of data reported
  • Evidence of data used
  • Reported in the last 3 years

Data Collection & Analysis – The Hard Way (Manual)

- All Programs
- Annual Reporting
- APC Responsibility
- Procure & Develop Reporting Tool
- Xitracs
- Implement a Support Structure
- SLO Executive Committee
- SLO Steering Committee
- Improve Campus Communication
- SLO Coordinators, Department Heads, & APCs
- Streamline Communications

Data Collection & Analysis – The Easier Way (Xitracs)

- Simple, straight & clear templates
- Easily accessible
- Unit collaboration
- Automated reports for compliance
- Easy streamlining of data
- Visualization of progress

Standardized format for review
Plan & reporting in one place
Easily accessible
Visualized reports for compliance
Data Collection & Analysis – The Easier Way (Xitracs)

- Standardized format for reporting and reviewing
- Automated reporting mechanisms
- Clarified expectations/format
- Access management & ease of access
- Unit collaboration
- Consolidation of plan & reports in one place

Sustaining the Assessment Loop, Year after Year

The micro loop: academic programs using data to improve assessment practice

Year 1 (AY 2016-17)

- Analytical insights gained at the program level
  - Notable improvement in organization of assessment reporting
  - Evidence of challenges establishing measurable student learning outcomes (SLOs) and selecting well-aligned measures
  - Program-level assessment largely viewed as punitive, tendency among programs to report all outcomes as met
- Using the data to implement change at the program level
  - Programs encouraged to address:
    - Unmeasurable SLOs
    - Use of course grades as measures
    - Ceiling effect, in part by revisiting measures and targets

Year 2 (AY 2017-18)

- Analytical insights gained at the program level
  - Notable improvement in understanding of assessment reporting, measurability of student learning outcomes (SLOs), and alignment of measures with SLOs
  - Clear need for a shift in focus to assisting programs in making program-level improvements based on data analysis
- Using the data to implement change at the program level
  - Reinforcement of importance of “closing the loop”
  - Increased use of curriculum mapping
  - Programs encouraged to assess multiple SLOs per cycle
Sustaining the Assessment Loop, Year after Year

The macro loop: institution using program-level analysis to inform assessment policies, structure, and support

- Policy Changes
  - Add statements about using course grades as measures.
  - Adjust minimum expectations based on evolving and improving assessment practice.

- Functional Changes
  - Rename sections in the system for clarification
  - Add a feedback field
  - Standardized feedback rubric
  - Creation of an assessment website
  - Guidance for specific sets of programs

Thank you for attending!

Questions?
madeline.smith@uga.edu
aaycook@uga.edu
mparker@uga.edu