ASSESSMENT ESSENTIALS: ENGAGING A NEW AUDIENCE (THINGS STUDENT AFFAIRS PERSONNEL SHOULD KNOW OR LEARN)

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The diversity of student affairs functional areas makes it difficult to summarize simply.

It is difficult to clarify goals into measurable outcomes (e.g. reducing drinking behavior).

Assessment is increasingly important in an environment where everyone must demonstrate value added (to engagement, to graduation rates, etc.).

Student affairs graduate preparation programs do not spend enough time to prepare students in this area (Hoffman, 2010).
SURVEY: MOST ESSENTIAL ASSESSMENT SKILLS

- Sent to 1,321 self-reported senior-level student affairs administrators
- 201 respondents
- Opened April 2, 2013
- Closed April 18, 2013
- 201 respondents
- 15% response rate

- Assessment Skills based on ACPA’s Assessment Skills Knowledge (ASK)
- Respondents rated how essential 17 assessment skills were
SURVEY RESPONDENTS BIO

- 56% of respondents were director-level or higher
- 71% of respondents’ unit were moderately to very engaged in assessment
- 47% supervise 11+ employees
- 48% from institutions of 10,001+ enrollment
SURVEY FINDINGS

(COMPARATIVELY) MOST ESSENTIAL

- Be an ethical assessment administrator
- Design and execute an assessment plan
- Write and develop learning goals and objectives
- Identify the most effective methods to measure and perform assessment
- Determine what method of assessment is appropriate depending on target population

(COMPARATIVELY) LEAST ESSENTIAL

- Perform queries and other data analysis in database programs such as Microsoft Access
- Create and analyze database structures
- Perform queries to obtain data for assessment from your student information system
- Evaluate internal politics with stakeholders when communicating assessment results
OTHER FINDINGS OF INTEREST

- Only 26% were moderately or very familiar with ACPA’s ASK standards
- 41% had no dedicated assessment staff member
- 89% would hire an assessment staffer if they had the resources
TAKE-AWAYS

- Become familiar with assessment standards and competencies
- Assessment skills to focus on:
  - Ethical assessment
  - Developing assessment plans
  - Writing learning outcomes
CAPITAL “A” ASSESSMENT VS. ASSESSMENT, A THING YOU DO ONCE

- Good: You can conduct an assessment
  - Deploy a survey
  - Host a focus group
  - Collect attendance data
- Better: You can engage in Assessment as a process
  - Write an assessment plan and use multiple data collection techniques over time to answer multiple questions

THE ASSESSMENT CYCLE (VARIES FROM PUBLICATION TO PUBLICATION)

- There are many models, but here’s one by Suskie (2009, p. 4):
  1. Establish Learning Goals
  2. Provide Learning Opportunities
  3. Assess Student Learning
  4. Use the Results

TAKE-AWAYS: BASIC ASSESSMENT CONTEXT
REFERENCES

Assessment Essentials: Engaging a New Audience

Jo Campbell
Anat Levтов
Michael Mastalski
“Assessment is any effort to gather, analyze, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness” (Upcraft & Schuh 1996, p. 18).
The Assessment Cycle

- Determine Method(s) for Measurement of Progress Toward Outcomes
- Measure Progress & Document Results
- Analyze Results
- Use Results to Revise & Improve
- Determine Student Learning +/or Program Outcomes

Campbell, J., Levto, A., & Mastalski, M., 2014

Gregory, 2013
What are the barriers/obstacles we have personally experienced?

Where are the areas that supervisors can best support new professionals and graduate students?

How do you embed assessment in your daily work?

How much assessment is enough or too much?

Direct or indirect measures?
References

