Too Busy? Assessment for the Small College Student Life Educator

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Consultant: Beyond the Boundaries
Assumptions

- Assessment out of crisis or right before a accreditation can’t be the “mode of operation” any longer.

“..the survival of student affairs programs and services are reliant on the ways of demonstrating how our work enhances the mission of or the current strategic plan of our institutions” (Arminio. J, 2002)
Essential Keys for Success

- Determine a model to frame your assessment plan
- Call for a collaborative commitment of all SA staff
- Ensure staff training and development in assessment
- Provide resources for success (definition of assessment, terms, manual, library of key publications, learn/practice/apply methods)
- Carve out reasonable time for on-going assessment - proactive approach.
- Develop a communication plan to inform others about your progress (brief report template)
Frameworks/Model

- Modify an existing assessment framework that has been successful
  - The Ohio State Student Affairs Model

- Determine how you might organize your assessment process - using a system vs. or concern/inquiry based process
  - Nebraska Wesleyan: inquiry based process
  - Capital University: comprehensive process
Organizational Effectiveness Model - OSU
Observation: Perceived gap in student readiness and lack of transition skills described by faculty and student life staff (2004-05)

Residence life staff conducted mixed-methods assessment design to capture the profile of the FYS and clarify the perceived gap and determine a shift in residential curriculum for staff (2005-07)
Practical Inquiry Process

- What topic/concern are you interested in?
- What would you like to know about your issue? (Question)
- How can you answer your questions? (Method, data collection)
- What did your data tell you? (analysis)
- How does that inform practice, process, place for improvement? (implications/report)
- What is the next question? (feedback loop)

(Adapted from K, Yousey, 2007 - ACPA Atlanta)
NWU- Inquiry Model

3 Year Process: 2004/05 - 2006/07
Methods of Inquiry

- *Focus Groups* of FYS–fall semester 2005 and fall 2006
- *Qualitative Feedback*: Student Life division “End of the Year” retreat 2006
What Was Learned from the Evidence Gathered

- Students experienced both Academic and Social Transition Issues
- Students identified what assisted them and what they believed they needed.
- Faculty data revealed common concerns across 25 sections of the First Year Seminar
- Faculty data described a gap in expectations and experiences of FYS
Practice, process and place improvement resulted

- 6 diverse academic support practices added to the RA first 12 week curriculum for FYS
- 6 residential processes changes to improve the residential environment
- 12 new community development, structured social involvement and a few practices to better inform residents were included
  (defined a set of learning outcomes for training our student staff and a set of learning outcomes for our FYS)
- Confirmed 6 of our practices and process were identified as meeting student and faculty FY needs.
- Future concerns and next questions identified
Comprehensive Approach (Capital)

- Tracking Usage Numbers *
- Assessing Student need (s)*
- Student satisfaction (2013-14)
- Environments-(Keeling and Associates)
- Student Cultures- (Keeling and Associates)
- Program/Service-Learning Outcomes *
- Comparable (Benchmarking) (2013-15)
- Using Standards for Program Evaluation (CAS) * (3 programs 2012-13)

(Upcraft & Schuh, p. 27)
Student Affairs Comprehensive Assessment Plan (first 2 year goals)

1. **Complete Program Review** using CAS (council for the advancement of standards) for conduct systems, community service, multicultural affairs, career services, counseling/disability services and residence life.

2. Develop program/department **learning outcomes** for areas and division.

3. Assess health habits and behaviors using the National College Health Assessment to determine **student needs**

4. Determine **data/artifact collection and dashboard cycles.**

*Define and collect usage information*
CAS Small College Program Review

- Benchmarked programs against minimum standards as a review of program-1 1/2 year process
  - Provided staff with step by step process and training on using CAS
    - Choose self-assessment team
    - Orientation- meeting 1 (1 hour)
    - Facilitator Preparation list
    - Review Evidence and & Train “How to Judge performance”
    - Facilitator Preparation List
    - Final Meeting- Discussion
    - Facilitator Draft Report (committee Review)
    - Final Report
Learning Outcomes

Learn….Practice…….Apply Model- semester & summer process

- Consultant: experientially designed staff development session to gain greater understanding of the assessment process and practice writing learning outcomes
- Review of outcomes by consultant
- Final learning outcomes defined for each area.
Facilitated a small group of director staff to develop a general usage of programs/services/consulting by students: 3-1 hour meetings

Reviewed it with larger team/edited

Finalized the usage data chart

(VP/Assoc. Provost determined that we should abandon collecting usage data so we did not gather the evidence)
Needs Assessment

History- no actual data on alcohol, drug, anxiety, mood disorder had been collected (1999 CORE assessment)

IR- administering SSI and NSSI

- Counseling services (new) conduct data reflected alcohol and substance use, BITA data collected …no clear picture

Spring 12 –administered the NCHA
Institutional use of metrics (campus climate and career services)

Strategic Plan and Institutional Plan drove the need for dashboards

Hired Consultant to work directly with VP/Assoc. Provost and develop a set of dashboards for the division.

(8 week process)