Supporting Faculty Engagement in Ongoing and Innovative Assessment Practices Through Assessment Mini-Grants

Tama Hamrick and Jeff Roberts
Office of Academic Planning and Assessment (OAPA)
Sam Houston State University
First, a show of hands...

- How many of you are from:
  - Public Institution?
  - Private Institution?
  - 2-year College?
  - 4-year University?
Institutional Profile

- 4-year, public university approximately 1-hour north of Houston, Texas
- Current enrollment over 20,000 undergraduate and graduate students
  - 80+ bachelor’s degree programs, more than
  - 50+ master’s degree programs, and
  - 6 doctoral programs
- Classified by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education as a “Doctoral Research University” and a “Community Engaged” University
SHSU’s OAPA awards competitive mini-grants for assessment-related activities in the amount of $1000

Mini-grants are available to all SHSU faculty and staff

OAPA maintains a dedicated budget of $15,000 to award up to 15 Assessment Mini-Grants a year
Purpose of Mini−grants is to Encourage and Support Faculty and Staff Engagement in Innovative and Ongoing Assessment Practices
Application Process

- Invitations to apply are sent via email to faculty and staff starting during the third week of August and continue through the Fall semester.
- Invitations to apply are also included in SHSU’s Academic Affairs Newsletter.
Assessment Mini-grant Application (See Handout)
Independently, each OAPA staff member carefully reads, evaluates, and ranks all applications based on:

- Completeness of application materials
- Clarity of relevance to assessment
- Merit of the proposed assessment project
Application Evaluation

- OAPA staff meet to discuss each other’s evaluations and ranking of applications and to make a final selection of mini-grant award recipients

- Awards are announced on, or before, January 31
Past Mini–Grant Awards

- **2014–2015**
  - 10 applications
  - 10 mini–grants awarded

- **2015–2016**
  - 4 applications
  - 4 mini–grants awarded

- **2016–2017**
  - 29 applications
  - 10 mini–grants awarded

- **2017–2018**
  - 16 applications
  - 15 mini–grants awarded
Assessment Projects

- Practices and instruments to assess and inform curriculum decisions
  - Assessed and compared the outcomes of online and face-to-face instruction at the beginner and intermediate levels of Spanish courses in order to review the effectiveness of both types of instruction.
  - Implemented a Calculus Preparation Project to assess the prerequisite tracks leading to a Math course in order identify and improve program effectiveness and to make informed decisions about student placement in these tracks.
Travel to present assessment-related conferences and workshops

- Presented at the Transcultural Nursing Society Annual Conference on an evaluation of the effectiveness of an isolated culture course in increasing transcultural self-efficacy in baccalaureate nursing students
- Attended a Program Directors Workshop and participated interactive sessions focused on assessment, program improvement, and preparation for accreditation site visits
Residence Life student satisfaction assessment

- Improved the university’s Residence Life’s marketing efforts in order to increase student completion of surveys, to gather feedback, and to identify areas where improvement was needed.
Assessment Events

- Hosted a college-wide, full-day “Artful Assessment” mini-conference focused on providing faculty and staff in the College of Education with the opportunity to review assessment practices and processes
- Assessed an inter-professional education roundtable event by using pre- and post-survey measures, observation measures, and student reflective measures
Learning community assessment

- Assessed the effectiveness of Residential Learning Communities (RLC) by gathering data on student engagement, student retention, and student performance

- Created a comprehensive assessment program for Freshman Learning Communities that involved researching best practices, and developing and/or refining assessment measures
Program improvement and accreditation efforts

- SHSU’s Teacher Preparation Program developed the Teacher Capstone Portfolio (TCP) to assess and measure pre-service teachers’ proficiency in accreditation standards

Development of assessment instruments

- Developed an instrument and implemented procedures to measure knowledge levels of master-level Educational Diagnostician candidates
Assessment Projects (continued)

- Acquisition and use of assessment-related technology and software
  - Purchased technology equipment allowing students in a teaching program to video themselves while teaching in order to increase the number of observations per student and to provide real-time feedback about students’ teaching abilities
  - Purchased iPads and installed kiosks to collect survey data to assess visitor satisfaction with their experience at SHSU’s museum
The Future of Mini-Grants

- Design and implement a rubric for evaluating mini-grant applications
- Identify and implement new marketing strategies to increase the number of assessment mini-grant applications
- Identify funding sources to increase the number and/or amount of mini-grants awarded
Questions?

Tama Hamrick, Coordinator
Jeff Roberts, Director of Assessment
Office of Academic Planning and Assessment
Sam Houston State University
thamrick@shsu.edu
jeff.roberts@shsu.edu