How do we Assess the Assessment?

Developing and Implementing a Process for Formal Meta-assessment

Jeff Roberts
Director of Assessment
Sam Houston State University

A quick question to start…

▸ How many have a system for evaluating the quality of assessment plans at their institution?

▸ How many are currently planning to start such a process at their institution?

▸ How many don't have such a process, but want it?

▸ Did I miss anyone?

What is Meta-assessment at SHSU?

▸ Formal process for evaluating the quality and maturity of annual programmatic assessment plans

▸ Utilizes a common rubric that is applicable to all programmatic assessment plans

▸ Similar to the type of evaluation we will experience with SACSCOC CS 3.3.1

How is it being used?

- Formative feedback is provided to units for use in improving assessment plans

- Summative results used by colleges and university to determine existing weaknesses and to track improvement over multiple years

- Results are also used to direct resources and training, as necessary, to address identified weaknesses

Our rubric needed to...

- Be detailed and easy to use

- Match the structure of our assessment database, the OATDB

- Work for both academic and non-academic units

Structure of OATDB (Online Assessment Tracking Database)

- Goals
- Objectives
- Indicators/Criterion (for Learning Objectives)
- KPIs (for Performance Objectives)
- Findings/Results
- Actions
- Plan for Continuous Improvement elements
  - Part 1: Progress update on the previous cycle's PCI
  - Part 2: New PCI

Structure of the rubric (Handout)

- Naturally, elements match those of the OATDB

- Each element can be scored as "Developing," "Acceptable," or "Exemplary"
  - Check boxes available under each area to allow for greater granularity

  - Comments section provided for each element for qualitative feedback

- Each plan is also given an overall rating of "Developing," "Acceptable," or "Exemplary"

Meta-assessment Rubric Location

http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-planning-and-assessment/assessment/resources.html

Pilot implementation of Meta-assessment

- Office Pilot in Spring 2013
  - Wanted to test the rubric and process

- Following success of initial office pilot, proposal to the Provost and Academic Deans for a larger pilot
  - Importance of buy-in from academic leadership

- Sought nominees to serve as part of an ad-hoc Meta-assessment group
  - Two nominees sought from the seven academic colleges

- Targeted degree program units first
  - Within our Division (Academic Affairs) – So low hanging fruit

  - Would help identify weaknesses within SACSCOC CS 3.3.1.1 prior to our 5th Year Interim Report, due in March 2015

Methodology

- Group discussion to develop format for the review
  - Decided that each assessment plan would be reviewed by two reviewers
    - First rater from inside the College, the second rater from outside the College

  - Blind review process was designed to protect the anonymity of each of the reviewers and make for a more fair, unbiased evaluation

- Multiple norming sessions to familiarize Meta-assessment group with the rubric and process

Methodology, ctd.

- Evaluation took place November 2013 – January 2014

- 134 total assessment plans reviewed from 7 academic colleges
  ◦ Three plans were used for group norming

  ◦ Remaining 131 assessment plans were reviewed twice (for a total of 262 completed reviews)
    • Roughly 18 assessment plans per reviewer

How are we distributing and using our results

- University-wide data has been collected and is being analyzed by the Assessment Office
  - Will serve as baseline for future improvements

  - Will guide for where we devote training and resources for assessment improvement

- Completed rubrics and data sets are provided to each of the Colleges for analysis
  - Using a common report template the Colleges will complete analysis reports of their data by end of Spring 2014

- College-level reports will be combined into an institutional analysis report for the University's executive leadership

Challenges faced implementing Meta-assessment

▶ Fear of judgment or retribution
  ◦ General fear of judgment or retribution by colleagues

  ◦ Fear of how "outside review" would be perceived by units

▶ Inconsistency in the evaluations
  ◦ Despite blind review, some inconsistences were still seen
    • 48 of 1,179 (roughly 4%) pairings were "inconsistent," meaning one reviewer rated an element "Developing" while another rated it "Exemplary"

    • 38 times the First Rater gave the inconsistent element the higher ranking

    • First Rater vs. Second Rater averages were "consistently inconsistent"

First Rater vs. Second Rater Averages

	Overall		Goals		Objectives		Indicators		Criterion		Findings		Actions		PCI Update		New PCI	
	First Rater	Second Rater	First Rater	Second Rater	First Rater	Second Rater	First Rater	Second Rater	First Rater	Second Rater	First Rater	Second Rater	First Rater	Second Rater	First Rater	Second Rater	First Rater	Second Rater
Developing	16.15%	**32.81%**	3.10%	**10.16%**	5.43%	**14.96%**	9.38%	**14.96%**	14.84%	**14.17%**	19.35%	**23.62%**	28.68%	**44.80%**	16.41%	**26.40%**	17.46%	**46.03%**
Acceptable	62.31%	**52.34%**	59.69%	**58.59%**	53.49%	56.69%	62.50%	**61.42%**	54.69%	59.06%	54.84%	**50.39%**	56.59%	**43.20%**	64.06%	**48.80%**	61.11%	**38.10%**
Exemplary	21.54%	**14.84%**	37.21%	**31.25%**	41.09%	**28.35%**	28.13%	**23.62%**	30.47%	**26.77%**	25.81%	25.98%	14.73%	**12.00%**	19.53%	24.80%	21.43%	**15.87%**

Generally, second raters were more critical in their evaluation of each assessment element

So, was it successful?

- Overall, yes! Although there is room for improvement with regards to norming, rater reliability, and perceptions of fear and retribution
  - Fear of retribution can be eliminated through greater education and giving ownership of the process to the Colleges

  - Reliability can be improved through more norming and practice

Next steps for Meta-assessment at SHSU

- Formalize ad-hoc Meta-assessment group in a formal Assessment Liaisons committee
  - Will serve as contacts with the Colleges

  - Will advise and assist with academic assessment related matters

- Fully implement Meta-assessment within the Colleges
  - College liaisons, under the guidance and assistance of the Assessment Office, implement Meta-assessment within their areas and report back the results.
    - Sample of evaluations will be scored by the Assessment Office to ensure evaluations are accurate and reliable

Next steps for Meta-assessment at SHSU, ctd.

- Roll out Meta-assessment pilots for the remaining Divisions
  - Starting with Student Services, and working out from there

  - Following successful pilots, assessment liaisons within each Division implement Meta-assessment within their areas a report back the results
    - Sample of evaluations will be scored by the Assessment Office to ensure evaluations are accurate and reliable

- Institute a parallel Assessment Liaisons committee for non-academic Divisions

Questions?

Jeff Roberts
Office of Academic Planning and Assessment
Sam Houston State University

jeff.roberts@shsu.edu
936-294-1859