

Student Support Services Assessment: Moving Beyond Headcounts

John Jordan, Director of Academic Support Programs
Jeff Roberts, Director of Assessment
Sam Houston State University

Presented at the 2015 SACSCOC Annual Meeting

Introductions

- ▶ Your Speakers
- ▶ Show of Hands
 - Private or Public Institutions?
 - 2-year or 4-year Institutions?
 - R1 Institutions?
 - Experience with Assessment (Limited, Some, A Lot)?
 - Who works in a student support department?

SHSU Demographics

- ▶ Public, Tier-2, Doctoral/Research University
- ▶ Located in Huntsville, TX
 - Approximately 1-hour north of Houston, TX
- ▶ Approximately 20,000 total students
 - Roughly 17,000 undergraduate students
 - Roughly 3,000 graduate students
- ▶ Population Breakdown:
 - Low SES (~70%),
 - High 1st-Generation (> 50%),
 - Ethnically Diverse

SAM Center Demographics

Student Advising and Mentoring Center

- ▶ Opened August 2002
- ▶ Advising
 - Roughly 14,000 undergraduates each semester
 - Hybrid professor and professional advisor system
- ▶ Mentoring
 - Professional and peer mentors
 - 5 primary programs
 - Roughly 2,000 undergraduates each semester



Academic Support Programs

- ▶ Academic Improvement Mentoring (AIM)
 - ▶ Study Skills Workshop Series
 - ▶ First Alert (FA)
 - ▶ Establishing Leadership In and Through Education (ELITE)
 - ▶ Presentations / Workshops

SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard

COMPREHENSIVE STANDARD 3.3.1

- ▶ The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: **(Institutional Effectiveness)**
 - CS 3.3.1.1—educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
 - CS 3.3.1.2—administrative support services
 - CS 3.3.1.3—academic and student support services
 - CS 3.3.1.4—research within its mission, if appropriate
 - CS 3.3.1.5—community/public service within its mission, if appropriate



What is Assessment?

- ▶ Palomba and Banta (2015):
 - “Assessment is the process of **providing credible evidence** of resources, implementation actions, and outcomes; undertaken for the **purpose of improving the effectiveness** of instruction, programs, and services” (p. 2).

What is Assessment?

- ▶ Roberts (Whenever anyone listens):
 - An internally driven process of **self-reflection** for the purposes of **self-improvement**.
 - In this process, units identify objectives they wish to accomplish, measure the attainment of those objectives, and use the collected data for improvement.



General Best Practices in Assessment

- ▶ Start With the Ends in Mind
- ▶ Map Out Desired Outcomes First
 - What are the key areas of service, support, and/or learning for which your office is responsible?
- ▶ Don't Reinvent the Wheel
 - Identify what assessment measures might already be in place.
 - Develop new processes *ONLY* when you identify important objectives that are unassessed or when existing assessments no longer provide useful data.

General Best Practices in Assessment

- ▶ **Use Multiple Measures**
 - This allows you to triangulate your results.
- ▶ **Mix Direct & Indirect Assessments**
 - Head counts, data analysis, perception surveys, questionnaires, interviews, rubrics, tests, quizzes, commercial products/instruments, etc.
- ▶ **Use Available Institutional Data/Metrics**
 - Student GPA, retention rates, graduation rates, etc.

ABOVE ALL,

ASSESSMENT Should Be...

Meaningful,

Manageable,

and *Useful!*

The Three Pillars of Student Support Assessment

- ▶ Who Are You Serving?
 - Total Numbers
 - Population Demographics
- ▶ Perceptions of Program Quality
 - Are participants satisfied with the quality of your services or programs?
- ▶ Effectiveness of Service
 - Are your programs accomplishing what you want them to accomplish?

Ok, there can be Four Pillars...

- ▶ Student Services can, and does, have an impact on student knowledge and measureable skills (i.e., *learning outcomes*).
- ▶ **Examples:**
 - communication,
 - critical thinking,
 - teamwork,
 - social and personal responsibility,
 - study skills,
 - self-efficacy, etc.

A Note on Student Workers

- ▶ Student workers can...
 - ...help administer assessment measures, collect data, and analyze data.
 - ...be a population that you target for improvement and assessment.
- ▶ Student on-campus employment is a high-impact practice (Kuh, 2012).

SAM Center – Historical Approach

- ▶ AIM

- Participation, Pre- & Post-GPA

- ▶ Study Skills

- Participation, Pre- & Post-LASSI Scores

- ▶ FA

- Course Grades, Referrer's Name

- ▶ SH ELITE

- Pre- & Post-GPA, Completion Rates, Comparison Groups

- ▶ Presentations/Workshops

- None

SAM Center – Revamping

- ▶ Parallel Assessment Structure for All Programs
- ▶ Identify Key Goals & Performance Objectives for Each Program

SAM Center – New Assessment (Parallel Assessment)

- ▶ Demographics
 - Ethnicity, Gender, SES, College, Major, 1st Generation, etc.
- ▶ Academic Performance
 - Pre- & Post-Intervention GPA, Course Completion Rate, Participation
- ▶ Stakeholder Perception
 - Surveys/Questionnaires
- ▶ Comparison Groups

SAM Center – The New Assessment (Program Specific Assessment)

▶ AIM

- 1–Semester Persistence, 1–Year Retention, Graduation

▶ Study Skills

- Pre– & Post–LASSI Scores (Scales Scores & Individual Item Responses)

▶ FA

- Course Grades, Method of Student Response, Referrer Data

▶ SH ELITE

- 1–Semester Persistence, 1–Year Retention, Graduation, Learning Objectives

▶ Presentations /Workshops

- Learning Objectives



Assessment – Challenges

- ▶ Buy in
- ▶ Culture
- ▶ Data
- ▶ Personnel
- ▶ Time

SAM Center – Future Plans

- ▶ Fully Implementing Assessment
- ▶ Assessment of Training
- ▶ Disseminating Results



Questions?

John Jordan, Director of Academic Support Programs
jordan@shsu.edu | 936-294-4403

Jeff Roberts, Director of Assessment
jeff.roberts@shsu.edu | 936-294-1859



References

- ▶ Banta, T. W., & Palomba, C. A. (2015). *Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- ▶ Kuh, G. D. (2013, February). *What matters to student success: The promise of high impact practices*. Presented at the New Mexico Higher Education Assessment and Research Conference, Albuquerque, NM.