Alignment of Assessment Initiatives-Campus Perception Surveys

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Campus Process

- Centralized - Highly Collaborative
  - Identify topic/themes
  - Draft questions
  - Announce survey
  - Ask for input
  - Campus groups test survey-more feedback
  - Faculty experts review
  - Small sample of population tests survey
  - Administer & communicate results
Ground Rules

• Must ‘fit’ schedule
• Avoid multiple surveys of same population
• Priority to departments conducting accreditation surveys/ assessment
• IR retains survey results
Solicit input

Rate the following questions on the level of appropriateness of each question. Space is provided below each question for making suggestions/changes to questions or the items. There is additional space on the last page if needed. Thank you for your feedback!

Reviewer (your name please) ________________________________ Department_________________

Appropriate  Somewhat Approp.  Not Approp.

Q1 – What year did you graduate from UNO?

Q2 – At what level did you most recently graduate from UNO?

Q3 – Did you continue on to graduate-level education within six months after receiving your UNO degree?

• Better to gather feedback from online survey testing - through e-mails.
• Google ‘bad survey questions’ for examples.
• The wording of a survey question strongly influences the answer!
Survey Development Consultation

- Strategic planning
- Chancellor’s Cabinet
- Senior Staff
- Enrollment Management
- Assessment Committee
- Faculty Senate
- Deans/Department Chairs
- **IR Advisory Council**

* Handout
IR Guidelines for access to survey data

- Access to Student Data*
- Access to Data for Faculty Research*
- Ex. of Faculty-Developed Survey about Research Climate for Faculty*

* Handouts
My Favorite Things (Types of Questions)

• **Likert-scaled**
  - Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly Agree

• **Open-ended**
  - Gives full meaningful responses
  - Start off with an open-ended question

• **Check-off lists**
UNO Community Survey

- Second question on the survey was open-ended:

“What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about the University of Nebraska at Omaha?”

Don’t leave your open-ended questions to the end of the survey.
Metropolitan Opportunities at UNO.
Check all that you would like to do while at UNO.

- Be involved in government/civic activities (state, local, federal government/citizenship organizations)
- An internship in an area related to my career goals
- Be involved in a community action that addresses a social issue (health, housing, etc.)
- Help with a political campaign
- Get involved with eco-initiatives
- Participate in activities that encourage greater appreciation of diversity
- Do career exploration
- In-depth research about a metropolitan or community issue
- Volunteer in public schools
- Public speaking
- Take a university course that encourages learning through participation in a community service project
- Get assistance with job preparation
- International learning and/or exchanges
- Learn more about sustainability (transportation, recycling, clean energy, wise use of resources)
- Non-for-profit organization experience
- Involvement in new business and technology ventures
- Participation in creative arts in the community
- Give back to my community
- Take some courses with persons who have life experiences and interests similar to mine (learning community)
Senior Exit Survey

Did you participate in any of the following while at UNO?

- American Democracy/Civic Participation Project activity or organization
- Blackboard use
- Campus career fairs
- Campus work-study employment
- Career preparation workshops
- Coursework requiring community work or service
- Volunteer work or community service not related to coursework
- Distance Learning Course(s) offered by an institution other than UNO
- Distance Learning Course(s) offered by UNO
- Dual Enrollment at UNO as a high school student
- First Year Experience (FYE) class
- Honors program
- Honors societies in your career field
- Independent study course
Which of the following technologies, when used in a class, have enhanced your learning?

- Blackboard
- Access to the instructor’s personal course website
- Clickers (student response systems)
- Email to communicate with your instructor
- Instant messaging to communicate with your instructor
- Multimedia presentations such as PowerPoint
- Simulations
- Online syllabus
- Online discussions
- Online quizzes
- Immediate feedback on quizzes and tests via an online gradebook
- Podcasts
- Wikis/blogs
- RSS feeds
- Webcast
- Social Networking software (Facebook, MySpace)
- ePortfolios
- Spreadsheets
- Discipline specific software (Maple, Mathematica, AutoCAD)
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)
Open-ended question

- How could technology services at UNO be enhanced to better serve students?
Survey Challenges

- Finding Community Engagement Benchmarks
- Reaching Recent Graduates
- Making time for analysis and reporting
IR Checklist

- Be strategic
- Use surveys to inform as well as to gather information
- Keep questions simple and straightforward
- Look to peers for benchmarks
- Invite campus input
- TEST your survey
AQIP at UNO

- AQIP has allowed us to focus on continual improvement as opposed to sporadic efforts
- Improving processes on a permanent basis
- Includes all areas of UNO’s operations—academic affairs, student affairs, business and finance, athletics, etc.
- Academic assessment has been a primary target for improvement
Assessment at UNO

- A relatively new “holistic” approach to assessment
- Process involves indirect and direct measures of assessment

Indirect Measures:
- NSSE
- Internship surveys
- Grad surveys
- Employer surveys and focus groups
- Percentage and/or number of students attending graduate school
- Number of majors
- Student honors and awards
- Retention and graduation rates
- Grade distributions

Direct Measures:
- Capstone projects
- Longitudinal sample of classroom artifacts
- Portfolios
- CLA
- MFAT and other standardized tests
An Empowered Assessment Committee

- UNO is a relatively decentralized campus with deans wielding a great deal of power
- Deans sanctioned a university-wide assessment committee in 2007 to make decisions on academic assessment
- The committee has commenced providing guidance to academic units through review of annual assessment plans
- The guidance is intended to be unit-specific and tailored to meet the needs of each area
The IR/Assessment Committee Bridge

- Director of Assessment is familiar with various surveys and other indirect measures across campus
- Compiles and organizes relevant data that can be shared with Assessment Committee as annual plans are reviewed
- Helps to ensure that many of the indirect measures are being used to inform overall assessment process
Assessment and Professionally Accredited Programs

- Assessment is generally well-established and relatively rigid and includes direct measures.
- HLC accreditation is not a primary focal point.
- The holistic approach is more internally focused (i.e., how can we use data to improve our programs?)
- Assessment committee examines relevant indirect and direct measures and offers feedback.
“…Internship survey results are satisfactory, but somewhat inconsistent. You may want to examine your process of student placement, which seems to be ad hoc with few criteria considered.

Also, a number of exiting seniors in both NSSE and through graduation surveys expressed some concern about the lack of academic challenge in your area. Although this may be misrepresentative, the unusually high number of student papers deemed “proficient” in your latest assessment report indicate your expectations for students may not be as elevated as they should be to maximize intellectual engagement…”
Assessment and the “Stragglers”

- Assessment plans and other relevant data are reviewed by the assessment committee.
- Many of the plans include significant gaps in areas of assessment.
- Many have included only one or two indirect measures of assessment (e.g. “over 90% of our graduating seniors indicated they were satisfied with their educational experience.”)
Using Indirect Measures to Nudge the “Stragglers”

- HLC accreditation is more of a focal point initially
- The indirect measures allow us to begin reporting assessment data for units with inconsistent assessment efforts
- Sample questions from our Systems Portfolio:
  “What are your results for common student learning objectives as well as specific program learning objectives?” (generally no answer)
  “What is your evidence that students have acquired the knowledge and skills base required by the institution and its stakeholders (that is, other educational institutions and employers) for the awarding of specific degrees or credentials?” (answer using indirect measures)
Closing the Loop

- Answering the second question allows us to consider the first in a more holistic and gradual process
- Step 1: Collect and organize indirect measures for units while having units articulate or refine program goals
- Step 2: Have units examine data, mostly indirect, they are already collecting and use that to inform improvement strategies
- Step 3: Have units begin by assessing 1 or more of their program goals through direct measures
- Step 4: Combine relevant indirect and direct measures for comprehensive assessment and continue refining the above steps....