Faculty Assessment Mentors: Guiding Conversations

Where to Start?

Programs should understand campus reporting expectations.

- Review the 3 reporting expectations for each biennial reporting round. (Be sure to select the correct form for reporting, whether accredited or not accredited.)
  1) If not accredited, note two report sections:
     a. Report Section I ("new" assessment work);
     b. Report Section II (using results from prior reports/following up on recommendations for change to check for impact on learning)
  2) Provide an updated curriculum map
  3) Post program learning outcomes to the program website with a functioning URL

- Share: The location of the report template and the report rubric
  http://web.uri.edu/assessment/planning_reporting_documents/

  Next: Review the columns of a blank report template and rubric, and show the relationship of the form to the appropriate rubric. The rubric defines expectations and can help guide the conversation and remove ambiguity about expectations.

- Update faculty on the peer review process:
  It helps for them to understand who will apply the rubric and how the reports are evaluated. Emphasize that point of assessment is not to prove, but to improve and that expectations are that programs engage in a question about their students that matters to them: they drive the question, the process and the use of results.

Planning to Report

Has the program looked at past assessment reports?

- Look back first! Past report are a helpful guide/template for planning for a new report; the recommendations column from Section I or II from a past report is critical for completing Section II in a new report (following up on previous recommendations.)

Review the program’s curriculum map: is it updated?

- Key discussion points if referring to an existing map:
  o Are the learning outcomes the most updated? Do they match the prior report or has the program changed them? Faculty new to assessment may not have seen a map of their program curriculum or may not understand what it represents.
  o Are the courses/course requirements the same since the last report? Does the designation of how the outcome is supported across the courses (introduced, reinforced, or emphasized) still accurate? This is very helpful in thinking about designing an assessment project.

Are the program learning outcomes posted online to the program site?

- All programs are expected to post student learning outcomes clearly on a program webpage. This provides transparency and allows prospective students, parents and accrediting bodies to see the learning that students will be expected to demonstrate/be able to do at the conclusion of the degree.
Facility Assessment Mentors: Guiding Conversations

Reporting Specifics: (the rubric is a reference and guide)

Are the learning outcome statements well written? Is there a strong use of Blooms’ verbs in the learning outcomes? Are there too many or too few outcomes for a reasonable assessment timeline?

- When creating learning outcomes, Blooms’ verbs can be helpful in properly describing the learning outcome, but in also helping faculty think about the ultimate program-level goals for students: do they want students to simply identify facts and figures, OR to then apply that knowledge for example, to analyze the death rate from a seatbelt campaign. Faculty should be thinking about what graduates of their program should be able to demonstrate given the curriculum provided.
  - Too many outcomes (some sound like course-level)? Too few outcomes (too broad)?
  - Assessment project: some programs may plan to assess too many learning outcomes (several) which can be overly burdensome for the faculty. It is best to achieve some form of balance when assessing learning outcomes, so the program has time to make improvements and can assess all outcomes in a reasonable timeframe to ensure a quality program.

Is the coursework/student sample and program population specified?

- Being as specific as possible on the reporting forms is helpful, especially for determining the generalizability of the results: what is the population to whom the results will be generalized? What population would receive an intervention if one is warranted, to improve learning? It is very important to note why that sample is meaningful to understand why the results will be impactful.

How does the program plan to engage faculty in the assessment process?

- Program level assessment should involve faculty, not just one faculty member, and there are many roles which can be had: 1-2 faculty can coordinate the effort, multiple faculty can provide student work and provide feedback on a scoring tool to ensure the assignment is aligned with the tool; 2-3 faculty can score the work; 1-2 faculty can summarize results and make recommendations; all faculty can participate in understanding the results and thinking about how to implement recommendations, etc. Participation in program assessment can be a high-quality exercise for faculty program. Having one or sometimes just two people involved from the department can be burdensome and may produce results that are not represent all of student learning experiences throughout the program.

In Section II, has the program addressed or described how they plan to address any/all of the recommendations made from the previous report(s)?

- Previous reports highlight next steps and recommendations for the program moving forward. In Section II of the current report, programs should be explaining how they followed up on previous recommendations and changes to the program. Even if a program was not able to implement a change, they should respond to their prior recommendation with an explanation and future plans. Reasons for not following up should be noted because it indicates programs are addressing their responsibility to use results they have identified as important for improving student learning.

Questions?

Make a n appointment for a consultation!

- Contact the Assessment Office (SLOAA) for more information. Consultations can be helpful to clarify any questions or concerns programs may have as they are preparing for assessment or going through the reporting process especially for faculty and instructors new to assessment (email: assess@uri.edu).