Making Institutional Academic Assessment Work for Faculty

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SACSCOC Standard 8.2.a

8.2 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:
a. Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs.

Introduction

Academic Assessment is **required** for institutional accreditation, yet may be **challenging** for individual departments, programs, and faculty to produce because of:
- **time constraints;**
- **lack of training;**
- **lack of interest.**

Further, SACSCOC Standard 8.2.a on Student Outcomes is known to be **complex and easily subject to non-compliance** (Wymer, 2023), especially if programs and faculty do not provide accurate or adequate academic impact reports.

Making academic assessment impact reports accessible to faculty with expertise in non-assessment fields may contribute to favorable outcomes for a university's accreditation reports and to a smoother process for programs.

Rationale

Background: At Old Dominion University, we piloted a **new Academic Assessment Impact Report** to transition from the use of WEAVE to a reporting procedure more geared toward collecting required information for accreditation.

Why?
1. We were finding that multiple programs year after year **failed to report changes, provide data, and describe use of results** in order to be in compliance with Standard 8.2.a.
2. We wanted to **shift away from WEAVE**.
3. We wanted to switch to a process where the emphasis was on **USING data, not COLLECTING it.**
4. We wanted a **student-centered evaluation focused on learning improvement**, not just how programs are currently meeting goals. **HOW are they improving** and on what basis or for what need?

Purpose of the Presentation: The following is a review of the process of drafting our new Academic Assessment Impact Report, piloting it to faculty, and reporting initial results to apply to an improved product.

Piloting the First Draft of the Report

Procedure: We created a new 2-page, 5-part report on a Word document. This new Academic Assessment Impact Report solicited a) mission statement b) SLOs c) curriculum map d) learning improvement pursuits and e) impact of the pursuits.

We attempted to address **key issues** in the following way:
- **Time constraints** – created a **short, clear** report in **row and column form**;
- **Lack of training** – provided clear descriptions of what to include in each section **using common language and supplying prompts;**
- **Lack of interest** – requested a **short report** with enough information to meet the standard for when programs do not put the same time and energy toward the report as others.

We distributed the new Impact Report to **12** faculty to complete instead of the WEAVE reports the rest of the university was completing. Using Qualtrics, we **surveyed them after completion** of the report **asking about ease of use** and **suggestions for improvement**. We also examined their completed reports and identified the areas of the report that were lacking and perhaps unclear.

Final Draft

STUDENT LEARNING IMPACT REPORT 2022-2023

NAME OF THE PROGRAM:

SECTION A: CURRICULUM MAP

Please go to your Program's Folder And Complete/Review Your Curriculum MAP (or Upload your existing Map)
Need Resources? Click Here: Curriculum Mapping/Curriculum Matrix | Assessment and Curriculum Support Center
Need Help? Email us at assess@odu.edu | kcarlisl@odu.edu

SECTION B: ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

CHANGE #1	CHANGE #2	CHANGE #3
1. Describe a course/curriculum change made to improve your students' learning.	**1. Describe another course/curriculum change made to improve your students' learning.**	**1. Describe a third course/curriculum change made to improve your students' learning.**
Faculty in the program changed…	Faculty in the program changed…	Faculty in the program change…
2. Provide the student learning data and explain how it justifies the change. Include a description of the tool (rubric/test/etc) used.	**2. Provide the student learning data and explain how it justifies the change. Include a description of the tool (rubric/test/etc) used.**	**2. Provide the student learning data and explain how it justifies the change. Include a description of the tool (rubric/test/etc) used.**
The program uses a _____(rubric/text/etc) to gather student learning data. __% of students met faculty expectations __% of students did not meet faculty expectations Based on this performance, faculty determined…	The program uses a _____(rubric/text/etc) to gather student learning data. __% of students met faculty expectations __% of students did not meet faculty expectations Based on this performance, faculty determined…	The program uses a _____(rubric/text/etc) to gather student learning data. __% of students met faculty expectations __% of students did not meet faculty expectations Based on this performance, faculty determined…
3. What student learning outcome(s) in your curriculum map align with this change?	**3. What student learning outcome(s) in your curriculum map align with this change?**	**3. What student learning outcome(s) in your curriculum map align with this change?**
The related student learning outcomes are:	The related student learning outcomes are:	The related student learning outcomes are:

WHEN FINISHED, FIND YOUR PROGRAM/CERTIFICATE IN THIS LIST (CLICK HERE)
THEN CHANGE THE STATUS FROM "IN-PROGRESS" TO" COMPLETE"

Results and Discussion of the Pilot

Results: Results of the pilot showed ease of use with constructive comments for improvement. Continued improvements included **clarifying assessment language** and **simplifying the format** which program faculty may find more **accessible**. The intended outcome was a reporting process that gathers the **precise information** required for accreditation and **compliance with Standard 8.2.a.**

Discussion: We incorporated feedback into a **new draft of the Academic Assessment Impact Report** resulting in a **1-page document with 2 sections.** We changed **language in the prompts** and **provided sentence stems** for faculty to use to write their responses. We added technology to the form, including **links to a private folder** where they can upload large documents, e.g., the curriculum map. The final draft of the report after the pilot is below.

Use of Pilot Results

We still need to take steps toward successful implementation:
1. **Develop and pilot a rubric** to assess the Academic Assessment Reports. (Spring 2023 – Spring 2024)
2. **Develop and implement faculty training** across colleges. (Summer and Fall 2024)

There are still **big picture issues and goals** to consider:
1. Learning improvement: This report hones in on reporting learning improvement, but it **does not give any guidance for the process of data collection and analysis** a program should conduct during the academic year.
2. Time constraints: The report is shorter and requires less writing; however, **programs still need to invest significant time into data collection and analysis** to prepare for writing the report.
3. Lack of training: We want to train faculty, but have **no concrete plan, no model to follow, and not enough help**. How have other universities trained their faculty?
4. Lack of interest: Creating interest in academic assessment and reporting is a **university-wide task**. This new report does not increase interest, but it may be a tool administrators and leaders can use in an initiative to engage faculty in academic assessment across the board.