The Role of Assessment in Making Institutions Better and More Competitive

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Southern SCUP Conference
St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands

October 25, 2007
Overview

• Multiple effective assessment processes in higher education
• Program Review as one mechanism
• Program Review process at Wake Forest as “bottom-up” planning
• Examples of Program Review outcomes making the institution a better and more competitive university
Wake Forest University
Schools

- College of Arts and Sciences
- Calloway School of Business and Accountancy
- Babcock Graduate School of Management
- Divinity School
- Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
- Law School
- Medical School
Types of Assessment Processes in Higher Education

• Standardized Tests
  – GRE, CLA, ACS

• Surveys
  – CIRP, CSS, NSSE, HEDS Alumni, HERI Faculty

• Qualitative
  – Interviews, Focus Groups

• Outcomes Analysis
  – Graduation Rates, Job Placement

• Program Review
  – External Reviewers
Spellings Commission

“We have noted a remarkable shortage of clear, accessible information about crucial aspects of American colleges and universities . . . Our complex, decentralized postsecondary education system has no comprehensive strategy, particularly for undergraduate programs, to provide either adequate internal accountability systems or effective public information.”

“No current ranking system of colleges and universities directly measures the most critical point—student performance and learning.”

— Secretary Spellings
Assessment Emphasis by Accrediting Associations

- **SACs – Core Requirement**
  - 2.5 “The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. (Institutional Effectiveness)”
Assessment Emphasis by Accrediting Associations (Continued)

- SACS – Comprehensive Standard
  - 3.3.1 “The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs (including student learning outcomes for educational program) and its administrative and educational support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results. (Institutional effectiveness)"
Program Review
California Lutheran University

“Program Reviews are identified by accrediting agencies as a critical component contributing to the educational effectiveness of an institution (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2006; Western Association of Schools and Colleges, 2001).”

Kornuta, H. and Neilson, L. (2007). *Shaping the Future through Program Reviews.* Paper presented to The Association for Institutional Research (AIR), Kansas City, KA.
Wake Forest Program
Review – Background

• Task Force chaired by Graduate Dean
  – Established in 1994 as review of undergraduate and graduate programs
  – Facilitated process giving faculty and students the opportunity to provide input
  – Undergraduate and graduate programs reviewed every seven years
  – Coordinated by the Director of Institutional Research with one review cycle taking about 13 months
Program Review – Process

- Chair and department have five months to conduct a self-study
- Chair recommends internal committee members including chair of committee
- Chair recommends external reviewers who will visit the campus
- Self-study report submitted to committee for internal review in November
Program Review – Process
(Continued)

- External reviewers visit campus for two days in February and submit findings to Internal Review Committee
- Committee submits final report to Deans and Provost by May 1st
- Department works with Deans and Provost to develop Memorandum of Understanding by end of May
- Follow-up study one year after Memorandum of Understanding
Program Review – Self Study
Mission, Assessment and Outcomes

• Mission of your program?
• Role of this program within the mission of the university?
• Goals of your program in regard to teaching, research and public service?
• Has your program generally been successful in reaching these goals?
• If not, what changes would you make in general to reach these goals?
• Goals set for the established learning outcomes of your students?
• Assessment activities taken place related to goals set for established learning outcomes of your students?
• Outcomes from these assessment activities?
Program Review – Self Study
Faculty and Students

- Content of curriculum and course requirements for major or minor
- Characteristics, quality and workload of the faculty
- Students enrolled in majors, minors and honors and their progress toward graduation
- Efforts to help students after graduation
Program Review – Self Study
Departmental Resources

- Library resources
- Support personnel
- Physical facilities
- Computer facilities
- Support for faculty scholarship
- Adequacy of departmental budget
Program Review – Outcomes

- Department of Mathematics and Computer Science divided into separate departments
  - Number of majors in mathematics and computer science in 2005-2006 represented a 53% increase since the division in 1997-1998
  - Research Grants increased from $79,324 for the combined departments in 1997-1998 to a total of $838,530 as separate departments in 2005-06
Program Review – Outcomes (Continued)

- East Asian Languages and Literatures became a department offering majors in Chinese and Japanese
- Clinical Research Center constructed for Department of Health and Exercise Science
- Department of Romance Languages now teaches Spanish ISLI (Intensive Summer Language Institute) on campus; Spanish ISLI in Queretaro (Mexico); and Italian ISLI in Venice and Sicily
- Education Department recently divided into separate departments of Education and Counseling
- Others
Summary

- Assessment processes in higher education will make institutions better and more competitive.
- Program Review for specific departments is one effective assessment process by having departments recommend committee members and external reviewers with professional credentials.
- Wake Forest Program Review schedule, procedures, timetable and self study are available at [http://www.wfu.edu/ir/docs/programreview.doc](http://www.wfu.edu/ir/docs/programreview.doc).
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