

University of Northern Iowa Division of Student Affairs Assessment Plan 2008-2013

Purpose

We collect and analyze data about our work in order to improve our performance, and to communicate about our performance to others who are interested in it. We will seek the best balance of activities to make the effort most useful, and sustainable.

- Collecting and analyzing data is one of the key means by which we professional judgments about the value of programs, activities and services we provide.
- Assessment activity helps us to understand the current state of affairs, to identify needs, to know if constituents are satisfied, to compare ourselves with others, to compare our practice with best practice in the field, and to demonstrate impact. Our understanding in each of these areas is enhanced when we monitor change over time.
- Communication of assessment results helps others to know who we are and what we do, to compare our performance with others, to monitor our progress and to understand our impact.
- Communication of assessment results will also help us develop the knowledge and capabilities of our staff, and cultivate support from others -- by demonstrating our capabilities and our commitment to continual improvement.
- Too much assessment is less valuable than no assessment in that it contributes to the illusion of understanding and accountability while overwhelming those who use assessment results to make judgments.

Elements of Assessment Program

We have four primary components of our assessment program, each of which sheds light on our effectiveness and informs decisions about improvement and is describe in more detail below:

- Key performance indicators
- Outcomes assessment
- Program/service quality assessment
- External review
- Best practices research

Key Performance Indicators

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are measurements that help us understand and evaluate how well we are doing in achieving important divisional goals. Each is a statistic that is intended to provide an indicator (not a thorough understanding) of our performance on a specific function. Retention rate is a good example of an indicator – knowing what the rate is provides us with useful information, but other methods of assessment must be used to understand what's behind the measure.

KPIs are useful in that they are more easily accomplished than research findings, they can be easily communicated to stakeholders, and they are amenable to be tracked over time. They are limited in their use, though, in that they serve only as indicators of what we think we know.

Our plan relative to KPIs is to:

- Determine (and update as needed) key performance indicators for each major function within units within the Division of Student Affairs and for institutional functions that are most relevant to the Division [fall/spring 2008-09].
- Institutionalize routine assessment and reporting of key performance indicators within the Division.
- Communicate key performance indicators to campus leadership and stakeholders, and to the public as appropriate [fall 2009].
- Employ findings as appropriate for continual improvement and strategic planning.

Outcomes Assessment

A limited number of major assessment activities that help us understand significant outcomes are undertaken routinely by departments (see those noted below in parentheses) within the division. Data from these assessments are used to more fully understand the impact of the university's overall effort as well as the efforts of departments. Data from these are also used in tracking key performance indicators. Current major outcomes assessments undertaken routinely are:

- Graduating Senior Survey Report (Career Services)
- National College Health Assessment (Wellness & Recreation Services)
- Student Leaders Learning Outcomes Assessment (Maucker Union)
- Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Biennial Review (Wellness & Recreation Services)

In addition to these undertaken by the division, assessments conducted by Institutional Research and other units are routinely reviewed by division staff and used to inform program planning and improvement:

- National Survey of Student Engagement (Academic Assessment)
- Student Satisfaction Report (Institutional Research)
- Clery Campus Crime Statistics Report (Public Safety)

Program/Service Quality Assessment

Self-Assessment with Standards

Four programs of Students Affairs have completed, within past two years, self-assessments utilizing externally-developed professional standards:

- Recreation (Council for the Advancement of Standards)
- Health Education (Council for the Advancement of Standards)
- Maucker Union (Council for the Advancement of Standards)
- Student Activities (Council for the Advancement of Standards)

- First-Year Experience (with Academic Affairs) (Foundations of Excellence)
- Residence Facilities (Association of Physical Plant Administrators)
- Dining (National Association of College and University Foodservice Administrators)

Program/Service Evaluations with Benchmarking

Six programs of Students Affairs completed routine self-assessments utilizing externally-developed survey instruments that reflect best professional practice and allow comparison of results with like institutions:

- Maucker Union (Educational Benchmarking, Inc)
- Student Activities (Educational Benchmarking, Inc)
- Housing/Residence Life (Educational Benchmarking, Inc)
- Dining (Educational Benchmarking, Inc)
- Student Health (American College Health Association's Patient Satisfaction Assessment)

Program/Service Evaluations

In addition to data generated to assess broad outcomes or impact, departments routinely assemble and analyze data from a variety of sources on activities, participation, trends, levels of satisfaction, etc. in an effort to improve program and service delivery within the department. Current activities include:

Admissions

- Application Tracking Report
- Enrollment Forecast
- Tour Evaluations
- "Up Close" Program Evaluations
- Campus Visit Report
- Telecounseling Report
- Web and e-Newsletter Report
- Transfer Plan-It Report
- High School Visit Report
- Student/Prospective Student/Counselor Advisory Board focus groups
- ACT Class Profile
- National Clearinghouse Student Tracker

Career Services

- Overseas Fair Employer/Candidate Surveys
- Career Fair Employer/Student Surveys
- Teacher Fair Employer/Student Surveys
- Student/Advisory Boards Focus Groups
- Workshops Attendance Report

Dean of Students

- Student/Parent Orientation Satisfaction Surveys
- First Year Student Follow-up Survey
- First Year Student Focus Groups
- Welcome Week Post -event Evaluations

- Family Weekend Post-event Evaluations
- Student Conduct Committee Training Evaluation
- Disciplinary Hearings Post-hearing Evaluation
- Student Complaint Logs
- Student Conduct Reports
- Police Reports
- Critical Incident Reports
- Disciplinary Action Reports

Maucker Union

- Faculty/Staff Satisfaction Survey
- Facility Users Post-Event Evaluations
- Campus Activities Board Post-Event Evaluations
- Student Program Interest Survey
- Student Organization Officers/Advisors Satisfaction Survey
- Greek Community Report
- Greek Recruitment Survey
- Homecoming Program Evaluations
- Targeted Student Focus Groups

Multicultural Education

- GPS Mentoring Program Participant Evaluations
- Event Participant Evaluations
- Workshop Participant Evaluations
- Facility Reservations Report
- Website Visits Report

Residence/Administration

- Residence Hall Occupancy Reports
- University Apartments Occupancy Report
- ResNet Network Usage Reports

Residence/Dining

- Vendor Product Usage Reports
- Micros Sales Reports
- Kronos Labor/Timekeeping Reports
- CBORD Dining Hall Reports
- Food Pro Food Production Reports

Residence/Residence Life

- Student Academic Performance Reports (residents and staff)
- Student Conduct Reports
- Student Discipline Database Reports
- Student Exit Surveys (those students leaving residence before end of contract)
- Student Feedback Surveys (staff performance)
- Health Aide Student Health Issues Reports
- Residence Hall "House" Feedback Surveys
- Peer Advisor In Residence (PAIR) Survey
- Police Reports

Residence/Facilities

- Fire Alarm Logs
- Fire Marshal Reports
- Facilities Work Order “Time to Complete” Reports
- Facilities Work Order Summary Report
- Vandalism Report

Student Financial Aid

- Scholarships Report
- Athletic Scholarships Report
- Student Employment Report
- Academic Progress Report
- Awarding Report
- Teach Grant Report
- Direct Loans Report
- Private Alternative Loans Report
- Unusual Circumstances Logbooks

University Health Services/Counseling Center and Student Disability Services

- Titanium Usage Reports
- Titanium DSM-IV Diagnosis Frequency Reports
- Titanium Outreach Programming Reports
- Client Satisfaction Surveys
- Participant Workshop Evaluations
- Ulifeline.org & MentalHealthScreening.org Online Screening Utilization Reports

University Health Services/Student Health Clinic

- QS1 Prescriptions Report
- Mediat Service Usage Report
- QS1 Inventory of Pharmacy Medications
- Mediat Annual Quality Improvement Studies (selected processes)
- Mediat Health Insurance Claims Report

University Health Services/Wellness and Recreation Services

- Rec Trak Recreational/fitness Facilities Usage Reports
- Interest/Awareness Surveys (conducted by HPELS academic classes)
- Program/Instructor Evaluations
- Student Employee Evaluations of Supervisors
- Student Employee Learning Outcome Assessments

University Registrar

- Graduate Applications/Admissions Report
- Ad-Astra Classroom Space Utilization Report
- Student Academic Suspensions Report
- Academic Term Student/Course Registrations Report

External Program Review

There is significant benefit to external review. By opening ourselves up to the scrutiny of experts and colleagues outside of our own routine work environment, we benefit from differing perspectives and experiences that can provide more objective feedback necessary to enhance our effectiveness. External review can take the form of contracted consulting (through a for-profit vendor or a professional association), institutional review, accreditation, and auditing. As such, external review can be sought voluntarily or imposed.

We have several on-going external reviews and have had several important ad-hoc reviews in recent years. These are described below. For units that are not otherwise subject to a routine external review, an external review will be accomplished at least once every 7 years. Units undertaking external review will be selected in the spring for implementation the following academic year. External reviews for FY10 are:

- Student discipline system (Dean of Students)

Consultancy

Three programs of Student Affairs have, in the recent past, contracted with professional consultants to provide assessment of operations and performance:

- Admissions
- Financial Aid
- Disability Services

Institutional Program Review

Major institutional reviews have been conducted of Student Affairs (as an organizational unit) and International Services (in the context of future of International Programs). Both included Student Affairs staff but were comprised of equal or larger numbers of personnel from Academic Affairs and elsewhere.

Accreditation

Four programs of Student Affairs are externally accredited and/or licensed on a routine timeline:

- Counseling Services (International Association of Counseling Services)
- Student Health Clinic (Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care)
- Health Clinic Laboratory (Commission on Office Laboratory Accreditation)
- Health Clinic Pharmacy (Iowa Board of Pharmacy Examiners)

Audit

Three programs of Student Affairs are externally audited annually on behalf of bondholders by professional financial auditing organization. This external review focuses on financial management, but will cite poor practice to the degree that it might affect financial performance:

- Residence

- Maucker Union
- Student Health Clinic

Three programs of Student Affairs have been externally audited (2009) for compliance with federal law (Clery Act):

- Violence Intervention Services (in Wellness/Recreation Services)
- Residence Life
- Dean of Students

Best Practices Research

An additional component of our assessment program is action-oriented, best practices research. As opposed to a review of the research literature, this is a review of the professional practice of organizations that are similar to us or are tackling similar issues. Best practices research can be accomplished in a number of ways, the most common being participation in professional development activities (conferences, seminars etc) where new or refined practices of other organizations are described.

An emerging methodology is more systematic and involves a researcher who seeks out best practices and summarizes findings. Through membership in the Student Affairs Leadership Council, we have examined “best practices” research using this approach on these topics:

- Creating high student engagement in the university career center
- Addressing the needs of troubled students on campus
- Determining tuition rates for summer programs, online courses, international students, and non-residents
- Centralized advising models
- Instilling a culture of accountability
- International recruitment practices
- Organizational models for providing veterans’ services
- Campus health center staffing and operations