Assessment Overview

Assessment, the ongoing process of:

- Establishing clear, measurable expected outcomes of student learning.
- Ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve those outcomes.
- Systematically gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence to determine how well student learning matches expectations.
- Using the resulting information to understand and improve student learning.
  (Suskie, 2009)*

Assessment, serves the following functions:

- Helps faculty and staff make better decisions and use limited resources more wisely.
- Helps students learn more effectively.
- Provides feedback for improvement.
- Brings faculty and staff together to discuss important issues.
- Helps faculty and staff see how courses link together.
- Brings neglected information to the forefront.
  (Suskie, 2009)*

College of Charleston Institutional Effectiveness Model

The College of Charleston's assessment model engages broad-based participation and encompasses several key faculty, staff, and administrator roles. The CofC assessment model is an ongoing, broad-based process and involves collaborations between assessment coordinators, the Deans' Assessment Committees (DACs) members, the Administrative Assessment Committees (AACs) members, the chairs of the DACs and AACs who comprise the Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC), the Provost or Executive Vice Presidents, and the President. The DACs consist of faculty across the varying disciplines. The AACs consist of staff members and administrators from the respective divisions. These committee members serve as mentors and work collaboratively with their programs and units to assist the assessment coordinators in their assessment efforts and to provide a review of the quality of the assessment reports based on established criteria provided in the Institutional Assessment Rubrics.

Assessment coordinators (faculty and staff members) work collaboratively with colleagues in their programs or units to develop an assessment plan and report and coordinate their program's or unit's ongoing assessment process.

The Center for Assessment and Continuous Improvement (CACI) serves as a support office for assessment coordinators, the AAC members, the DAC members, the IAC members, the Executive Vice Presidents and the President.

* Suskie, L. (2009). *Assessing Student Learning; A Common Sense Guide.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Steps in the Assessment Process**

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1. Begin with a brief statement of the program/unit mission and document how the program/unit mission supports the College of Charleston Institutional Mission.
   - A mission statement should tell the reader what the organizational unit is about and why the unit exists.

2. Describe the assessment process.
   - Detailing the assessment implementation process involves answering the following basic questions: Who will be involved in each aspect of the assessment? When will specific tasks be completed?

3. Identify outcomes for the program or unit.
   - All outcomes should be measurable and assessed within a single five-year assessment cycle.

4. Map outcomes for a program/unit.
   - Mapping of curriculum/functional areas is an exercise that identifies outcomes are properly assessing the program/unit's mission.

5. Identify useful and feasible methods of measurement with performance targets.
   - Each outcome must have at least two measures, one of which is a direct measure.

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Plans

6. Analyze and report assessment results.
   - After assessment data are collected, scored, and analyzed, the results need to be summarized, presented to program faculty, staff, and administrators, and discussed in useful ways with findings used to improve policies, procedures, teaching, and learning practices.

7. Use assessment results for continuous improvement
   - Participants (including students and staff) should discuss the results of the assessment, review original outcomes, and make programmatic decisions based on the findings. Continuous improvement can also stem from changes to the assessment plan.

Results

Examples of Closing the Loop

Academic Examples	
Changes to Curricula, Pedagogy, or Programming	• Revise course content. • Revise course objectives. • Revise course sequence. • Modify program offerings.
Changes to Processes	• Modify frequency or schedule of course/program offerings. • Revise advising processes. • Create co-curricular activities. • Implement training or workshops.
Administrative Examples	
Changes to Services	• Alter scheduling or frequency of services. • Add new programs. • Revise content area of services or programs.
Changes to Processes	• Revise training/workshop content. • Modify manual procedures toward automated systems. • Alter staff scheduling or availability.

** See the College of Charleston Assessment Guide for more detailed information and examples.