The University Assessment Council

Minutes
August 25, 2020
Zoom: https://uasystem.zoom.us/j/93120561364

Attendees

Viola Acoff, Ginger Bishop, Christy Cole, Chris Coleman, Fran Conners, Allison Curington, Holly Hallman, Lauren Holmes, Suzanne Horsley, Deidre Leaver-Dunn, Grace Lee, Joyce Meyer, Michele Montgomery, Cathy Pagani, Heather Pleasants, Ariane Prohaska, Tim Salazar, Liza Wilson

- Welcome
- SACSCOC FYIR updates
- Three Talking Points (2020-21)
    - On-time assessment reporting
    - Evidence of seeking improvement (SACSCOC 8.2.a)
    - Impact of COVID-19 (on data collection, findings, action plans)
- Feedback Trends: Assessment Reports
- Unit Updates
- Homework: Additional ways to recognize/honor good assessment work?

    (current mechanisms = Assessment Award and Honor Roll)

Next Meeting
September 22, 2020

SACSCOC 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.
>   *(Student outcomes: educational programs)*
>
>   b. Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs.
>   *(Student outcomes: general education)*
>
>   c. Academic and student services that support student success.
>   *(Student outcomes: academic and student services)*

Rationale and Notes

Student outcomes—both within the classroom and outside of the classroom—are the heart of the higher education experience. Effective institutions focus on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning and support appropriate student outcomes for its educational programs and related academic and student services that support student success. To meet the goals of educational programs, an institution is always asking itself whether it has met those goals and how it can become even better.

Even though the concept of institutional effectiveness may not be explicitly referenced in all of the standards, the accreditation process assumes that all programs and services, wherever offered within the context of the institution's mission and activity, are reviewed as part of the institutional effectiveness process.

8.2.a Each educational program, in its assessment reports, should:
(1) identify student learning outcomes (SLOs),
(2) assess/evaluate the extent to which it achieves those outcomes, and
(3) provide evidence of seeking improvement based on the analysis of results.

The SACSCOC review team will be looking for those **three key components** in our longitudinal assessment reports. Their charge is to look at the last 2-3 years of reports for each sampled program (stratified sample of at least 25% of all degree programs). Based on the review, they will make a judgment about whether UA as an institution appears to be in compliance with 8.2.a. That official decision will be accompanied by a list of which assessment reports they reviewed AND an indication of which reports did (or did not) appear to include the three key components.

Feedback Trends: Degree Program Assessment Reports
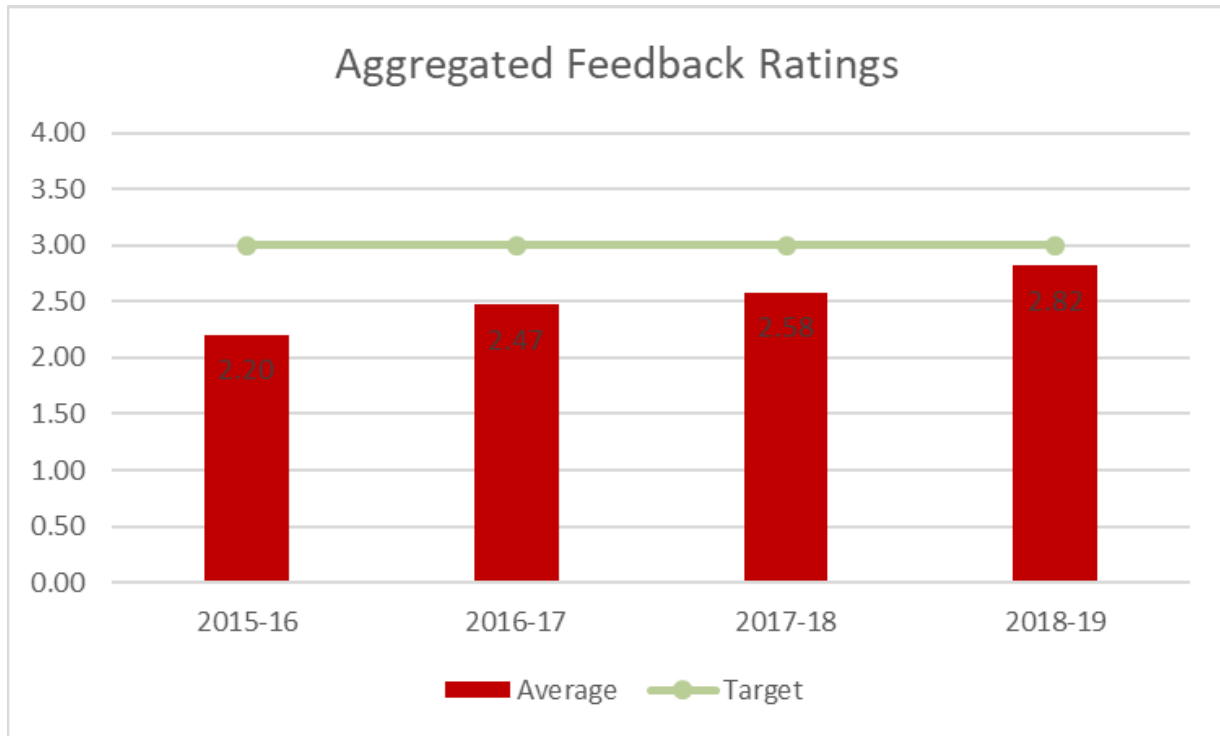
The quality of assessment, as evident in annual reports, is trending upward among UA degree programs. Use of results to seek improvement (element S13, which reflects component 3 of SACSCOC 8.2.a) is also trending upward, but more slowly.

S13 Trends (aggregated across all ADPs)

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
1.56	1.62	1.62	2.05

On element S13, a rating of Mature or better (≥3) equates to "evidence of seeking improvement in learning." A learning improvement (LI) intervention is a concrete, data-informed change to the learning environment (curriculum/pedagogy) that could plausibly enhance student skills in the target skill.

Number of programs w/ a 3+ rating on S13 in <u>one or both</u> of last two cycles: **70**
Total number of programs (as of Spring 2020):   **219**

From SACSCOC Resource Manual: *Effective institutions focus on the design and improvement of educational experiences to enhance student learning…*

THE IMPACT OF THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC ON INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

A Position Statement

During the global COVID-19 pandemic, institutions are having to renegotiate their approaches to institutional effectiveness processes. Sound institutional planning and assessment form a cornerstone of assurance for educational quality. The ability of institutions to respond effectively in this fluid environment often depends upon the strength of the institution's long-standing engagement with ongoing and comprehensive planning, including risk management and business continuity planning. As institutions navigate managing the pandemic, regular planning and assessment practices may be disrupted or altered to give attention to the immediate crisis. The form, focus, and timing of institutional planning and evaluation and program assessment activities may change in substantive ways during these times. However, SACSCOC anticipates that institutions will move forward strategically, adjusting plans as needed and engaging in reflective practices that monitor the effects of decisions made on operational effectiveness and student learning. Documentation of decisions and actions taken prior to the current crisis and while institutions work toward returning to normal operations will be useful in demonstrating institutions' ongoing planning, evaluation, and assessment processes.

In reports on 2019-20 assessment activities, programs should talk about COVID-19. For example…

-Did it disrupt or alter data collection?

-Did results look different than usual?

-What lessons were learned from emergency remote instruction?

-What actions have programs (departments, colleges) taken for the 2020-21 year to ensure strong and equitable student learning/success?

Breakout Group Activity: **What actions have programs (departments, colleges) taken in Spring 2020 and/or the 2020-21 year to ensure strong and equitable student learning/success?**

Actions taken by programs/departments/colleges to improve student learning/engagement during emergency remote teaching (ERT) and beyond:

Teaching Strategies
- For online/hybrid courses with large numbers of students, use of small group meetings and breakout rooms for "live" engagement
- Flipped classes (e.g., content covered in recorded lectures; course time used to actively apply knowledge/skills)
- Use of Zoom quizzes as formative assessment tools
- Adjustments to course-level assessment vehicles that may work well in face-to-face classes but be susceptible to student misconduct in a virtual environment
- Identification of back-up instructors ready to take over courses if an instructor becomes ill or needs to care for an ill family member

Experiential Learning
- Alternative arrangements (e.g., virtual or local placements) for students needing supervised clinical hours
- Alternative opportunities for students whose internships were cancelled due to COVID (e.g., industry partners offering free "continuing ed" programs over the summer)

Program Effectiveness
- Ongoing training with CIT to increase faculty knowledge about teaching online
- Focus on teaching strategies for Fall virtual delivery
- Maintaining same student learning outcomes
- Adjustments to 20-21 assessment plans; want to disaggregate by instructional modality
- Adjustments to website/access/transfer of materials

Student Support/Outreach

- Departmental town halls (Zoom), recorded for students unable to attend
- Keeping social media platforms and information updated
- Checking in with students (and sometimes their parents) to maintain engagement, support their well-being, and make them aware of resources; particularly for students who are enrolled but possibly disengaged based on Blackboard metadata
- Adjustments to advising of students (e.g., switching advising model temporarily during ERT so that all students—not just underclassmen—worked with the College's professional advisors, who were prepared to handle the dramatic increase in questions about registration, pass/fail, etc.)