

CAMPUS ASSESSMENT REPORT

UW-BARRON COUNTY

May 31, 2006

Areas of Focus:

Parts of the Institutional Strategic Plan for 2002-2007:

- “Improve the first-year experience for students”
- Strengthen the advising program (to “remove curricular obstacles to student success” and to “improve services for nontraditional students”)
- “Increase cooperation with the Wisconsin Technical College System”
- “Strengthen opportunities for and participation in co-curricular activities”

Parts of the UW Colleges Institutional Goals:

- “Serve the people of Wisconsin by promoting continuing education and outreach”
- “Provide opportunities for civic and cultural enrichment”

Goal for 2005-2006:

Collect base-line data that can be used in future years as a point of comparison

Success in Meeting Goal in 2005-2006:

The CAC has received the following baseline data.

- Number of students attending various campus workshops: time management, stress management, Myers Briggs, majors day, transfer day
- Number of students actively involved in most campus organizations: SGA, PTK, Encore, Contemplare Historia, Campus Greens, Campus Crusade for Christ, Campus Republicans, Alliance
- Number of programs undertaken by each of those campus organizations
- Number of students voting in SGA elections
- Number of students seeing advisors
- Topics that students discussed with advisors
- Number of people attending recruitment sessions
- Number of students who attended summer registration sessions in 2005
- Number of people attending freshman orientation
- Number of students applying for the AAS degree
- Number of students who completed a Guaranteed Transfer Application
- Number of students served by campus tutors in writing and math
- Level of faculty & staff engagement with students beyond the classroom
- Number of people participating in Continuing Education programming
- Number of students involved in a new program connecting UW-BC to Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College
- Student survey results from Fall 2005 LEC 100 courses
- Student survey results from Fall 2005 regarding the campus common read

- Exit survey results in regard to whether students are learning the value of a liberal arts education
- Retention data (from fall to spring and from spring to fall)

In most cases the data above is complete, but not all. There were two reasons for that. One was lack of cooperation from 100% of the campus community, and the other was that the CAC did not issue written reminders to stakeholders before final exams ended.

The CAC has sought but not yet received the following information.

- Results of a Student Satisfaction Survey
- Number of students who received career training as part of their classes
- Number of students enrolled in LEC 100 (both semesters)
- Number of students actively involved in the Science Club and number of programs undertaken by the club

The lack in this case is partly due to the CAC's late reminders and partly due to the lack of staff to tally the surveys and perform statistical analysis on them.

Problems Discovered in the Assessment Process:

The CAC should have pursued the following information but didn't think to do so. The data would have served as a baseline for determining to what extent the campus is providing opportunities for civic and cultural enrichment. The CAC will attempt to gather this information beginning in 2006-2007.

- Number of people attending each performance of a play on campus
- Number of people attending each concert by a musical group (chorus, band, orchestra) in which students are enrolled
- Number of people attending any program advertised to the public that had academic or cultural content

The plan indicated that the Assistant Dean for Student Services could provide his information in June. However, the report was due before then.

The CAC should remind all stakeholders in early May of their assessment responsibilities, so that collection of the data will be easier. This year the CAC spoke to stakeholders in August, September, or October, and again in January. She also contacted the advisors of student groups and the coordinator of CE in April but failed to get in touch with the other stakeholders until after May 24.

The assessment surveys used for some programs were not designed by social scientists skilled in the creation of surveys. Therefore, there may well be flaws in some of the data collected.

The CAC now has in her hands a large amount of numerical data creating baseline information. By next May she will have more. However, the CAC is not a statistician, nor is she trained in assessment. She may be unable to tell if a change in numbers from one year to the next is significant. And beyond that how will the CAC know what the numbers mean? For example, if 60% of advisors turn in the checklist of advising,

and 75% of those advisors' students came to see them at least once during the semester (for a number of years), is that evidence of effective advising? Or are those numbers irrelevant, with the Student Satisfaction Survey providing the only real information on whether advising has been effective? In addition, the CAC has received no training in how to write good, meaningful surveys. Therefore, she cannot really be of assistance to those seeking to improve assessment surveys including the Student Satisfaction Survey.

Final Thoughts:

The CAC and a large number of people on this campus are sincere in their desire to improve student life, supply quality programming to the campus and the larger community, provide excellent advising, and develop highly effective first-year experience programs. They realize that assessment is vital in these efforts. However, the CAC and some others feel like they are groping in the dark when it comes to assessment because they have never received adequate training. Asking each campus to create its own assessment goals and tools really assumes that people on the campus have the expertise necessary to do that. And, frankly, that's not true at UW-BC.

The CAC remembers when institutional assessment of the academic proficiencies and departmental assessment efforts were equally confused and confusing. The institution and departments have made a lot of progress in achieving a viable assessment program, in large part because the Senate Assessment Committee took an active role in creating and refining rubrics.

Perhaps something similar needs to be done for campus assessment. The Senate Assessment Committee could start by looking at what each campus chose to assess this year, using the items that were most commonly assessed to create the basic categories and then move on to creating rubrics. Truthfully, until those steps are taken, I foresee the collection of a lot of useless information that will do nothing to improve services to students or our communities. In addition, such "assessment" may convince other stakeholders (like legislators, the UW System, the Higher Learning Commission) that we're not serious about assessment. Those stakeholders would be wrong. The UW Colleges and UW-BC in particular may be inept in regard to campus assessment, but it is not lacking in seriousness; that could still be the impression conveyed—probably to the great detriment of the institution.

Submitted by Sue C. Patrick

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