Model Assessment Approach

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Introduction

There are many different departments that make up a university, with each playing an

important role in student and organizational success. One office that I found to be very important

is the Office of Assessment and Accreditation. My ideal office would be one that placed a greater

emphasis on student input to better determine office effectiveness for the overall student body.

The office generally aims to ensure that assessments and student learnings are in line with

university accreditation and are best preparing students to complete programs for graduation.

While faculty and staff input are key, student input can be very valuable in determining whether

factors such as degree programs, assessments, and curriculum are providing the most benefit for

the student body and helping to prepare students from a multitude of different backgrounds to be

successful in their future. In this assessment, I will focus on the University of

Houston-Downtown while also reviewing campuses discussed by several of my peers.

Individual Institution Assessment Overview

When conducting my Model Assessment Approach Research, I had no clue on what to

expect when exploring the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) website and checking their

credentials. Thankfully, their school website was well structured and organized. UHD became its

own university in 1979 while being a junior college beforehand and it is not serving as a

Hispanic Serving Institute (HIS). While it holds the second largest institution in the University of

Houston system, UHD is a small but mighty campus that holds a 20-1 student-to-faculty ratio,

while offering 45 Bachelor and 9 Master degree programs.

I was not able to meet with the Executive Director of Assessment and Accreditation, Lea Campbell but the department website was well inverse with the process of assessments and accreditation. Their mission statement was inclusive to all means of creating a well balanced college experience for everyone. "The Office of Assessment and Accreditation provides leadership and support (1) of continuous improvement in all areas of university operations including educational programs; academic, student, and administrative support services; research; and community/public service, and (2) in establishing and maintaining accountability to the UHD community, the public served by the university, accrediting agencies, and government agencies. (University of Houston Downtown, 2022) UHD assessment plans are broken up to each of the four colleges: education, business, humanities and social science, public service and sciences and technology. Their timeline for the assessment plans is from the end of October of being due till the following spring when the results are published. The Academic Assessment and the Co-curricular committee are representatives from the college that come together to share ideas to improve strategies and effectiveness. Committees are a great way for administration to grow and become great leaders for the institution. The main goal for UHD assessment and accreditation is to enhance student retention and graduation rates by making an inclusive college environment.

Institutions References

The University of Texas at El Paso is my favorite institution for assessments. It could be the great presentation given by Mariah Neumeyer, but when you browse their website, everything is more practical and easy-going for someone who might not know anything about assessments and how to conduct one. UTEP is very informative with the process of conducting an assessment

and it is very student friendly. Illustrating what and why assessment is important and giving a tool kit as resources to better understand the different types of assessments is what stood out for me the most in comparing UTEP to UHD.

Tulane University was another great example on how to make their work relatable and concise to their audience. For being a private institution, only having one point of contact for assessments can be challenging. The handouts of explaining the learning outcomes from Tulane are extremely helpful for staff from all departments and backgrounds to conduct an assessment.

University of North Texas (UNT) accreditation department reminds me a lot of UHD on how the assessments are broken up into two groups of academics and non-academic. They also share the same timeline of reporting and evaluating. UNT shares the past years of student achievement outcomes that are easily accessible to anyone. I really like when colleges and universities have their data accessible to everyone without needing the institution credentials.

Office of Assessment & Accreditation

When creating my own office of assessment and accreditation, I will employ an executive director and assistant director while also employing two graduate research assistants. Involving students and creating more of a student led environment will be more inclusive and relatable when coming up with ideas and strategies. Depending on the institution's fiscal cycle, I will try to match our timeline to theirs, but that might be more challenging so I can keep the patterns of the other institution and have reports due mid fall semester and the outcomes will be published mid spring. I really enjoyed the Tulane process and resources of conducting the assessment cycle and steps. The cycle of "1.) Goal Setting 2.) Mapping 3.) Data Collection 4.) Results 5.) Actions 6.)

Impact, then the steps of 1.) Analyze 2.) Inform 3.) Assess 4.) Report". (Tulane University, 2022) While focusing on academic and non-academic assessments, I will make public more visual aids, data, and handouts to help the reporters/researchers. I will also add UTEP what and why part of our mission to support assessments and student learning outcomes to emphasize the importance of growth for the institution.

Conclusion

My assessment philosophy is aimed to focus on student engagement and retention. These aspects are critical for improving educational atmospheres as well as helping students obtain their college degrees. By focusing on the institutions listed above, I was able to further explore into real world examples and find areas of success as well as those for potential improvement. Combining student input with the current faculty infrastructure can identify and create resolutions for problems in higher education as students see issues occurring in real time. Creating the most conducive system for student success is of the utmost importance for issues we face today.

References

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