From Planning to Action: Implementing an Administrative Assessment Process

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Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Create a high-level outline of a plan for organizing and scheduling assessment in administrative offices.

2. Identify at least two organizational or structural features/challenges at their own institutions that either help or hinder the implementation of a systematic administrative assessment process.

3. Identify at least three sources of institutional data and associated metrics for administrative assessment, including both direct and indirect measures.
Why a “new” assessment process?

- Assessment was uneven
  - Not pervasive
  - Episodic
  - Often lacked documentation
  - Didn’t “close the loop”
- MSCHE self-study recommendation
- New Office of Institutional Effectiveness to manage assessment
- Confusion over what the recommendation meant
First Considerations

- To which offices and units does this recommendation apply?
  - Administrative and Student Support offices

- How do goals and outcomes for administrative and student service units differ from the learning outcomes that drive academic program assessment?
  - Student Outcomes and Operational Outcomes – not necessarily learning outcomes

- Should assessment of student service and operational outcomes differ from the assessment of learning outcomes?
  - Although the outcomes to be assessed will be different, the process and methodology will be quite similar
Characteristics of Our (Ideal) Process

- Adaptable
- Sustainable
- Systematic
- Pervasive
- Transparent
- Effective
Precursors to Implementation

- A clear, step-by-step structure
- Clear terminology (e.g., goals, objectives, outcomes)
- Tools for carrying out assessment (templates, forms, etc.)
- A repository for documents and shared resources
- Willingness to change the process as we implement it
Overview of Implementation

1. Identify the appropriate units
2. Develop guidelines, worksheets and templates
3. Create an “onboarding” calendar
4. Run a pilot
5. Assess the process
6. Make improvements
7. Incorporate additional units in waves
Identify the Appropriate Units

- Generate a list of offices
- Understand their reporting structure (org charts)
- Group administrative offices by function(s)
- Create “waves” of offices/units joining the process over 4 years
## Create an “Onboarding” Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>Offices</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Assessment Liaisons</th>
<th>Starting Point</th>
<th>Assessment Plan Due</th>
<th>Assessment Report Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>July 2017</td>
<td>Dec 2017</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wave 1</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>Jan 2018</td>
<td>April 2018</td>
<td>Dec 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wave 2</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>Oct 2018</td>
<td>June 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wave 3</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>Jan 2019</td>
<td>April 2019</td>
<td>Dec 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wave 4</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>July 2019</td>
<td>Oct 2019</td>
<td>June 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wave 5</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>Jan 2020</td>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>Dec 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wave 6</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>July 2020</td>
<td>Oct 2020</td>
<td>June 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wave 7</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>Jan 2021</td>
<td>April 2021</td>
<td>Dec 2021</td>
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Developing Guidelines and Templates

- **Worksheets** for units to articulate mission statements, goals and objectives, to develop a logic model, and draft an assessment plan

- **Forms** for units to develop their assessment plan and report on assessment activities

- **Tools** to help units collect, organize, and analyze assessment data
Piloting the New Assessment Process

- 6 administrative offices, across 8 administrative divisions
  - One-Stop (QC Hub)
  - Registrar
  - Bursar
  - Financial Aid
  - Student Development and Leadership
  - Institutional Effectiveness

- 1 orientation/meet and greet
- 4 scheduled working sessions
Challenges

- Challenges to running the pilot
  - Scheduling and time
  - Unclear guidelines
  - Confusing terminology

- Challenges to doing assessment
  - Lack of buy-in or misunderstanding of assessment
  - Lack of agreement about the vision for the unit
  - Lack of data / data expertise
  - Competing priorities / lack of resources
  - “Silo Mentality”
Supports

- Supports for running the pilot
  - Setting aside time in advance
  - Clear guidelines
  - Agreement on terminology

- Supports for doing assessment
  - Understanding the purpose of assessment
  - Alignment across college, division, and unit goals
  - Access to data / data expertise
  - Support from Higher Administration
  - Assessment Councils
University Mission

College / Division Mission

Evidence: Data and Metrics

Goals and Objectives

Assessment Activity

Evidence-based decisions

Improved operational processes and student experience
# The Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Working Session 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Working Session 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Working Session 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Assessment Plan Submitted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. - April</td>
<td>Check-Ins</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Working Session 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Assessment Report Submitted</td>
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Office of Institutional Effectiveness
The Working Sessions

- **Working Session 1** – Reflecting on what we do and why
  - Articulating a mission statement
- **Working Session 2** – Taking charge of our work
  - Setting goals and measurable objectives
- **Working Session 3** – Embarking on an assessment
  - Selecting objectives / outcomes and identifying data sources
  - Planning the collection and analysis of data
  - Introduction to logic modeling
- **Working Session 4** – Making Evidence-based decisions
  - Documenting the process, the findings, and the decisions
Working Session 1
Reflecting on what we do and why

How to articulate a mission statement:

a. What does the office do? Describe its main functions.
b. Who does the office do this for?
c. What relationships does the office have with other offices?
d. Does the office directly affect the student experience?
e. How does the office contribute to student success?

“The mission of [insert office here] at Queens College is to [insert core purpose here] by [insert how you do this here].”
Working Session 1
Reflecting on what we do and why

Example: Queens College OIE Mission Statement:

➢ “The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) provides access to high quality and trustworthy data to monitor academic and administrative effectiveness, and to inform student success initiatives, program development and evaluation, fundraising endeavors, public relations, and strategic planning. Through collaboration with academic and administrative units across the college, OIE strives to facilitate evidence-based decision-making to improve student success and the student experience at Queens College.”
Working Session 2
Taking charge of our work

How to set goals and objectives:

a. Think about the possible ways in which the mission would be fulfilled.
b. Parse the mission into distinct themes.
c. What operational or student goals must be met to address each major component of the mission?
d. What measurable steps (objectives) can be taken to meet each goal?
Working Session 2
Taking charge of our work

Examples of Queens College OIE goals and objectives:

➢ Goal: Improve access to institutional data
  • Objective: Enhance OIE data infrastructure and analysts’ access to data resources
  • Objective: Develop dashboards and other tools for distributing and communicating data analyses

➢ Goal: Increase faculty / staff engagement in assessment
  • Objective: Develop a clear, systematic, sustainable process for administrative assessment.
  • Objective: Develop a clear, systematic, sustainable process for academic assessment.
Working Session 3
Embarking on an assessment

How to decide on an assessment activity:

a. Which objectives are you working to meet this year?

b. What actions/resources are needed to meet these objectives?

c. What results (outcomes) do you expect to see?

d. How will you know if these results have taken place? What evidence/data will you collect?

e. How is this particular assessment tied to your larger assessment strategy?
Working Session 3

Embarking on an assessment

Example: Queens College OIE assessment activity:

- **Objective:** Enhance our data infrastructure and analysts’ access to data resources
- **Action:** Map analysts’ expertise to data sources and data infrastructure goals
- **Result:** The mapping will make explicit how far along we are in meeting our data infrastructure goals
- **Evidence:** The map
General Principles for Selecting Assessment Metrics

- Choose metrics requiring relatively low investment
- Choose appropriate direct and indirect measures
- Use checklists for process-oriented goals
- Measure operational and student outcomes, not individual staff performance
Examples of Data Resources for Administrative Assessment

- Student records
- Swipe records
- Surveys
- Interviews / Focus Groups
- CRM systems
- Budget data
- Audit reports
Examples of Metrics for Administrative Assessment

- **Direct**
  - Count of students served
  - Wait time
  - Time to issue resolution / request fulfillment
  - Dollars saved / Audit findings / Cost per unit output
  - Pre / Post evaluations

- **Indirect**
  - Attendance
  - Usage rates
  - Satisfaction ratings
  - Office self-assessments
  - Measures of attitudes/perceptions
Working Session 4
Making Evidenced-Based Decisions

How to make decisions based on the assessment findings:

a. What do the data show?
b. What improvements could be made?
c. What actions do you recommend?
d. How frequently should these outcomes be reassessed?
e. What might future assessment plans need to address?
Example: Queens College OIE decision-making:

- Findings will lead to decisions about:
  - Training
  - Assignments
  - Dashboard development priorities
  - Software licenses
  - Resource allocation
Start: Identify measurable objectives

Identify data sources and metrics for each objective

Collect, organize and present evidence

Interpret evidence, review findings, recommend actions

Document decisions and implement actions
What we’ve learned so far...

- Implementation needs to be a collaborative effort
  - Start with a pilot group of volunteers
  - Consider forming an administrative assessment council

- Develop your tools for carrying out assessment first
  - Working on the calendar, worksheets, templates, and forms was helpful to planning out the implementation process

- Feedback from pilot assessors is essential
  - The point of running a pilot is to figure out what works and what doesn’t work
What we’ve heard so far...

- From our pilot assessors:
  - Assessment provides the opportunity to identify challenges, address concerns, and be more deliberate about solutions.
  - Assessment provides the opportunity to engage staff in thinking about unit goals and committing to them.
  - Assessment not only improves operational outcomes and the student experience, but improves office moral, provides opportunities for professional development, and offers evidence for needed resources.
What we expect...

- More effective and efficient operational processes
- Improved delivery of student services
- Increased staff motivation, reflection, investment
- New opportunities for professional development
- Resources used more wisely
- Move from anecdotal to evidence-based decision-making
Take Away Points

- Assessment planning is iterative and takes time
- Start small, showcase results and build from there
- Assess your assessment process, make changes as necessary
- Set aside dedicated time for assessment activities
- Prepare to do some hand-holding
- Forge relationships that further your assessment objectives
Thanks for joining us!

Questions? Comments?

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