Academy for Assessment of Student Learning Project Questions

Overall Project Description

1. Description
The UW-Superior Assessment Team plans to develop assessable outcomes for all five liberal education learning goals, identify appropriate measures, and implement the assessment of these goals. Each of these steps will be preceded by educational and equipping activities for the faculty and staff and informed by facilitated conversations with key informants and stakeholders. The awareness and competencies of the faculty and staff will also be measured through homegrown simple pre- and post-test surveys. Assessment will be conducted on one of the five learning goals in the first year, followed by the analysis of findings and reflective conversations for continuous improvement. This process will be repeated for the remaining four goals. The ultimate objective is that within the four year time frame, the campus will institute a coherent, integrated and sustainable process of assessment of the UW-Superior liberal education learning goals.

2. Area of Focus
Liberal education learning goals
- The ability and inclination to think and make connections across academic disciplines
- The ability and inclination to express oneself in multiple forms
- The ability and inclination to analyze and reflect upon multiple perspectives to arrive at a perspective of one’s own
- The ability and inclination to think and engage as a global citizen
- The ability and inclination to engage in evidence-based problem solving

3. Degree level
Baccalaureate

4. Assessment Activities
Refining outcomes, creating data collection instruments, collecting and analyzing data, and using data to implement change

5. Organizational Areas Involved
Organizational units that will be most directly involved are the academic departments, the Faculty Senate, the Undergraduate Academic Affairs Council, the General Education subcommittee, and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. In addition, student life, advisement, admissions, athletics, and other units to be identified may also be involved.

6. Desired results from the project
As the project advances, the following results are expected to emerge:
- learning outcomes identified out of the UW-Superior liberal education learning goals
- appropriate measures for some of the assessable SMART outcomes that are chosen for viability and meaningfulness in the context of the institution
- instruments and institutional process of assessment reflecting data that are gathered and recorded in a format that allows coherent analysis and meaningful reporting
- data gathered and recorded in an appropriate format and analyzed to produce a meaningful report
reflection and action for the continuous improvement carried out and documented in each academic department, program and unit on campus

7. Planning and Managing the Student Learning Project
The HLC Assessment Academy Team plans to complete the following:

Year 1:
- Develop and conduct faculty/staff survey on assessment awareness; develop questions that guide campus conversations; organize and facilitate campus conversations to clarify and refine Liberal Education Learning Goals; analyze campus conversations and create SMART learning outcomes; develop measures for some of the goals through campus conversations.

Year 2:
- Implement the assessment of at least one of the student learning goals using the measures; and share data on student learning outcomes and facilitate continuous improvement across the campus.

Years 3-4:
- Repeat the process for the remaining four learning goals.

Throughout the process, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) will provide professional development opportunities for assessment basics and more specialized assessment skills training.

8. Monitoring Plan
The team will check the progress of the project against the original timeline as it compiles the semiannual report to the HLC Assessment Academy. The UW-Superior Chancellor’s Cabinet, Provost’s Leadership Team, and Faculty Senate will also be informed of the project progress via the annual report.

9. Evidence of Success
- Campus culture of assessment;
- Campus members who use assessment theory and practice to improve or enhance student learning;
- Measurable, defined outcomes for each of the five liberal learning goals, reviewed and vetted by appropriate governance groups;
- Clear instruments for assessing the five liberal learning goals;
- Implemented assessment process;
- Established feedback loop for revising practices and curriculum for enhanced student learning; for example, documented changes to course syllabi and co-curricular planning that link the five liberal learning goals to student learning experiences;
- Institutionalized assessment process

Overall Portfolio Questions

1. Shared Responsibility
The project assumes that shared responsibility is critical to its success. The team has planned strategies to promote collaboration among faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders, integral
to its design. Firstly, the team will work closely with the Faculty Senate and obtain its input and approval for the project. Other governance bodies and campus units will be consulted as appropriate. Secondly, the team and CETL will provide opportunities for stakeholder input at various stages of this project. Thirdly, data gathering will involve individual faculty/staff members, while findings from the data analysis will be shared with the campus, fostering a sense of shared responsibility. Finally, this process will promote a campus culture of reflection and continuous improvement.

2. Impact of Academy Participation

This project will create a shared understanding of liberal education across the campus and promote a culture of assessment throughout the institution. Specifically, prepared with assessment knowledge and skills and having access to outcome assessment evidence of student learning, the faculty/staff will be better equipped to continuously improve specific aspects of curricular/co-curricular programs and pedagogies. Numerous professional development opportunities will be provided. Participation in the HLC Assessment Academy will better equip us for effective and integrated strategic planning and evaluation as an institution, fostering evidence-based decision-making.

3. Other Important Aspects

UW-Superior is in the beginning phase of an integrated assessment model. Participation in the HLC Assessment Academy will serve as a catalyst for campus transformation around assessment. The 2003 HLC accreditation review identified our need to develop and assess specific liberal education learning goals. A campus committee generated five liberal education learning goals in February 2010. The Faculty Senate unanimously approved them. These goals are the foundation of this HLC Assessment Academy project.