

Building a Best Practice: The PSU Internal Co-Curricular Assessment Academy

Structure of the Internal Academy

- ★ Modeled after the HLC Academy for Assessment of Student Learning
- ★ Calendar year schedule with monthly meetings during the fall & spring terms
- ★ 5-7 teams with a mentor per cohort
 - ★ Administrators nominate unit teams
 - ★ Mentors are prior co-curricular participants

Year 1 2011	Year 2 2012	Year 3 2013
Admissions	Campus Recreation	Forming now
Campus Activities	International Programs Study Abroad	Office of Student Diversity
International Programs IEP	Registrar	
Library	Student Financial Assistance	
Writing Center	Undergraduate Research University Housing	

Processes of the Internal Academy

- ★ Monthly meetings
 - ★ Meeting #1: 2-hr orientation & team work
 - ★ Meetings #2-8: 1-hr didactic & team work
 - ★ Mini-presentations, usually by participants
 - ★ Team work, use of story boards
 - ★ Sharing progress & feedback
 - ★ Meeting #9: 90-min team presentations of assessment plans
- ★ Mentor relationship with teams
 - ★ Mentor role as educator & consultant, support
 - ★ Interactions during academy meetings, unit meetings, & communications over the year
 - ★ Google-based form for documenting interactions

Outcomes of the Internal Academy

- ★ By 12/3/12, 13 unit teams – 2011 1st cohort of 5, 2012 2nd cohort of 6 (2 units pre-academy)
- ★ Growing pool of future mentors
- ★ Written unit co-curricular assessment plan
- ★ Participants' evaluations:
 - ★ Highly recommend/recommend to others
 - ★ Re-framing unit focus to student learning
 - ★ Highly rated the use of rubrics
 - ★ Using assessment results to improve units

Lessons Learned & Sustaining Progress

- ★ Structure
 - ★ 5-7 units per year as an effective cohort
 - ★ Administrators nominate units better positioned to succeed (e.g., those with explicit student learning focus, already collecting data)
 - ★ Mentors from prior participants
- ★ Processes
 - ★ Manageable assessment plans, focus on 1-3 outcomes, especially those with available data or shared measures
 - ★ Applied workshops, hands-on approach to developing an assessment plan, mini-presentations by teams
 - ★ Early identification of challenges faced by units to guide mentor instruction & available resources
 - ★ Team process for within & among team collaborations, opportunity for cross-disciplinary sharing & support
 - ★ Course management software (e.g., CANVAS) to create a single point-of-contact for teams
 - ★ "Reunions" for continued mentorship & support of teams, mentor development, & work on a complete assessment plan with planning for improvement
 - ★ University Assessment Committee role in monitoring & evaluating co-curricular assessment reports, similar to processes for degree programs

Example: First Year Programs Assessment

Year 1 2009-10 (pre-Academy)

- ★ Mission: Successful transition for students
- ★ Freshmen Experience -- 3 Goals
 1. Increased retention with 2 outcomes
 2. 8 objectives with 1 outcome of 75% proficiency on 8 knowledge/skills areas (e.g., use of Library resources)
 3. Mentorship with 1 outcome: 95% or > students perceived respect & openness of FE faculty
- ★ Assessment techniques identified
- ★ Results for outcomes generated
- ★ Analysis & plan for improvement of 2 outcomes

Year 2, updated plan November 2011

- ★ Mission: Same
- ★ Freshmen Experience - Now 4 goals
 1. Increased retention same
 2. 8 knowledge/skill objectives same
 3. New, 6 objectives each with specific achievement target (e.g., 75% were in at least 1 co-curricular activity)
 4. Mentorship same
- ★ Added Transitions - 3 goals
 1. Increased retention (similar to FE)
 2. 6 knowledge/skill objectives (similar to FE)
 3. Mentorship (similar to FE)
- ★ Assessment techniques identified, results generated
- ★ Analysis, decisions, & plan for improvement of 1 outcome

2012, updated plan May 2012

- ★ Mission: Same
- ★ Freshmen Experience
 1. Increased retention same
 2. 8 knowledge/skill objectives same
 3. 6 objectives same
 4. New, 4 objectives with 3 achievement targets (e.g., 95% students said how values influenced choice of major)
 5. New, 4 objectives with 3 achievement targets (e.g., 80% students identified purpose of general education)
 6. Mentorship same
- ★ Transitions
 1. Increased retention same
 2. 6 knowledge/skill objectives same
 3. New, 3 objectives with 2 achievement targets (similar to FE 3)
 4. New, 4 objectives each with achievement target (similar to FE 5)
 5. Mentorship same
- ★ Added Pitt Encouragement & Educational Resource Specialist (PEERS) Program
 1. Peer mentors for FE & Transitions with 1 achievement target
 2. Training, 5 objectives with 1 achievement target of acceptable/exemplary on 70% journal entries (e.g., on illustrating role of mentor)
 3. Deliver quality mentoring, 3 objectives with 1 achievement target of 80% of students agree/strongly agree with survey items (e.g., help mentees adjust to college life at Pitt State)
- ★ Added 5-yr timeline for implementation of assessment plan



Pittsburg
State
University

Patricia Lindley, PhD,
Director of Assessment
&
Heather Eckstein, MS,
Director of First
Year Programs