FROM 0 to 60: DEVELOPING AN ASSESSMENT PROCESS AT LEHMAN COLLEGE

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Objectives

1. Explain the evolution of our assessment process
2. Identify challenges and successful strategies
3. Discuss the roles of the Assessment Coordinator, Assessment Ambassadors and Assessment Council
4. Explain how we are institutionalizing and evaluating our processes
5. Discuss next steps
Assessment Coordinator

- Background
- Timeline
- Challenges
- Working with Faculty
- Institutionalizing Process
Background: About Lehman College

- Located in Bronx, NY
- 1/11 Sr. Colleges of the City University of New York (CUNY)
- Approximately 12,000 students (80% undergraduate)
- Serve ethnically diverse student body (over 50% Latino, 70% female, 55% Pell recipients)
- 50%+ >22 yr old

- Three academic divisions
- 26 academic departments (55 degree programs)
- 371 full-time faculty
Background: 2008-2009

- Preparation for Middle States accreditation visit
- Assessment conversations
- Formation of **Assessment Council**
- Middle States Report – April 09
- Monitoring Report issued – June 09
- Assessment Coordinator Hired – July 09
First Steps: 2009-2010

- Inventory of assessment artifacts on hand
- Evaluation of current process
- Discussions with academic leaders (Provost, Deans) and Chair of Assessment Council
- Appointment of assessment ambassadors
- Individual meetings with ambassadors and department chairs
- Development of an implementation timeline
- Reinforcement by senior administrators at college events
- Professional development opportunities for faculty
Personal Challenges

- Outsider
- Lack of trust
- Implementing new process
- Role was not clearly defined
- Lack of space
- Understanding the culture
- Credentials questioned
Background: Middle States Action

“… a monitoring report due by April 1, 2011 documenting evidence of the development and implementation of an organized and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve student learning and institutional effectiveness, including evidence that (1) assessment results are used to improve planning, teaching and learning (Standards 7 & 14), and (2) establishment of measurable goals at the program and course levels (Standard 14).”
Timeline: 2009 - 2011

Fall 2009
- Articulate learning goals and objectives for majors and programs.
- Identify learning opportunities in curriculum and places where students demonstrate learning of objectives.

Spring 2010
- Programs begin gathering evidence.
- Individual consultations
- Supporting workshops.

Spring 2011
- Middle States report due April 1
- Second completed assessment cycle of student learning goals
  - Analyze evidence
  - Report on how fall assessment results were used

Fall 2010
- First completed assessment cycle of student learning goals
  - Analyze evidence
  - Report on how spring assessment results were used (Nov)
- Identify 2nd learning goal and begin to gather evidence (Sep)
- Supporting workshops through fall semester.
- Syllabi collection

Ongoing Assessments
Working with Faculty: Challenges

- Buy-in / support
- Lack of incentives
- Resources (Time, money)
- Rewards and recognition system
- Culture
- Competing priorities
- General education
- “Academic Freedom”
- Getting everyone involved
- Bureaucratic exercise
  - NCLB for college, Business model
Working with Faculty: Strategies

- Make it **AS EASY AS POSSIBLE**
- Provide examples from other schools
- Be available
- Provide templates
- Provide continuous feedback
- Be open-minded (understand their perspective)
- Let them take ownership
- Be flexible (yet firm)
- Emphasize the positive
- Invite to events
- Professional development
Institutionalizing Assessment

- New course proposals
- Course change form
- Program review documents
- Departmental annual reports
- Departmental websites
- Syllabi guidelines established
- Office of Assessment and Planning formed
- Assessment newsletter and website – www.lehman.edu/research/assessment/
Perspective from a Department Ambassador

- Introduction
- Challenges
- Suggested Solutions
Perspective from a Department Ambassador

Introduction

• Assessment Ambassador chosen by the Department Chair

• Tasked to develop a list of department goals for each of the major academic programs

• Develop course syllabus

• Determine whether major learning objectives were met
Perspective from a Department Ambassador

Challenges

• initial lack of clarity as to purpose of assessment for the faculty
• physical gathering of all departmental faculty in one place at one time
• placing responsibility among the full-time and part-time faculty
• Perceived as bureaucratic exercise by faculty and others
• uncertainty regarding the continuous evaluation and feedback of the assessment process
Perspective from a Department Ambassador

Suggested Solutions

- Administrators and assessment officers should communicate with faculty members the importance of assessment very early in the process.
- Senior administrators should hold Deans and Chairs responsible for completing the assessments.
- Department chairs must also hold faculty members responsible for preparing course objectives in a timely and responsible manner.
- Course objectives should be prepared first and then program goals and objectives.
- Communicate how the course objectives and or teaching methodologies maybe revised based on student performance.
Perspective from Vice Chair of Assessment Council

- Evolution of the Assessment Council
- Goals and tasks of the Assessment Council
- Identification of departmental learning goals and objectives
- Curriculum mapping
Evolution of the assessment council

- Council representatives appointed by the associate deans
- Comprised of faculty from a cross-section of disciplines
- Made up predominantly of full time faculty
- Goals and Tasks established
Goals of the Assessment Council

- Advise and update the Provost and Deans Council
- Advise and consult with department/program chairs and individual faculty members to develop and improve assessment plans
- Promote efficient coordination and effective communication of assessment initiatives to the greater Lehman community
- Assist in the preparation of the report for the Middle States Commission of Higher Education
Tasks of the Assessment Council

- Organize workshops for faculty
- Review learning goals of departments/programs
- Make recommendations to department/program chairs
- Create college-wide student learning assessment plan with guidelines and timelines
- Coordinate assessment related activities
- Prepare an Annual Report to the Provost documenting student learning assessment efforts
- Review usefulness for assessment strategies, reporting strategies and feedback processes
The Work of the Assessment Council

DEVELOP

DISSEMINATE

ADVISE
Challenges

- Buy in of faculty to develop learning goals and objectives
- Submission of course syllabi for review
- Implementing the culture of assessment within individual programs
- Departmental meetings to brainstorm as to appropriate departmental goals and objectives
- Resources for review of assessment results
Departmental learning goals and objectives

- uses *action verbs* that specify definite, observable behaviors.
- uses simple language.
- describes student rather than teacher behaviors.
- describes a learning outcome rather than a learning process.
- indicates a single outcome per objective.
- can be assessed by one or more indicators (methods).
- is clearly linked to a goal.
- is realistic and attainable.
- is not simple when complexity is needed.
- is clear to people outside the discipline.
- is validated by departmental colleagues.

*Source: Ball State University*
Sources for Identifying Major/Program Goals & Objectives

- Standards espoused by professional organizations and accreditation agencies
- Course syllabi
- Textbooks
- Mission Statements
- Strategic planning discussions
- Capstone experiences
- Existing course assignments or assessments
- Survey or interview of prospective students
Once learning goals are developed, what next?

- Curriculum Mapping
- Developing and Identifying Assessment Instruments that Correspond to Learning Goals
- Using Assessment Results to Improve Student Learning
## Curriculum Mapping and Identifying Appropriate Assessment Instruments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome/ Learning Objective</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Course</th>
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<tbody>
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## Curriculum Maps

### Levels Curriculum Map Example

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(I = Introduce; D = Developing; M = Mastering)</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properly documents references and citations in APA style.</td>
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Moving Forward

- Getting more people involved
- Making process easier – implement an assessment management software solution
- Integrate into the program review process
- Reviewing Assessment Reports
- Incentivizing participation
- “Assessment Day”
- Faculty orientation
- Promotion and Tenure criteria – (increased emphasis in the scholarship of teaching).
Questions

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