

Annual Report for the Academic Assessment Committee: AY 2013-2014

Introduction

The Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) set many specific goals this year. Of foremost importance was the need to re-establish practices and processes for program assessment after a year of less consistency (due to an interim point person). Additional goals included preparation for the next five-year cycle of program assessment, continued focus group training, analysis of submitted program assessment surveys, an AAC self-evaluation, and renewed efforts to create a preliminary assessment dashboard for the AAC website.

Program Assessment

Progress in program assessment occurred in two key areas: (1) reinstatement of the Program Assessment Survey (PAS), and (2) revision of the PAS to include an assessment of department faculty participation and adherence to the five-year assessment plan. In 2012-2013, the PAS was not sent to the faculty. This process was re-instated in October 2013 when the PAS was sent to all faculty members. It was expected that each department would submit one form to represent individual department efforts.

The PAS response rate was weak. Twenty-eight programs submitted the survey (64%), five programs chose not to do so because the programs or leadership was new and data was unavailable (11%); and 11 programs failed to submit the survey (25%). Despite repeated reminders and outreach efforts, no additional surveys were received.¹ An overview of the results from the 2013-2014 survey can be found at F:\dept\Academic Assessment\Private\Academic Assessment Committee\Committee Info\Year End Reports.

In comparison with PAS results from 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, trends from 2013-2014 show increases in programs describing assessment practices as being “in good shape” for their mission statements, student learning outcomes, and course matrices. Three areas that need AAC attention for 2014-2015 are: (1) continued help with course matrices for programs who have not reached the “well developed” stage; (2) direct assistance to programs that do not have well developed program student learning outcomes; and (3) outreach efforts to programs struggling with outcome measures, data collection, or utilization of data collected. A more detailed comparison chart can be found at F:\dept\Academic Assessment\Private\Academic Assessment Committee\Committee Info\Year End Reports.

Focus Groups

Focus Group participation and outcomes were particularly strong this year based upon attendance, active conversations, research discussed, and feedback. The Fall semester focus group meeting was held November 5th. This meeting took place later than usual and it is important to have this initial meeting earlier in the semester (late September or early October). The presenters (Cohort #4, who began their first 5-year focus group cycle in 2012) were Philosophy, Social Work, Theology, MA Theology, and English/AYA. MA in Liberal Studies and Campus and Youth Ministries did not participate

due to leadership changes and/or minimal student enrollment. Those new to the focus group process (Cohort #5) were Education, MEd, Graphic Design, MBA, MA Medical Practice Management, Physician Assistant Studies, Spanish, Sport Management, MS Sport Management, and TESOL. Presenters discussed their program assessment experience for the year including questions of interest, measures used, and outcomes. Posters were displayed throughout the room and additional time was spent sharing more detailed information among the departments. Training materials were shared with Cohort #5 members and they spent the remaining time working on their assessment plans for the academic year in preparation for presentations in Fall 2014.

In December, the AAC created and distributed a Focus Group Survey to elicit feedback from those who had participated in the focus group process. The main purpose of the focus group survey was to use the feedback received in creating the framework for the second iteration of the 5-year focus group cycle. While only 14 responses were received, the comments were useful and changes to the 2nd iteration of the focus group cycle were made (see below).

The Spring focus group meeting was held on April 23rd. This meeting was established for Cohort #5 departments to share their current progress regarding program assessment research with opportunities for problem-solving. Departments addressed specific questions including how they chose their assessment topics for the year, what measures they used, and what method they planned to use to present the information in Fall 2014. In addition, part of the meeting was devoted to active assessment planning. The research shared by Education, MEd, Graphic Design, MBA, MA Medical Practice Management, Spanish, Sport Management, MS Sport Management, and TESOL was informative and interesting. Informal feedback from the participants was exceedingly positive. Physician Assistant Studies was unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts.

This academic year (2013-2014) marked the end of the 5-year focus group cycle for the first cohort that began in 2009. The AAC discussed components of the 2nd iteration of the 5-year focus group cycle based upon Higher Learning Commission expectations and faculty feedback. While the basic structure seems to be working well, three recommendations will be implemented in Fall 2014: (1) improved structure for individual program presentations, (2) greater flexibility for presentation modes, and (3) a clearer explanation of what information is available on the f: drive regarding assessment.

AAC Self-Evaluation

As recommended by the faculty and administrators participating in the HLC Academy, the AAC completed a self-evaluation this year. The self-evaluation included an analysis of progress for defined plans and goals using a three-way model: type of activity (strategic, tactical, and operational), frequency of activity evaluation, and progress level of each activity (initial, emerging, developed, advanced). The evaluation was discussed and agreed upon by all Committee members.

This evaluation demonstrated that the most developed areas are the AAC mission and focus group coordination. Areas of increased development include HLC Requirements and Initiatives such as the

completion of the five-year focus group (1st iteration) and the planning for the 2nd iteration; and improved accessibility of assessment materials and resources (e.g., Practical Handbook and AAC website). Furthermore, based upon the expectations of the HLC, the AAC identified “public accessibility” to assessment data as a priority for 2014-2015. More specifically, the AAC expects to make progress on the creation, development, and maintenance of AAC web pages and program-level dashboards. A copy of the evaluation can be found at F:\dept\Academic Assessment\Private\Academic Assessment Committee\Committee Info\Year End Reports.

Faculty Development

While the AAC fell short of expectations in faculty development this year, a new Practical Handbook for Program Assessment was created. This Guide is approximately 30 pages including best practices, assessment steps, and specific examples of effective program assessment. Plans for distribution in Fall 2014 are under discussion, and feedback will be solicited from the faculty for ongoing improvements in the Handbook. In order to improve our contribution to faculty development in 2014-2015, plans are in place to examine the current status of each department’s progress in program assessment and to provide targeted assistance. Creation of an assessment newsletter will provide additional faculty development.

Websites

The Higher Learning Commission has explicitly stated that Universities must provide information to the public regarding assessment activities and outcomes. Consequently, attention to websites is of significant importance. Based upon resource limitations, progress on the AAC website did not begin until the end of the academic year. More specifically, development of basic dashboard data is at the initial stages and will continue during Fall semester if resources are available.

With the assistance of library personnel, the AAC made progress on the Assessment and Accreditation site created to assist faculty in their understanding of assessment expectations and resources. Several of the additions highlight aspects of the Open Pathway – the process of reaffirmation of accreditation chosen by Ohio Dominican University. Additional information can be found at:

<http://www.ohiodominican.edu/library/coursepages/faculty/aac/>

Quality Initiative

Three members of the AAC were part of the sub-committee that created the Quality Initiative Proposal focused on assessment of Ohio Dominican’s general education curriculum. The entire AAC reviewed and approved the Quality Initiative Proposal as one of the steps toward submission to the Higher Learning Commission.

Summary Observations

The AAC reached the vast majority of its goals for the 2013-2014 year as outlined in the chart below. Three over-arching categories were defined as HLC Requirements and Related Initiatives, Advancement of the Culture of Assessment at ODU, and AAC Self-Assessment.

HLC Requirements and Related Initiatives	Advancement of the Culture of Assessment at ODU	AAC Self-Assessment
Complete 5 yr. Focus Group (1 st Iteration)	Update PAS to include assessment of initial 5-yr plan	Determine what to assess
Focus Group Survey	Implement PAS	Highlight Priorities for 2014-2015
Plan for 2 nd Iteration	Implement PAR*	Determine assessment measures
Approval of QI	Increase internal & external communication through webpage	
	New faculty development	
	Mentor faculty seeking support	
	Program Assessment Handbook	
	Create list of recommendations to Academic leadership*	

Only two activities were not completed as originally planned (shown by an asterisk *). The AAC decided it would be best to incorporate aspects of the Program Assessment Report (PAR) into the PAS rather than create an additional, required assessment document. Therefore, the PAR was not, and will not be, implemented. In addition, at the end of the academic year, the AAC did not create a list of recommendations to the Academic leadership. However, two majors concerns are: (1) the availability of resource support for the creation of dashboards and other website improvements to meet HLC expectations; and (2) availability of funding to send at least one representative to the 2015 HLC Conference.

¹Program Assessment Process:

- Revised form sent to faculty on 10/16/13 with due date of 11/14/13
- Friendly reminders at two Faculty Senate meetings
- In-person conversations with 2 departments reluctant to complete the form
- Friendly email reminder to all faculty on 11/7/13
- Selected outreach by email after 11/14/13