Developing a Focused Structured Student Outcomes Assessment Program
Experiences at a Large Public University

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Setting and Challenges

• Large public university with disaggregated and uncoordinated student outcomes assessment activities
  – Redundancy in campus data collection efforts
  – Negative impacts on response rates
  – Variable quality of policy analysis and survey design
  – Committee duplication and waste

• Benchmarking limited by lack of participation in national student survey assessment programs
  – Home grown instruments with powerful clients resistant to changes

• “Territorial” Issues
  – Domains
    • Faculty: Assessment of Learning
    • Student Affairs: Assessment of Student Development
    • IR: Policy Analysis, Strategic Planning and Database Management and Methods
    • Senior Management: Institutional Metrics
Solutions

• Created Survey Research Advisory Committee
  – Major campus constituencies represented
  – Members represent survey stakeholders and financial backers
  – Vehicle to both focus analysis on important campus policy issues and ensure results included in campus planning metrics
  – Sufficient power among members to help with “Territorial Wars”

• Develop Survey Research Plan
  – Easily accessible—Light on research jargon given broad audience
  – Emphasis on survey justification and consolidation/coordination
  – Emphasis/justification for longitudinal data collection and benchmarking
Solutions (cont.)

• **Participate in National Student Assessment Survey Projects**
  – Benchmarking/consortium participation
  – Identify projects with maximal peer group participation
  – Ensure campus specific optional questions
    • Simultaneous analysis of local policy issues/concerns
    • Ability to incorporate “Competing “campus surveys /program needs
  – Ensure ability to identify respondents for merging with campus databases
  – Provides well written and presentable reports
  – National projects moving to census data collection allowing IR to provide departmental level program assessments
Transforming the U: Framework

**Vision:** Improve the Human Condition Through the Advancement of Knowledge

**Mission:** Extraordinary Education • Breakthrough Research • Dynamic Public Engagement

**Goal:** Become one of the Top Three Public Research Universities in the World

**Exceptional Students**
Recruit, educate, challenge, and graduate outstanding students who become highly motivated lifelong learners, leaders, and global citizens.

**Exceptional Faculty and Staff**
Recruit, mentor, reward, and retain world-class faculty and staff who are innovative, energetic, and dedicated to the highest standards of excellence.

**Exceptional Organization**
Be responsible stewards of resources, focused on service, driven by performance, and known as the best among our peers.

**Exceptional Innovation**
Inspire exploration of new ideas and breakthrough discoveries that address the critical problems and needs of the University, state, nation, and world.

**Foundation for Success:**
- Foster Culture of Excellence • Cultivate International Learning
- Advance Interdisciplinary Frontiers • Build Diverse Community • Generate Critical Resources • Account for Results

University of Minnesota

May 2006
Critical metrics/measures

• Retention/graduation rates
• Satisfaction levels
• Participation in “experiential” learning experiences
• Learning and development outcomes—assessment issues
• Inclination to recommend UMNTC to others
• Alumni success factors
UM Student Based Management Information System

- Integration and coordination of survey work
- Linking data -- pre-matriculation through alumni
- What experiences and programs shape attitudes, engagement, and success?
Assessing Student Progress & Development
Student Flow Model: Undergraduates

Process & Outcomes

Student Aspirations, Values, Goals, Background Characteristics

Institutional Environment (Major, Programs, etc.)

Social Engagement

Academic Engagement

Outcomes (Satisfaction, Retention-Graduation, GPA, Skill Acquisitions, etc.)

Data Collection and Analysis

Application Form Data
Admitted Student Survey
CIRP Freshmen Survey

UMNTC Student Experiences Survey
UMNTC Alumni Surveys
NSSE Undergraduate Survey
SERU Census Experience Survey

Student ID Link Produces Longitudinal/Comprehensive Files
Combining Survey Results and "Secondary" Data Files (Admissions, Registrar, Financial Aid)
SERU Survey Design

- Census Survey of Undergraduates
- Modular Construction—minimize time needed for completion
- Core Items (100% of participants)
- Modules (1 of 5 randomly assigned to varying % of participants)
  - Academic Engagement - 20%
  - Civic Engagement - 20%
  - Global Awareness - 10%
  - Student Development - 20%
  - “Wild-Card”—UM Specific Questions - 30%
Remaining Challenges

• Delivery of assessment information to programs/department for improvement
  – Best approach
  – Format/presentation

• Completing the feedback loop at institutional level getting evidence back from program and departments
  – Technology (local vs. off-the-shelf)
Remaining Challenges (cont)

• Sustaining Student Survey Response Rates A Major Challenge Underlying Success of Assessment Plan
  – 40% for 2008 and 2009 NSSE administrations at UMNTC
  – Better results publication plan
  – Demonstrating role of survey data in informing institutional change
  – Review of SERU survey interface compared to NSSE
    • 40% response rate for NSSE administrations versus 27% for 2009 SERU
More! Remaining Challenges

• Defining IR and Other Student Assessment Campus Roles
  – Issue in IR nationally as well as on our campus
    • Office of Assessment /Office of IR. How best to configure functions?

• Integration with Program Assessment Efforts Not Completed
  – Overall institutional metrics assessment straight forward—
    departmental and program assessment roles for IR fluid
Questions?

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