When the Accreditors Leave ...
Learning Outcomes

1. Session participants will share common obstacles that are raised within the college/university community after the accreditation visit ends.
2. Session participants will share strategies to overcome these obstacles.
3. Session participants will be reminded why assessment of student learning is really important.

• This is intended to be an interactive session
  • We’ll use groups to share strategies and stories
Broward’s Experience

• 2010 placed on monitoring by SACS because we had no plan to assess student learning and we weren’t doing any formal assessment of student learning
  • Wake-up call!
• 2010-11 – two pronged-strategy
  • Both aspects were faculty driven and involved volunteers from across disciplines and across the college (all campuses)
  • General Education Task Force
    • Established General Education competencies
    • Established criteria for a course to be considered as “General Education”
    • Reviewed all proposed course outlines to ensure that competencies were being addressed in those courses
      • Through this, a course was selected as a Gen Ed course at BC
General Education Outcomes and Assessment Team

- The second prong of our strategy was to create a faculty-led General Education Outcomes and Assessment Team (GEOATs)
  - Starting in 2010, a group of cross-discipline faculty established our approach to assessment
  - 20 high-enrollment General Education courses
    - 12 permanent; 8 rotate
  - Stratified random selection of sections offered of those courses
    - Each campus (including Virtual) must be represented in that sample
  - Full-time faculty in each discipline develop the assessment that will be used across the college
- Each GEOAT member
  - Mentors
  - Communicates with selected sections to ensure that the assessment is completed
  - Acts as honest broker to ensure that all student, faculty, and section identifiers are removed so that anonymity can be maintained
The Result

- We were removed from monitoring in 2011
- In 2014, we were up for reaccreditation
  - No recommendations
  - Quite complimentary regarding our attention to assessment and our approach to it
- So, now we are in that funny place
  - So much time, energy, and anxiety has been wrapped up in developing our strategy, executing it and ensuring that we are doing the best job we can
  - And then the visit is over ...
    - The pressure is off ... or is it?
    - How do we keep the momentum going?
- What is assessment really about?
  - Accreditation “tick-box”?
  - Student Learning
Group work

• Each group will be given a scenario
  1. Identify the kinds of obstacles that arise because of that situation
  2. Identify strategies to overcome those objections or obstacles

• Each group will have 10-15 minutes to share ideas
  • Facilitator from our team will keep your notes
• Each group will select one member to summarize the group’s findings and recommendations
Scenarios

• Scenario #1: There were no or very few recommendations
• Scenario #2: There were lots of recommendations all across the institution, but not many in the assessment area
• Scenario #3: There were some recommendations spread all over the institution
• Scenario #4: The QEP is the biggest source of concern to the institution and the accreditor
Scenario #1

• “We’re perfect!”
  • Great feeling of satisfaction and success
• Obstacles:
  • No one wants to change – we’re perfect
  • Sense of overconfidence – we can slack and still do fine
  • Let’s get back to “normal”
• Strategies to keep assessment energy alive:
  • Rebrand the goals of assessment
    • SUV – Simple, Useful, and Valid
  • Look at ways to use technology more effectively in the assessment process
  • Try to make it fresh
Scenario #1 – Group Discussion

- “Good” can go away as quickly as it can be developed
- By creating the culture of assessment, you minimize fatigue
  - It becomes a normal part of college activity
  - By embedding it in the college culture, assessment won’t “go away”
- Develop a template for execution of assessment
  - Set standard
- Develop a cycle that minimizes fatigue
  - You don’t need to do everything every year, so set a reasonable cycle
Scenario #2

• Lots of recommendations, but not in assessment
  • Panic!
• Obstacles:
  • We have bigger problems to deal with – don’t bother us with that
  • Move people from successfully operating areas to problem areas
• Strategies to keep assessment energy alive:
  • Recognize that temporarily there may be higher priorities, but ensure that any moves are temporary
  • Remind everyone that assessment is about student learning and that is a universal goal – everything boils down to student learning
Scenario #2 – Group Discussion

- Assessment is used to generate data and help solve problems
  - This methodology could help the institution that has major problems throughout
- Assessment helps overcome silos
  - Fosters communication across the institution
- Assessment is all about documentation
  - What is going right and why it is successful
  - Apply those principles to the areas that need attention
- So rather than deprioritizing assessment to solve other problems, use assessment to address those deficiencies
  - Reframe the issue
Scenario #3

• Report with some recommendations
  • We did OK

• Obstacles:
  • Sense of exhaustion – we made it ...
  • Lethargy – let’s solve the problems and get “back to normal”

• Strategies to keep assessment energy alive:
  • Have disciplines review their individual assessment strategies and activities
    • Can they be improved?
    • Do they meet the needs of the institution?
    • Is student learning enhanced?
    • Can they be simplified or can technology be used more effectively?
Scenario #3 – Group Discussion

• Examine the structure of assessment
  • Build committees to address each area of recommendation, even if they are minor recommendations
  • Examine & eliminate overlaps
• Raise the target level to encourage further improvement
• Review communication
  • Keep focus on faculty – they are the start and end of the assessment process
  • Prioritize face to face communication
    • This is the most effective approach
• Keep IE web site updated with assessment data and progress
• Use newsletters
• Present to Faculty Senate
Scenario #4

- The QEP is the priority
- Obstacles:
  - QEP takes all the resources and energy of the institution
  - QEP becomes its own being within the institution
- Strategies to keep assessment energy alive:
  - Partner with QEP
    - QEP needs assessment plan – participate in it
    - Help build rubrics for QEP
    - Engage some assessment people in the QEP
    - Make it a partner, not a competitor
Scenario #4 – Group Discussion

• Clarify the needs of QEP
• See where assessment can help operationalize QEP
Additional challenges or opportunities

• Has anyone experienced any other problems or issues that they want to share?
  • One institution mentioned that they were experiencing a sense of fatigue with QEP
    • It was a lot of work to select and set up
    • It was accepted by accreditors
    • Now, there is a sense that they are done
  • They will use this sort of exercise to reinvigorate the ongoing work required to make the QEP successful
Any questions or comments?

• Our contact information:
  • glindebl@broward.edu – Greg Lindeblom
  • bmemari@broward.edu – Behnoush Memari
  • cjohnsto@broward.edu – Chris Johnston
  • jkimber@broward.edu – Joshua Kimber
  • nmarin@broward.edu – Nilo Marin

• Thanks very much