Academic Assessment at NOVA

Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment,
Northern Virginia Community College
Academic Assessment at NOVA

• Currently, the emphasis is on Program/Discipline Reviews.

• Process is periodic:
  • Programs on 7-year cycle
  • Disciplines on 10-year cycle

• Process produces a detailed report, an executive summary, and an action plan.

• More than 30 programs/disciplines undergoing review.
Program/Discipline Review

Looks in-depth into:
- Viability
- Currency
- Productivity
- Meeting student needs
- Meeting employer needs
- Curriculum changes
- Transferability
- Agency requirements (VCCS, SCHEV, SACS)
- General Education goals
- Program and learning outcomes
- Resource needs
- And other areas…
Current Process of Program/Discipline Review

- Faculty ownership emphasized (SACS 3.4.1)
- Review committee with a lead dean
- Initial meeting with an overview presentation
- Added emphasis on learning outcomes along with program outcomes
- Continued focus on General Education goals
SACS Principles of Accreditation

3.3.1 - Institutional Effectiveness:
The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: educational programs, to include student learning outcomes; administrative support services; educational support services; research within its educational mission, if appropriate; community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate.

3.4.1 - Program Outcomes and Learning Outcomes:
The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded is approved by the faculty and the administration.

3.5.1 - General Education Goals:
The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which graduates have attained them.
Program Outcomes and Learning Outcomes

- **Program Outcomes:** Generally associated with statistics on groups of students, e.g., graduation rates, retention rates, transfer rates, etc. Mostly used for reporting and institutional accountability purposes.

- **Learning Outcomes:** Knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students take with them from a learning experience.
Institutional Effectiveness at NOVA

I E Plan

Outcome-based Planning & Evaluation

Academic Assessment

Annual Planning & Evaluation of Instructional Programs

Program/Discipline Reviews

Annual Planning & Evaluation of Administrative Units

SCHEV Core Competencies

Goals
Expected Outcomes
Strategies
Actual Outcomes (Results)
Use of Results for Improvement

Proposed Web-based Reporting

Annual Planning & Evaluation of Campuses

Use of Results for Improvement
Academic Assessment as Part of Institutional Effectiveness Plan

- NOVA implements an outcome-based evaluation process for all:
  - Instructional Programs
  - Administrative Units
  - Campuses
- Need for an annual process (ongoing evaluation)
- Demonstrate “Use of Results” to make continuous improvement – closing the loop
- Importance of faculty involvement in assessment of instructional programs
Annual assessment and evaluation of instructional programs includes the following:

- Provide institutional goals
- Establish program goals and link them to institutional goals
- Use assessment procedure to measure whether goals are met
- Use assessment results to make continuous improvement
- Annual assessment process is faculty driven as required in 3.4.1
- Data available on-line: http://www.nvcc.edu/oir/oirpubs/progeval.htm
Assessment of General Education

- Addresses SACS Principle 3.5.1
- General Education goals are embedded in different courses at program-level
- Critical component of discipline/program review process
- Evaluation of NOVA’s eight GE goals are done through a mapping process
- New GE goals approved by VCCS in 2006
NOVA’s General Education Goals

Students will demonstrate:
1. college-level communication skills.

Students will develop:
2. skills to enhance life-long learning.
3. critical thinking and problem solving skills.
4. an understanding of interpersonal and human relations.
5. quantitative skills and computer proficiency.
6. an understanding of culture and society.
7. a knowledge of science and technology.
8. the knowledge of wellness necessary for a healthy lifestyle.
VCCS General Education Goals

General Education Goals:

• Communication
• Critical Thinking
• Cultural and Social Understanding
• Information Literacy
• Personal Development
• Quantitative Reasoning
• Scientific Reasoning
SCHEV-Mandated Core Competencies

- Piloting the JMU’s testing over a 2-year cycle
  1. Writing (completed in 2003)
  2. Information Literacy (completed in 2003)
  3. Quantitative Reasoning (completed in 2005)
  4. Scientific Reasoning (completed in 2005)
  5. Oral Communication (to be completed in 2007)
  6. Critical Thinking (to be completed in 2007)

- Cycle to repeat itself beginning in 2008
Challenges

- Linking annual planning and evaluation to the program/discipline review cycle

- Professional development for faculty on assessment techniques and issues (e.g. defining and measuring learning outcomes).

- Web-based, automated data exchange and assessment reporting in a standard template for all instructional programs.

- Role of academic deans in completing Annual Planning and Evaluation Report and programs/discipline reviews

- Reinstated Assessment Committee
Moving Forward

• Length of review limited to two semesters
• External evaluators as part of the review committee
• Increased emphasis on outcomes
• Verification of market responsiveness of the curriculum
• Linking assessment results (action plan) with the annual budget and College planning
• Input from the advisory committee
• Reimbursement to the committee chair
• Curriculum plan will eventually be the basis for program/discipline evaluation
Web-Based Assessment Reporting

- Use of re-designed NOVA’s website
- Use of Blackboard
- PeopleSoft queries for data extraction
- Annual Planning and Evaluation Reports built on-line
Web-Based Assessment Reporting: Template

Template: Four Parts

1. Basic Information about the Program/Discipline
2. Program/Discipline Planning Summary
3. Program/Discipline Evaluation Data
4. Student Learning Outcomes Analysis (Annual Planning and Evaluation Report)
Part 1: Basic Information
About Program/Discipline

1.1: Purpose of Statement

1.2: Contact Information
- Coordinating Dean –
- Faculty Chair –
- Program’s web site -
- Course Content Summaries’ web site -
2.1: Advisory Committee

- Members
- Number of Advisory Committee Meetings held in academic year
2.2: Program Planning Activities Completed in Previous Academic Year

Provide an account of program/curriculum planning activities in academic year that should include the following:

- Date
- People Involved
- Description of Activity
Part 3: Program Evaluation Data

3.1: Program Placed Student Profile

3.2: Number of Degrees Awarded

3.3: FTES/FTEF Ratio

3.4: Graduate Survey Summary

3.5: Transfer Data
Part 4: Student Learning Outcomes Analysis

4.1: Curriculum Map – Outcome-Course Matrix

4.2: General Education Course Audit

4.3: General Education Program Audit
Part 4: Student Learning Outcomes Analysis (cont.)

4.4: Student Learning Outcomes by Programs (Annual Planning and Evaluation Report)

This section will include the following at the Program Level:

1. Student learning outcomes
2. Required courses
3. Assessment measures used
4. Use of results
5. Action plan for continuous improvement