

Session I: Degree-Level Assessment

- Overview of session
 - Announce at the beginning of the session that all notes and slides will be posted on the assessment website.
 - Expand discussion of the eight-year cycle:
 - Every year you list your learning outcomes to remind yourself of what you have proposed.
 - Collect data for two years and then assess the following year.
 - Since the slides were not available at the tables, I noticed many individuals trying to write down the information from the slides as it was being presented. It might be helpful to slow down a few of the pieces to accommodate individuals who are writing/taking notes. I noticed that few individuals were able to note all of the Undergraduate and Graduate solutions that were presented (i.e. course/curriculum changes, schedule faculty meetings, etc.)
 - My table discussed the dissertation assessment system and whether it was the same as the rubric offered by the Graduate School.
 - Clarification was made that for portfolios, it is the reflection piece, in addition to the artifacts, that is important.
- Peer feedback on degree-level assessment plans and practices.
 - Use of grades is too broad. It shouldn't be the only measure.
 - Anchor grades with meaningful information about what it means to get an A.
 - Hand off evidence from one instructor to another.
 - Close the loop: using written surveys and oral interviews to see what can be improved in the academic program from year-to-year.
 - Small classes pose their own challenges in regards to assessing the data. A small course means that you can pull each student's assignment for evaluation. At the same time, it can take 10 years to collect enough data for meaningful assessment.
 - Implementing changes at the lower-level classes can impact upper-level courses.
 - Differentiation should be made between this is what teachers need to do to better teach the course, and this is what students need to do to increase their learning of the course material.

Table Discussions (Physics, KU Libraries, Business, Biology, and Slavic Languages and Literatures were represented at my table)

- How are students progressing through your degree programs? What conditions prevent or delay their progression?
 - KU Libraries no longer represented at the Regents Center on the Edwards Campus.
 - Financial insecurity and the need to work one or more jobs often slows students down in their progress toward degree.
 - Some students wish to explore more pieces of an academic major because they are afraid of the real world.

Notes from KU Student Learning Symposium 2015

- Students wishing to pursue professional programs often choose to withdraw from a course rather than taking a C in the class. The impression from the faculty is that students believe the C will negatively impact their application GPA, and students are quickly dismissing the fact that a W can sometimes count as an F in the application GPA. The continuous cycle of withdrawing and retaking the class delays progress to degree.
- Some classes don't transfer across departments, even if the content in the course is applicable to more than one discipline.
- It would be helpful to set course expectations up-front
- Instructors should explain the applicability of the course (i.e. point) at the beginning of the term.
- Education changes the individual, impacts the family, and can ripple out to the community.
- What is a milestone course for? Why do we have them? Interpretations of the data.
 - From the data presented, the group wanted to know if these students graduated in something else or if grade inflation was a possible explanation.
 - My table discussed whether some curriculums have courses that build upon one another (i.e. sciences), whereas other curriculums allow students to pick up the missing skills on other courses.
- Imagine course A is in your program...
 - What are students learning and how does it connect to additional levels of courses in that curriculum.
 - How can this data be easily accessed?
- How can you learn about milestones and barriers in student progress to your degree (handout)
 - Start at the end (graduation) and work forward to the student's entry point into the curriculum.
 - Disadvantage to linear course programs: students are stuck. They've accumulated much knowledge in one area that doesn't transfer to other academic programs if they decide to change majors.
 - Faculty at my table struggled to complete this pathway to degree exercise. Some did not know the milestone courses for their own academic programs.
 - Heat maps of grades. Are students learning what they need to learn from your class?
 - My table seemed to experience a bit of fatigue at this point in our day. One person wanted a snack or some soda to perk them up.