Executive Summary: Survey of Faculty Perceptions on Assessment

During the spring 2011 term, the Faculty Assessment Committee created a survey to measure faculty perceptions on various aspects of assessment. The survey was open to all teaching faculty, both full and part time. The survey was accessed through an email link to SurveyMonkey from April 6 through May 9, 2011. Responses were collected anonymously and there were no links to department or rank. Fifty-five faculty members responded to the survey. The survey requested demographic information on years of service at Maritime College, type of employment, percent of courses taught onsite and online. A battery of questions on level of involvement with six assessment activities followed where responses ranged over a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (very high) to 5 (little or no level of involvement). The next battery of questions rated agreement with eight statements on assessment skills or responsibilities. Responses ranged over a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) with the statement. The final battery of questions rated agreement with five statements on institutional level support for assessment. Responses ranged over a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) with the statement. Participants were asked to include suggestions or comments as the final survey item. The summary report of all responses follows.

When filtering the responses of full time faculty as compared to all responses, no differences in response percentages were noted. The discussion that follows is based on all responses. To examine any differences by years of service at Maritime, the categories were collapsed into 1 to 4 years, 5 to 9 years, and 10 or more years. Response categories were collapsed into high or positive, neutral, and low or negative.

Question 4 rates level of involvement with assessment activities. The variation on items reflects the diversity between departments who house general education courses and those departments that function at the program level. Item b ‘analyzing course data’ showed a significant relationship between level of involvement and number of years at Maritime ($\chi^2(4, n = 54) = 9.959, p = .041$). Senior faculty with 10 or more years at Maritime were more likely (85.6%) to analyze data at the course level than other responding faculty (52.8%). Although no significant relationship between level of involvement and number of years at Maritime ($\chi^2(4, n = 53) = 2.833, p = .586$) was found in item d ‘analyzing program level data’, there is a progression of level involvement in program level assessment with experience. The last two items offer opportunities for improvement, as approximately 18.5% of faculty have minor to little or no involvement in developing an action plan to address assessment results, as well as, involvement with evaluation or improvement of the assessment instrument or process.

Question 5 rates agreement with eight statements on assessment skills or responsibilities. There was no significant relationship between level of agreement and number of years at Maritime for any item. However, for each of the following items 20% to 24.5% of respondents ‘disagreed or strongly disagreed’ with the statement.

- I know what my responsibilities are to implement the recommendations of the most recent assessment cycle.
- I have used assessment results to change my classroom instruction.
• I have seen improvement in student learning due to changes made based on assessment results. (Only 54.7% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.)

The last question rates agreement with five statements on institutional level support for assessment. There was no significant relationship between level of agreement and number of years at Maritime for any item; although some results are of interest. In terms of having the training needed to complete assessment activities, 47.4% of faculty with at most 4 years experience at Maritime agreed with the statement as compared to the agreement rate of 68.9% from the remaining respondents. In terms of having the technology needed to complete assessment activities, 52.6% of faculty with at most 4 years experience at Maritime agreed with the statement as compared to the agreement rate of 70.8% from the remaining respondents.

Suggestions and comments were categorized into (1) training on the role of faculty, how to design tasks to measure learning outcomes, and how to design rubrics, (2) assessment being time consuming, duplication of effort, something that is mandated, no evidence that supports its benefits, (3) efficacy of the process, evidence that it works, (4) follow up by leadership, on data analyses at an institutional level, actions items are subsequently addressed, make sure all faculty do their part, (5) need for working models because the campus is specialized, (6) other, such as off-site retreats.

Recommendations: Engaging junior faculty in the campus’s assessment efforts should be a priority. There appears to be a need for workshops to assist various groups with the procedures of defining tasks to measure learning outcomes and designing rubrics for interrater reliability across sections. Faculty should be made aware of and participate in workshops and conferences on assessment. Finally, the College needs to develop a wide-angle perspective on the role of assessment of student learning and its role within institutional effectiveness.

Respectfully submitted,
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