

Assessment and Review of Master's Programs

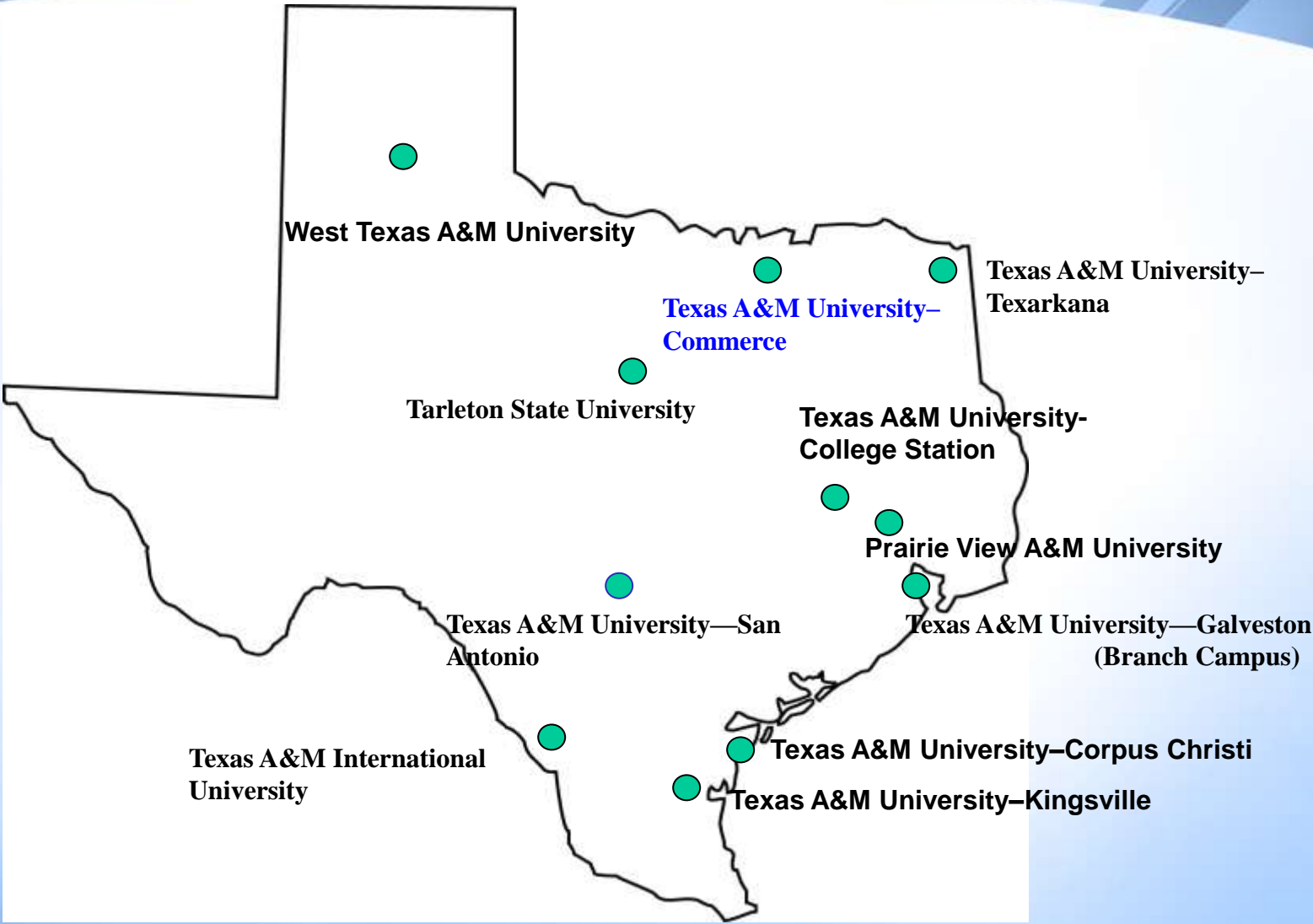
*Council of Graduate Schools Workshop
51th Annual Meeting, Scottsdale, AZ
December 7-10, 2011*

Allan D. Headley
Dean, Graduate Studies & Research
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Commerce, TX 75429
E-mail: allan_headley@tamuc.edu

Outline of topics covered

- About Texas A&M University-Commerce
- Purpose of program assessment
- The values of program assessment
- The process of program assessment
- Student learning assessments
- Expected outcomes
- Program enhancement through program assessment

Texas A&M University System



Texas A&M University-Commerce

- Established in 1889 and is the fifth oldest institution in the State of Texas
- Enrollment: 11,200 with 43% graduate students
- Maintains campuses at 4 sites throughout the Dallas Metroplex
- Joined the Texas A&M University System in 1996
- Graduates the largest number of high school principals, superintendents, and school counselors, compared to other universities in the state

Doctoral Programs

PROGRAM	DEGREE	FALL ENROLLMENT 2010	GRADUATES 2010-11
Counseling	PhD	76	6
Educational Administration	EdD	89	10
English	PhD	35	6
Educational Psychology	PhD	42	6
Supervision, Curriculum & Instruction - Elementary Education	EdD	65	5
Supervision, Curriculum & Instruction - Higher Education	EdD	84	16

Master's Programs (College of Humanities Social Sciences and Arts)

PROGRAM	DEGREE	FALL ENROLLMENT 2010	GRADUATES 2010-11
Art	MA/MS/MFA	34	7
History	MA/MS	23	7
English	MA	50	13
Spanish	MA/MS	9	2
Music	MM	16	7
Sociology	MS	21	3
Theatre	MA/MS	22	6

Master's Programs (College of Sciences, Engineering and Agriculture)

PROGRAM	DEGREE	FALL ENROLLMENT 2010	GRADUATES 2010-11
Agricultural Education	MEd	10	5
Agricultural Sciences	MS	10	7
Biological Sciences	MEd/MS	22	8
Chemistry	MS	36	1
Computer Science	MS	252	138
English	MA	50	13
Mathematics	MS/MS	22	4
Physics	MS	17	4

Master's Programs

(College of Education & Human Services)

PROGRAM	DEGREE	FALL ENROLLMENT 2009	GRADUATES 2009-10
Counseling	MS/MEd	213	67
Early Childhood Education	MS/MEd	48	37
Educational Administration	MS/MEd	180	88
Educational Technology	MS/MEd	22	34
Elementary Education	Med/MS	254	97
Health, Kinesiology & Sports Studies	MS/MEd	40	21
Higher Education	MS	28	10
Psychology	MA/MS	60	11
Reading	MA/MS/MEd	71	14
Secondary Education	MS/MEd	122	30
Social Work	MSW	142	76
Special Education	MA/MS/MEd	64	28
Training and Development	MS	28	8

Master's Programs (College of Business & Technology)

PROGRAMS	DEGREE	FALL ENROLLMENT 2010	GRADUATES 2010-11
Accounting	MS	28	3
Business Administration	MBA	916	324
Economics	MS	7	5
Finance	MSF	66	24
Management	MS	47	69
Marketing	MS	27	8
Technology Management	MS	96	29

Why Assess Graduate Programs?

- Provides valuable information about the quality of each academic program
- Provides information about the program's effectiveness in supporting the University's mission
- Provides information about the appropriateness of the programs to meet the needs of external stakeholders
- Provides reliable information for assessing areas of strengths and weaknesses of the program
- Assists in the development of strategies to continuously improve the program

Why Assess Graduate Programs?

- Provides measurable criteria to assess the progress of programs in meeting established goals
- Provides meaningful comparisons with discipline-specific standards, peer institutions, and related departments within the university
- Provides baseline data for the department and University to make well-informed decisions for program improvement and budget considerations

The Review Process

- Program review guidelines
 - Published schedule of periodic review of all programs
 - Clear guidelines and instructions with appropriate deadlines
 - Development of format for self-study review document
 - Relevant documents about the review process should be readily available to departments
 - Get buy-in from university administrators

The Review Process

- Peer institutions
 - Departments are asked to supply about six peer institutions
 - Peer institutions could be aspirational peers or peers in terms of program size
 - Programs must be comparable in terms of program offering
- Self-study document
 - Departmental and peer institution data gathered by Institutional research, grad school, and department
 - Self-study document written by **department** and approved by graduate school

The Review Process

- Reviewer committee (two external & one internal)
 - Department recommends potential reviewers
 - Recommendations are discussed with college dean and provost
 - Decision on the makeup of review team made by graduate dean
 - Review team receives self-study document prior to site visit
- Site visit
 - Typically two-day visit
 - Discussions with provost, college dean, graduate dean, department head, faculty members, graduate students and others as needed
 - Review team prepares report

The Review Process (Cont'd)

- Findings and recommendations
 - Review team reports to provost, graduate dean, college dean, department head on the outcome of review
- Action plan
 - Department prepares a plan to address recommendations and findings of program review
- A one-year follow up
 - Follow up carried out with provost, dean, and graduate dean
 - Closing-the-loop assessment plan is discussed
- 7-year program review cycle
 - Includes program enhancements based on previous review process
 - Must demonstrate the integration of previous information into program enhancement

The Self-study Document

- Mission Statement
 - Each program should have a clear purpose statement that is linked to mission of the institution

- Purpose of Program
 - A clear purpose and benefit of the program to the discipline and field

- Changes since the last review
 - Changes that have occurred from a previous program review
 - Program enhancements that have resulted as a result of previous program reviews

The Self-study Document (Cont'd)

- Curriculum & Program Profile
 - Enrollment data and trends
 - Semester credit hour production
 - Courses offered and enrollment in each course
- Degrees awarded
 - Number of degrees awarded per year
- Graduation rates
 - Measured as a six-year cohort

The Self-study Document (Cont'd)

- Average time to Degree
 - Typically averages around 2.5 years with the completion of 30 or 36 SCH depending on program (typically on the lower end for the science and business programs, compared to the education)
- Admission Criteria
 - Admission standards and acceptance/matriculation rate
- Financial support of students
 - Support for students (GAR, GAT, GANT), scholarships, etc.
 - Major scholarships and awards

The Self-study Document (Cont'd)

- Core faculty
 - Number of core faculty
 - Rank and distribution of faculty
 - Student-to-core faculty ratio
 - Diversity of faculty
 - Teaching load
 - Method of core faculty evaluation
- Research and Creative Activities
 - Number of discipline-related peer-reviewed publications, juried creative/performance accomplishments, books, book chapters, patents, etc.
 - Source and amount of external funding for scholarly activities

The Self-study Document (Cont'd)

- Graduate Students
 - Percentage of full-time students in program
 - Diversity of student population in program (ethnicity & gender)
 - Number of discipline-related refereed papers/publications, juried creative/performance accomplishments, book chapters, books, and external presentations by graduate students
 - Placement of graduates (first major job after graduation)

Student Learning Outcome

- Students should demonstrate professional and attitudinal skills in the discipline.
 - Oral and written communication skills
 - Knowledge of discipline
 - Critical and reflective thinking skills
 - Ability to apply theoretical training to practice
 - Ability to conduct research
 - Ability to teach

Assessment of Learning Outcome

- Aspects to consider in an assessment plan:
 - It should be a meaningful process
 - It takes time to carry out a complete assessment plan
 - It should contain measurable and observable assessments
 - It should not necessarily be designed to address all issues, but to improve the program
 - It should first address issues where there are modest expectations

Enhancement of Program

- Enhancement Plan
 - Demonstrate how learning outcome assessments have been used to enhance student learning in the program, i.e., change structure and timeframe for qualifying exams.
 - Demonstrate how the results of faculty evaluation are used to improve teaching effectiveness.

Action Plan

- Important aspects of a good action plan
 - Should address areas of concern and/or emerging new directions for the program identified through this program review
 - Should be written in the form of objectives to be achieved with clear timelines for their achievements, as well as responsible parties
 - May extend over several years
 - Should be evaluated at least yearly

Examples of Program Reviews Outcomes

- English Department restructured to more effectively maximize from existing resources
- Biological Sciences received added faculty lines
- Department of Physics was combined with Astronomy to form a new department, Department of Physics & Astronomy
- Chemistry decided on different recruiting strategies to increase its graduate enrollment
- Agricultural Sciences program was forced to be more focused

Conclusions

- Program review can assist in the departmental planning and evaluation process, i.e., curriculum, student learning, instruction, fiscal resources and mission/purpose.
- Program review should demonstrate how previous evaluations have lead to greater effectiveness within the program
- Areas of strengths and concerns/weaknesses of the program that impact its effectiveness are identified through program review

Conclusions

- Through program review, recommendations for the improvement of the program are gained
- For the process to be meaningful, must build into the review process an accountability mechanism
- The process must include a closing-the-loop assessment plan to indicate what performance measures were not met and what corrective actions are being taken
- The process is manageable, but must work collaboratively with various units of the university

Thank you!