Program Quality Assessment: The Master’s Focused Institution

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The Graduate School
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY™
Workshop Topics

I. Overview of Indicators of Quality
II. Relationship Between Quality Assessment and Ongoing Program Development
III. How to Link Program Assessment to Budget, Planning, & Fellowships
Eastern Illinois University

- Master’s Comprehensive
- 12,000 students
- 1,800 graduate students
- 28 graduate degree programs
- 7 identified as First Choice
- 7 seeking First Choice designation
Literature on Indicators of Program Quality

- Burgess, 1997; Rhodes, 2001
- Kohl & LaPidus 2000; Hamblin, 2000
- Council of Graduate Schools, 2004
Literature on Indicators of Quality in Assessment

- Banta, 1996
- Wiggins, 1998
- Suskie, 2004
- Allen, 2004
EIU Criteria

Assessment *Integrated* with 5 Criteria

1. *Diversity*
2. *Assessment*
3. *Curriculum* [Rigor]
4. [Student] *Scholarship*
5. [Faculty] *Mentoring*
EIU Process
Assessment *Integrated* with 4 Processes

1. *Mission Driven*
2. *Use Driven*
3. *Faculty Driven*
4. *Integration with University Values*
Mission Driven

“Where questions about educational mission and values are skipped over, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what’s easy, rather than a process for improving what we really care about.”

Banta, 1996
Three Levels of Mission at EIU

- Institutional Mission
  - Superior graduate education

- Graduate School Mission
  - Diversity, Assessment, Rigor, Student Research, Faculty Scholarship

- Program Mission
  - Communication Disorders: Meet requirements for clinical practice, certification and licensure
Mission Verification Model

EIU: Superior Graduate Programs

CGS: Diversity, Assessment, Rigor, Student Research, Faculty Mentoring

CDS: Practice, Certification, Licensure
Best Practice 2
Use Driven Assessment

- If an assessment doesn’t help improve teaching and learning activities, why bother with it?

- In order to be useful “assessment must correspond to your key learning goals and your curriculum.”

- Suskie, 2004
Use Concepts

1. Use
   - Verification/improvement of critical knowledge

2. Goals
   - Desired critical knowledge

3. Methods
   - Ways to learn critical knowledge

4. Data
   - Observations vs. expectation knowledge
Continuum of Assessment Use

**Initial**
- Verifies achievements
- Verifies strengths
- Identifies weaknesses; ways to improve

**Advanced**
- Verifies mission achieved
- On-going goal, method, and/or data advancements related to assessment
- Integrates assessment into program review
Use Focused Assessment

- Explain/define what a program wants to do before any other actions are taken
- Link assessment with action to verify/improve the program
- Retain the focus on taking action NOT completing a task
Best Practice 3
Faculty Driven Assessment & Review

“Assessment of student learning for program improvement is really transformational. We went into this process convinced that we were doing good work in preparing ESL/Bilingual educators and after two full rounds of assessment work we are even more committed and enthusiastic about our work as educators.”

Chris Cartwright, Portland State University
Guidelines for Faculty Engagement

1. Ease of Process/Clear/Understood
2. Resources
3. Recognition
EIU Commitment to Faculty Engagement

1. Graduate School Criteria
2. Integration with Center for Academic Support & Achievements
3. Streamlined Processes
4. Access to Resources
5. Recognition
Best Practice 4
Integration with Program Review

- Assessment leads to improvement under these conditions:
  - Integrated with a larger set of conditions that promote change (Program Review)
  - Integrated part of decision making

- Banta, 2004
Program Review Criteria

- Diversity
- Assessment
- Curriculum [Rigor]
- [Student] Scholarship
- [Faculty] Mentoring
Criterion 1 Diversity

- Enrollment/Diversity Plan
- Assistantship/Scholarship Plan
- Matriculation Management
- Graduate Placement
Criterion 2 Assessment

- Written & Oral Communication
- Depth of Knowledge (Technology & Ethics)
- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
- Research & Scholarship
Criterion 4 Scholarship

- Record of Student Scholarship
- Record of Research & Travel Grants
- Record of Showcasing Scholarship
- Record of Awards for Scholarship
Criterion 5 Mentoring

- Record of Coordinator Leadership
- Record of Faculty Scholarship
New Resources Enhance Mission

- Higher stipends
- More assistantships
- Travel awards
- Initiative awards
- College and Provost investments
Enrollment…..Assistantships…..**DIVERSITY**…Matriculation…..Placement

Communication….Depth….**ASSESSMENT**….Critical Thinking…..Research

Mission…Rigor…Capstone…**CURRICULUM**…Students…Alumni…Partners

Research….Grants…**STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP**…Showcase…Awards

Coordinator Leadership…**FACULTY MENTORING**…Faculty Scholarship
ELE: Assessment *One* of Multiple Criteria Failures

- Diversity: Declining enrollments
- Assessment: Disconnected from uses
- Curriculum: Rigor compromised
- Student Scholarship: Devastated student scholarly achievements
- Mentoring: Teaching loads decimate scholarship and mentoring
Elementary Education Criteria Analysis

- Enrollment
- Assistantships
- DIVERSITY
- Matriculation
- Placement
- Communication
- Depth
- ASSESSMENT
- Critical Thinking
- Research
- Mission
- Rigor
- Capstone
- CURRICULUM
- Students
- Alumni
- Partners
- Research
- Grants
- STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP
- Showcase
- Awards
- Coordinator Leadership
- FACULTY MENTORING
- Faculty Mentoring
ELE: Program, Graduate School, EIU
Missions Not Achieved

Not Achieved: Superior Graduate Programs

Not Achieved:
Diversity, Assessment, Curriculum, Student Research, Faculty Mentoring

Not Achieved:
Best teaching practices, multiple pathways
And diversity, communication excellence, Research excellence
Elementary Education
Disengaged from Processes

- Mission: Failing all levels
- Uses: Assessment isolated; data shelved
- Faculty: Coordinator unfilled; faculty not engaged with graduate program
- Integration: Program disconnected from University values
- Resources: Hold
Elementary Education
Process Action Plan

1. Mission: Define clear curriculum mission
2. Use: Specify uses to achieve mission
3. Faculty: Secure faculty commitment
4. Integration: Identify enrollment, rigor and scholarship expectations
5. Resources: hold/reduce resources until plan executed
PLS: Assessment *One* of Multiple Levels of Achievement Focus

- Diversity: Enrollment plan achieving diversity
- Assessment: Advancing mission
- Curriculum: Internal & external validation
- Scholarship: Exemplary
- Mentoring: Exemplary
PLS: Multiple Achievements
Remaining Question: Diversity

Enrollment…..Assistantships…..DIVERSITY…Matriculation…..Placement

Communication….Depth….ASSESSMENT….Critical Thinking…..Research

Mission…Rigor…Capstone…CURRICULUM…Students…Alumni…Partners

Research….Grants…STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP…Showcase…Awards

Coordinator Leadership…FACULTY MENTORING…Faculty Mentoring
Political Science: Program, Graduate School and EIU Mission Analysis

Achievement Likely: Superior Graduate Programs

Achieved:
Diversity, Assessment, Rigor, Student Research, Faculty Mentoring

Achieved:
Advanced knowledge in concentration, Analytical/theoretical thinking, communication, Social science research
Political Science
Process Analysis

- Mission: Driving assessment
- Use: Assessment ease/advancing mission
- Faculty: Coordinator leading/faculty engaged
- Integration: Working toward First Choice designation
- Resources: Considered for additional resources
CDS: Assessment *One* of Multiple Program Achievements

- Diversity: Achieved
- Assessment: Exemplary/Awards
- Curriculum: Internal & external validity
- Scholarship: Exemplary/Awards
- Mentoring: Exemplary/Awards
CDS: Horizontal & Vertical Achievements

- Enrollment…Assistantships…DIVERSITY…Matriculation…Placement
- Communication…Depth…ASSESSMENT…Critical Thinking…Research
- Mission…Rigor…Capstone…CURRICULUM…Students…Alumni…Partners
- Research…Grants…STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP…Showcase…Awards
- Coordinator Leadership…FACULTY MENTORING…Faculty Mentoring
CDS: EIU, Graduate School, & Program Mission Met

- Achieved: Superior Graduate Programs
- Achieved: Diversity, Assessment, Rigor, Student Research, Faculty Mentoring
- Achieved:
  Knowledge of nature evaluation treatment,
  Evidence based practice, Professional communication, Research foundation
Communication Disorders & Sciences
Process Achievements

- Mission: Achieved at all levels
- Use: Assessment advances mission
- Faculty: Culture of advancement
- Integration: Named a First Choice Program
- Resources: Increased & continued consideration for additional support
Value of Integrating Assessment, Program Review, & Resources

- Consistent Expectations of Quality
- Value of Assessment
- Sharing of Best Practices
- Consistent Process for Addressing Weaknesses
- Resources Tied to Outcomes
- Effective Process for Moving Resources