Evaluation and Assessment

It has been emphasized frequently that we wish to be ‘data-driven’ in our planning and decision-making processes at Tech. Part of that is gathering and using information about what we are doing. We need a culture of introspection about the work we do, of thinking about whether what we do is working, and about whether they are the correct things to do.

A major portion of a culture of evaluating and improving our operations is our Assessment program. The Associate VP for Academic Affairs leads the Assessment program on the academic side. Assessment of student learning, measured against learning outcomes, has been going on for many years, and continues to be improved.

A further step that perhaps needs to be more emphasized is the evaluation of the learning outcomes. We measure whether the students are learning what we want them to – we also need to evaluate whether the learning outcomes we have are sufficient and appropriate, and keeping pace with changing circumstances.

We propose as a goal

Assessment of Student Learning and review of programs needs to continue to be a central part of what we do.

Task 1 Departmental Assessment will be posted in the Integrated Planning Workspace. They will be available for other departments to see. Each department Chair should meet with the Assessment Coordinator (AVPAA) to discuss their assessment plan and how it can be improved.

Champion: Assessment Coordinator

Task 2 Departmental Assessment reports should also be considered with the annual Departmental Activity Report (DAR). Proper assessment, and using the results of assessment, should be part of the annual evaluation of academic departments for the departmental merit factor, and consideration for resource and position allocations.

Champions: Deans

Task 3 Periodically review the learning outcomes for the General Education requirements.

Champion: Faculty Senate Student Learning committee

Task 4 Periodic departmental reviews should be instituted to ensure that departmental outcomes and programs are meeting stakeholders’ needs. Departments should work with their area Dean, and for graduate programs also with the Dean of Graduate Studies, to develop a suitable plan and timetable for reviews.

Champions: Deans
(Plans might include outside advisory boards, professional organizations’ standards, surveys of employers and alumni, a formal program review with an evaluation team (possibly one outside reviewer in the program area, one internal faculty member in a different area, one internal professional staff), or others.)
Co-curricular programs, the Community Education Program, as well as all offices and departments have been working on assessment methods – for both Student Learning Assessment and Program/Office/Department Activity Assessment -- through their Student Learning Coordinator, the Institutional Student Learning team, and meeting with the AVPAA since 2013.

Task 5  All offices and departments will submit a Program/Office/Department Activity Report to the Integrated Planning Workspace for the prior academic year or for the fiscal year, whichever reporting frame works best for their VP review, beginning Fall 2014 on a standardized template draft (currently being finalized and should be reviewed and updated when necessary). The reports will be of two categories:
1. Student Learning Evaluation/Assessment Reports, if applicable; and

Champions: VPs

Task 6 The SWOT analysis results should be shared with the President’s Cabinet so that programmatic and student service needs that are not currently being met can be identified. The student government organizations should be asked to provide an annual report on needs the students feel are not being met. This report should go to the President’s cabinet, and to the Strategic Plan Oversight committee for consideration for action.

Champions: VPs, Deans of Graduate & Undergraduate Student

Since assessment hasn’t always been a part of academic culture, faculty will need to learn more about it.

Task 7 Professional development and training in Assessment ‘best-practices’ should be made available and encouraged.

Champion OSL Director, VPAA
(refer to Community of Scholars, with other professional development tasks?)

Sharing our attempts, successes and failures will be helpful for everyone.

Task 8 Workshops to share what different departments are trying, and what individuals have learned from conferences and training, should be offered.

Champion Institutional Student Learning Team

Surveys of outgoing students is part of Assessment, but is included under Quality/Growth.

Finally, the Faculty Senate Student Learning committee (with the AVPAA ex officio) should be aware of all assessment efforts and when needed make suggestions for improvements.