IT TAKES A REGIONAL VILLAGE
The Eastern PA Two-Year College Assessment Consortium

Presented by:

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THIS IS THE TITLE FOR THE CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Here is the “real” title...
MISERY LOVES COMPANY

Our Regional, Two-Year College Assessment Consortium
Our Goals For Today’s Presentation:

• Describe:
  • Why we came together.
  • What we do.
  • What we have learned.
  • The benefits of collaboration:
    • For us.
    • For you
The Beginnings: 2006-2008

• Bucks County Community College and Montgomery County Community College came together around a shared opportunity:
  
  • Collaboration on faculty professional development.

  • Shared faculty development needs:
    • Using technology effectively.
    • New pedagogies.
    • Assessment of student learning outcomes.

• Six colleges involved by 2008.
Assessment: The Topic That Rose to the Top

- Shared challenges and concerns:
  - How do you create a “culture of assessment?”
  - Complacency on campus: “How serious is our accrediting body, anyway?”
  - Are there resources that address the community college context, and where do you find them?
  - How do you assess General Education?
Assessment: The Topic That Rose to the Top

• **Shared Challenges and Concerns:**
  • How to assess developmental education programs?
  • How to train and support large numbers of adjunct faculty in assessment?
  • How to juggle the multiple expectations of specialized accreditation in career and transfer programs?
Questions for Discussion

• Who would you consider collaborating with? (getting started.)

• Who would you call at each institution?

• What outcomes would you look for?

• What concerns would you gather around?
Current Consortium Members

- Bucks County Community College
- Northampton Community College
- Delaware County Community College
- Montgomery County Community College
- Community College of Philadelphia
- HACC
- Luzerne County Community College
- Harcum College
- Manor College
Our Outcomes

• Over time, trust develops – we share assessment results with each other (the good and not so good.)

• Network/Brain Trust
  • General Education assessment.
  • Use of standardized instruments.
  • Types and uses of placement tests.
  • Experience across different positions within our institutions: IR Directors, Teaching Center Directors, Faculty, Assessment Directors, etc.
  • Experience across different institutional structures for assessment.
Organizational Logistics

• Regional Group
  • Goal 1 – Meet face-to-face 3 to 4 times a semester.
  • Commuting time a consideration (max. 90 minutes ideally.)

• Lunchtime Meetings
  • Rotating locations.
  • Host college provides the meal.
  • Breaking bread together builds community.
  • Noon to 3 p.m. (beat the rush hour traffic!)
Organizational Logistics

• Meeting Agendas:
  • Collaboratively developed.
  • Focus on assessment happenings at the school hosting the meeting.
  • Planning the annual Assessment Summit.
Questions for Discussion

• What potential obstacles would you anticipate for building a consortium?

• How would you organize to address these obstacles?
The Annual Assessment Summit

• Goals:

  • Bring together faculty from different institutions to network and broaden perspective.

  • Promote “faculty-driven” assessment on each campus by building a “critical mass” of awareness and knowledge.
Assessment Summit Logistics

- Different formats/matched to goals each time and overall:
  - Facilitator—whole day.
  - Concurrent sessions.
  - Panels.
  - Table talks (by topic/college.)
  - Participants gather by institution at the end to discuss the take-aways.
Assessment Summit Logistics

• Second Friday in April.
• Rotating locations.
• Host college provides the venues for presentations and break-out sessions.
• Share cost of keynote presenters (2009 Summit.)
• Hospitality costs shared; each participating college pays $20 per attendee.
• Professional development that does not break the bank!
Assessment Summit Topics

- 2009 (MCCC): “What Middle States Expects for Assessment of Student Learning”
  - Presented by Linda Suskie.

- 2010 (RACC): “Telling Our Stories: Faculty Assessment Project Showcase”
  - English; Math; Accounting; Allied Health; Art; Psychology; Engineering; ESL; Developmental Ed.

- 2011 (NCC): “Assessing General Education – Critical Thinking”
  - Philosophy; Math; Criminal Justice; Business; English.
Assessment Summit Topics

• 2012 (LCCC): “Closing the Loop: Results/Changes from Assessment”

  • General Education shared rubrics—oral/written communications; “Integrated Knowledge” outcome; Research papers; Computer Literacy; changes in Psych programs; Applying for Graduation (Institutional Effectiveness outcome.)

• 2013 (DCCC): “Direct Accreditation Experiences: ‘What have you done for me lately?’ or ‘They’re not kidding this time!’”

  • Luzerne CCC shared the results of their accreditation experience and what they did about it.

• Collaboration on program assessment
Future Directions: Collaborate on Program Assessment

- Business Studies Programs:
  - NEED: To whom do we compare the performance of our students?
  - SOLUTION: Collaborate and share assessment data with other consortium members.
  - CONCERN: Confidentiality
How We Did It

• Business faculty at six consortium institutions came together.
• Frame Your Discussion – Look for what is common, while avoiding criticism.
• Process Design – Begin the conversation by identifying a common course, assignment (Best Practice), or learning goal/learning objective.
• Desired Outcome – Assessment of student learning using a common assessment instrument.
Adopt the “Culture of Assessment and Improvement”

- Conquer fear.
- Focus on what is you hold in common, not on how you differ.
- Join the “team” – communicate and share to improve student learning.
- Celebrate successful collaboration – Keep the party going!
Future Opportunities for Collaboration

• Cross-institutional Consulting on assessment projects/areas.
• Data collection and analysis.
• Completion and Success Theme.
• Assessing Institutional Effectiveness.
• Sustaining Assessment (post-Accreditation.)
• Engaging Adjunct Faculty.
• Course-Based Assessment (as opposed to Gen Ed. and/or Program.)
• Developmental Education.
Final Thoughts: Challenges

• Maintaining regional focus.
• Continuity in membership (ebb and flow of assessment personnel.)
• Establish and sustain a regional event.
• Maintaining assessment focus.
• Funding?
Final Thoughts: Opportunities

• We all have to do it; why not do it together???

• We are trying to change the culture of our institutions – the focus is on learning, not evaluation.
  • Increase faculty involvement in assessment at our institutions.
  • Increase information sharing among assessment professionals at our institutions.

• Increasing trust and transparency.
Question for Discussion

How will you get started back home?
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