Advancing the Use of Evidence to Improve: Lessons from Excellence in Assessment

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SACSCOC Annual Meeting, New Orleans - December 9, 2018
Agenda

- Introduction to the Excellence in Assessment Designations
- Connecting SACSCOC and EIA: Principles related to evidence
  - Rubric exercise
- One EIA awardee approach: Mississippi State University
- Approaches to increasing the use of evidence
- How might you use the EIA rubric to enhance your assessment practice?
- Apply for EIA 2019! (applications available in December)
- Q&A /Discussion
Excellence in Assessment Designations

- National recognition program for campus assessment leaders
- Evaluation based on the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) Transparency Framework
- Focus on campus-wide assessment – including student affairs & external stakeholders
- Joint project of the VSA, NILOA, and the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U)

http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/eiadesignation.html
EIA Designees 16, 17

- CCBC Community College of Baltimore County
- INDIANA UNIVERSITY–PURDUE UNIVERSITY INDIANAPOLIS
- KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
- ROSE-HULMAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
- CAMERON UNIVERSITY
- Capella University
- MILLS COLLEGE
- JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY
- BGSU
- MOUNT ST. JOSEPH UNIVERSITY
- MIDDLESEX Community College
- Rio Salado College
- Southern Connecticut State University
- UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON
- ZAYED UNIVERSITY

EXCELLENCE in Assessment
2018 EIA Designees

2019 application period opening soon!
Why did we create the EIA Designations?

Is college worth it? Goldman Sachs says...

By Brooke Metz 8:30 am EST December 10, 2015
EVERYDAY ECONOMICS

Is College Worth It Even Though It Costs Too Much

Why College Is So Expensive and Worth It

Opinion

The Misguided Drive to Measure ‘Learning Outcomes’

By Molly Worthen

Feb. 23, 2018
Why did we create the EIA Designations?

- Faculty & instructional staff
- Students & Alumni
- Student Affairs staff
- Employers, subsequent institutions
- Accreditors, governing boards

- College-level Assessment (e.g., assessment of college-level learning outcomes, competencies, etc.)
- Program-level Assessment (e.g., assessment of program-level learning outcomes, requirements for licensure, etc.)
- Subsequent institutions, employers, accreditors, governing boards

- Faculty & instructional staff
  - Course level Assessment (e.g., assessment of course-level learning outcomes, etc.)

- Students & Alumni
  - Program level Assessment (e.g., assessment of program-level learning outcomes, requirements for licensure, etc.)

- Student Affairs staff
  - College level Assessment (e.g., assessment of college-level learning outcomes, competencies, etc.)

- Employers, subsequent institutions
  - Program level Assessment (e.g., assessment of program-level learning outcomes, requirements for licensure, etc.)

- Accreditors, governing boards
  - College level Assessment (e.g., assessment of college-level learning outcomes, etc.)
Why did we create the EIA Designations?
How does the NILOA Transparency Framework fit in?

Institutions more frequently report assessment results internally than to external audiences.
Application Components

• Letter of support from Senior Campus Leadership
• Annotated list of participants in creating application
• Application narrative
  – Self study reflection process
  – Draws heavily on components (6) of the NILOA Transparency Framework
  – Reflection and Growth/Improvement Plan
• Evaluation by national assessment experts
EIA Application Evaluation Domains

1. Diversity of groups and individuals engaged in assessment activities;
2. Student learning outcomes statements;
3. Assessment plans;
4. Assessment resources;
5. Current assessment activities;
6. Evidence of student learning;
7. Use of evidence of student learning; and
8. Growth and improvement plans.
Development of the EIA Rubric

- Creation of rubric
  - Domains based on NILOA Transparency Framework
  - Elaboration on dimensions & standards for excellence

- Rubric testing

- Training and norming reviewers
EIA Application Evaluation Domains

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Why Focus on the Evidence Domain?

• Evidence use narrative:
  – “Challenge to ‘close the assessment loop’”
  – All energy devoted to collecting evidence, less to using it to inform action, even less to documenting change
  – Demonstrating “use of evidence” is slippery… what counts? What systems do we have to keep track of use?
  – Demonstration of evidence use is a core expectation in accreditation
  – What else?
Which SACSCOC Principles relate to evidence use?

- SACSCOC 7.1
- SACSCOC 8.2.a,b,c
Review of 3 EIA Application years – what did we learn?

EIA domain with greatest range of excellence: Use of Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Standard for Excellence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integration of campus-level results with measures used at other levels to guide campus decision-making</td>
<td>Campus-level assessment results have been considered in combination with assessment results at other levels of the institution to guide decision-making related to changes in policies/practices that may lead to improved student learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence of use of assessment results from all levels of campus provided to stakeholders</td>
<td>Stakeholders from both inside and outside the institution are regularly provided with evidence that institutional decision-making is appropriately guided by assessment results from multiple levels of campus assessment.</td>
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<td>Communication of changes made as a result of assessment evidence from all levels of campus</td>
<td>Changes made as a result of assessment are communicated to both internal &amp; external campus audiences, including students. Communications include information on evidence supporting need for change. (weighted for both internal &amp; external communication, that changes made are communicated to both, &amp; if communications include information on evidence supporting need for change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication of outcomes from changes made as a result of assessment evidence from all levels of campus</td>
<td>Changes made as a result of assessment are monitored and evaluated. Outcomes from changes are communicated to both internal and external campus audiences, including students. Communications include information on evidence used to evaluate the change. (weighted if evidence is provided that changes made as a result of assessment results are monitored and evaluated, and more if outcomes from changes are monitored and results are communicated with both internal &amp; external audiences)</td>
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**Scoring:** To what extent does the application provide evidence of meeting the exemplary definition provided? 5 = clear evidence provided that meets the exemplary definition; 3 = evidence provided, but either evidence is unclear or practice falls short of exemplary definition; 1 = evidence is alluded to but not provided directly or practice needs significant improvement to meet exemplary definition; 0 = no evidence provided or evidence provided does not address practice at all.
Reflection: SACSCOC, EIA Standards & Your Practice

<table>
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<th>Institutional Challenge Reflection</th>
<th>EIA Standard of Excellence</th>
<th>Effective Practices</th>
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<td>What challenges are there for your institution’s demonstration of SACSCOC Principles for using evidence, or for EIA “Use of Campus-level Evidence of Student Learning?”</td>
<td>What dimension/s outlined in the EIA rubric is/are particularly difficult and why?</td>
<td>What approach might you take to improve use of evidence, especially in the most challenging dimension/s?</td>
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Let’s Learn A little More about EIA Excellence and in Particular, Effective Approaches to Using Evidence
Mississippi State University continues to implement effective evidence-based practice into its current assessment process. Using a bottom-up approach to improve teaching practice and administrative services, Mississippi State University has done considerable work to embed assessment throughout the campus. Extensive committee engagement, integration of its learning outcomes (institution-, program/unit-, and course-level), comprehensive assessment templates, and one of its most robust practices—distributing and sharing campus-level results of student assessment—are key to its success.
Overview of Assessment at Mississippi State

• Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness (OIRE) shepherds the assessment process for 248 academic units, 41 academic support units, 8 colleges, and 9 divisions under VPs.

• Use university-wide instruments, such as National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), ETS Proficiency Profile exam, Graduating Student Exit Surveys, and a common writing rubric.

• Consider ourselves “polycentric” with multiple, overlapping units rather than hierarchical.

• Strong shared governance culture with lots of emphasis on university committees representing all of the functional areas and units.
Our “Bottom-up Approach”

- OIRE developed a common language based on a content analysis of hundreds of annual assessment reports: We call this our bottom-up approach.

- Analysis revealed themes and patterns, which we cross-referenced with CAS and DQP.

- Crafted university learning outcomes that gave us common ground while also protecting accreditation and discipline-specific needs.

- OIRE develop a map that connects these reports from the courses through colleges through the divisions. We also applied that map to our university-level assessment instruments, which could then be shared appropriately with the units that need it.
Documenting Evidence

• Our first submission for EIA designation was rejected because we focused too much on our QEP and annual assessment reports.

• Lightbulb moment: Committee meetings recorded evidence and action, but isn’t documented in annual assessment reports.
  – Associate Deans Council meeting discussed survey results, which led to changes in advising system.
  – In the university curriculum committee, Biological Sciences submitted a reform packet based on results from the writing rubric.

• Leverage committees to both gather assessment evidence as well as insert assessment-related content
Changing the Assessment Image

- Celebrating strengths
  - Twitter for #TuesdayTrivia & #EnhancementSpotlight
  - Connected more with students through Student Association and committee work
  - Collaborations with other units to share data that demonstrates success

- Incentivizing participation
  - Department of Art has had significantly higher reflective learning scores on NSSE. We wrote a memo to connect the instrument to the department, which helped them in course redesign to preserve what they thought contributed to the score.
  - Wrote a note to our IT person and his boss to show the impact his work had in increasing our NSSE response rate.
  - Laying the groundwork to incorporate assessment into faculty members’ annual evaluations.
Additional Approaches to Excellence in Using Evidence

1. **JMU** promoted “Weigh Pig, Feed Pig” approach, and transparent evidence of student growth on learning clusters and what this means for instructional practice.

2. **Rio Salado College** campus wide TQM Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle and Assessment Data Display.

3. **Bowie State** emphasis on and **structured support to use assessment results to improve instruction** via National Center for Academic Transformation, and **USLAC Assessment Report Action Plans** and **USM Program Reviews**.
Lessons Learned about Using Evidence

- **Structures** to promote use of evidence
  - Multiple levels (program, college, university) with expectations for multi-level communication/reporting of results, plans/initiatives for improvement
  - Committee structures with formal responsibilities for decision making such as with curriculum, faculty development, policy/practice

- **Active involvement of diverse stakeholders** on campus committees, especially students

- **Opportunities for public showcasing/recognition** of use of evidence and improvement

- Assessment cycles/schedules that include **adequate time for improvement** and reassessment

- Data and assessment management system dashboards that **facilitate monitoring & evaluation** of effectiveness

- Institutional **best practice models/templates** as campus-wide resource
How might you use the EIA to Advance the Use of Evidence?

• Use the EIA Standards and the Rubric to critique your own practice
• Apply to get feedback or recognition
• Keep improving!
## Use EIA Rubric as a Self-Study

[www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/eiadesignation.html](http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/eiadesignation.html)

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<th>Engagement in monitoring and compiling campus-level assessment results and analysis</th>
<th>Faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders such as employer admissions or faculty from programs frequently applied to by graduates of the institution, including schools and programs that accept students as transfers or for graduate study participate in the monitoring and/or compiling of campus-level assessment results and analysis.</th>
<th>To what extent does the application provide evidence of meeting the exemplary definition provided? 5 = clear evidence provided that meets the exemplary definition; 3 = evidence provided, but either the evidence is unclear or the practice falls short of the exemplary definition; 1 = evidence is alluded to but not provided directly or the practice needs significant improvement to meet the exemplary definition; 0 = no evidence is provided or the evidence provided does not address the practice at all.</th>
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<td>Distribution and sharing of campus-level results of student assessment</td>
<td>Campus-level assessment results are shared proactively with faculty and staff on campus in ways that facilitate their discussion and application (e.g., not simply made available as a report on a website).</td>
<td>To what extent does the application provide evidence of meeting the exemplary definition provided? 5 = clear evidence provided that meets the exemplary definition; 3 = evidence provided, but either the evidence is unclear or the practice falls short of the exemplary definition; 1 = evidence is alluded to but not provided directly or the practice needs significant improvement to meet the exemplary definition; 0 = no evidence is provided or the evidence provided does not address the practice at all.</td>
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<td>Integration of campus-level results with measures used at other levels to create complete picture of student learning</td>
<td>Results from campus-level assessments are integrated vertically with assessment occurring at other levels of the institution intentionally to create a complete picture of student learning for all students. Campus-level assessment results build on and from assessment activities in all other areas of campus.</td>
<td>To what extent does the application provide evidence of meeting the exemplary definition provided? 5 = clear evidence provided that meets the exemplary definition; 3 = evidence provided, but either the evidence is unclear or the practice falls short of the exemplary definition; 1 = evidence is alluded to but not provided directly or the practice needs significant improvement to meet the exemplary definition; 0 = no evidence is provided or the evidence provided does not address the practice at all.</td>
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UNC Charlotte: Using the EIA Rubric to Improve

“Using the 25 dimensions and the excellence criteria on the EIA rubric as the aspirational goals, 19 gaps were discovered.”
Why Apply? Reason Mills College Pursued the EIA

- In process of moving to a new phase in assessment program and excited about the changes underway.
- Impressed by the sponsors of the award.
- Gain from the self-reflection required to apply.
- Saw the opportunity as one that could provide validation/constructive feedback.
EIA 2019 Timeline

• Application materials for the 2019 EIA Designation available: December 2018

• Application Deadline: May 15, 2019

• Applicants notified of EMBARGOED Designation results: July 31, 2019

• Public announcement of designees: August 16, 2019
Thank you!

Apply Now - this badge could be yours!

www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/eiadesignation.html