Assessment Workshop: Using Findings to Make Improvements

October 2014

Discussion Notes

Five people (chairs and assessment coordinators) participated in the workshop.

Obstacles: There was consensus around the following points:

Assessment is still a relatively new process for many faculty members. They’re unsure that decisions should be based on them.

Not enough faculty are participating in the assessment process itself, so they are unfamiliar with why we do it.

Many other issues and decisions take priority over assessment discussions.

Difficulties in determining a solution that faculty believe will make a difference.

Opportunities:

Draw more faculty into the process by

1. Creating an assessment committee (as opposed to the program coordinator doing all the work)
2. In departments that have a committee, develop a rotation schedule that draws in a new member every year.

Spend more time at faculty meetings throughout the year on assessment (discuss schedule, implementation, etc. in addition to results)

Examples of ways to get more faculty involved prior to discussion of results:

1. Physics and graduate Biology and Marine Biology: all faculty attend capstone presentations and participate in evaluating student presentations.
2. Studio Art: multiple faculty, in addition to capstone instructor, attend senior exhibit oral defense.
3. Psychology: all faculty are invited to capstone poster session and are encouraged to participate in scoring.

Provide more space for discussion of results – many said the process needs to be on the agenda multiple times in order to make changes. It was also mentioned that it is normal for faculty to want to see more than one year’s worth of data before agreeing to make changes.

Conclusions:

No silver bullet to solve this problem. Continue to work on it and move culture along.