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Systematic Assessment Debuts at FAMU
- Orientation to a Systematic Assessment Process

State legislators and accrediting agencies/bodies continue to mandate that institutions demonstrate accountability for student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness. With the recent hiring of a director of assessment, FAMU has made its debut to a systematic assessment process. The director, Uche Ohia, Ph.D., has conducted orientations meetings with all the academic deans, vice presidents and some directors of programs and services. These meetings have provided opportunities for the director to learn about programs and administrative/service functions while sharing the proposed “FAMOUS” assessment planning and documentation approach.

The “FAMOUS” assessment approach, which was conceptualized by Dr. Ohia, is an innovative approach that ties assessment activities together. The “FAMOUS” approach involves the following six precise steps:

- **Step 1:** Formulating statements of outcomes/objectives aligned to institutional mission/goals
- **Step 2:** Ascertaining criteria for success
- **Step 3:** Measuring performance using qualitative and quantitative methods
- **Step 4:** Observing and analyzing results for congruence between expected and actual results
- **Step 5:** Using results to effect improvement of programs and services
- **Step 6:** Strengthening programs and services by continuously evaluating, planning, allocating resources, and implementing new approaches
Assessment Inventory Results

First things first! FAMU’s assessment efforts kicked off with an Inventory of Assessment Methods. An in-house designed three-page instrument was circulated to all programs/unit to document currently used methods/strategies. Results from the colleges and schools confirm that the most commonly used methods by degree programs are: accreditation reviews, program review and course evaluation by students. Other methods reported by a majority of the instructional programs include: Final Projects, Internships, Clinical /Practicum Reports, or Examinations, Exit Tests / Comprehensive Exams, Certification / License Exams, Theses Evaluation and Curriculum / Syllabus Analyses.

Assessment Strides

➢ Progress by Colleges/ Schools and Administrative and Educational Support Units (ADESU)

The director has successfully conducted initial training sessions for four Instructional Programs (Architecture, Education, Journalism and Business and Industry) and two Administrative and Educational Support units (Student Affairs and Sponsored Research). Topics covered were: “Course Level Assessment: Focus on Writing Measurable Outcomes” and Assessment in Administrative and Educational Support Units.”

Future Faculty/ Staff Development Opportunities

During the Fall 2004 semester, the Office of Assessment will offer workshops on such topics as: writing measurable outcomes, the FAMOUS Assessment Approach and FAMU Assessment Planning Templates, Direct and Indirect Assessment Methods in collaboration with Instructional Technology Services.

Please visit http://www.famu.edu/about/admin/vpa/a&m.php?page=assessment for more information on assessment activities and planning templates.

Assessment News

National
The American Association For Higher Education (AAHE) recently concluded its 2004 National Assessment Conference in Denver, Colorado. This year’s theme was: “Connecting Public audiences to our Work.” The venue for next year’s conference is Toronto, Canada.
State of Florida
Recently, the State of Florida Board of Governors (FBOG) mandated all universities to adopt the Academic Learning Compacts (ALC). To this end, every academic program is required to clearly identify what students will learn in terms of content knowledge, communication and critical thinking skills by the time they graduate. These Compacts will clearly be articulated by the universities to students at the beginning of their academic careers and when they begin their degree programs. Most importantly, that before graduation, the universities will certify, through any process they choose, that the criteria of the Compacts have been met by individual students. The Board of Governors will work with universities to ensure implementation of meaningful Academic Learning Compacts that will maximize flexibility at the university level.

FAMU
As a prelude to the above resolution, FAMU and four other state universities made presentations to the Board of Governors during its April 22, 2004 meeting. Undergraduate students from FAMU’s School of Business and Industry (SBI) demonstrated how the different types of assessments used in their classes to measure students’ oral communication skills improved their competences to higher levels. Of significant value to the presentation was the incorporation of taped sessions that were critiqued by CEO’s serving as external assessors. Below is an excerpt representing the views of Carly Fiorina, Chairman and CEO of Hewlett-Pacard, who once served as a member of the SBI’s external assessment team.

“I visited four different schools over a four day period including Stanford, Florida A&M University, Harvard and Wharton. The students at the School of Business and Industry were superior to all of them in terms of being prepared, asking the current and relevant questions, poise, delivery, and their ability to share with me their ideas on how to best move my company forward”

On the horizon, will be the establishment of the assessment committees at various levels: Institutional Level Assessment Committee (ILAC), the College/School Level Assessment Committee (CLAC or SLAC), the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC), the Administrative and Educational Support Services Assessment Committee (AESAC), the Department of Assessment Group (DAG) and the Individual Unit Assessment Group (IUAG).
**Notes and Updates**

**Personnel**
Mr. Felix Wao recently joined the Office of Assessment as a Research Associate. He will coordinate the designing and maintenance of assessment databases and support the data analysis needs of academic programs, departments and the office. Mr. Wao, who comes to FAMU from the Catholic University in Washington, DC, is in the final stages of completing his doctoral studies.

**Training and Opportunities**
Training sessions have been scheduled for the month of August in collaboration with the Allied Health, Arts and Sciences, and CESTA. Administrative and Fiscal Affairs office.

**Faculty Planning Conference**
This year’s faculty planning conference theme is: “Focusing on Assessment at FAMU: A culture of continuous improvement.” This theme depicts the university’s commitment to embrace assessment as a vehicle for continuous improvement and for strengthening institutional effectiveness. FAMU has invited a nationally recognized assessment leader, Dr. Linda Suskie from Towson University, as a guest speaker for the planning conference. She will do a plenary session presentation on “Using Assessment Results to Enhance Teaching.”