Expected Outcome: Survey Research

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment will support and administer institution-level surveys, such as BCSSE, NSSE, FSSE, COACHE, Exit, and Alumni Surveys.

Assessment methods

Method: Analysis of survey response rates

University-wide survey response rates have been compared over time. The years for comparison were: 2006-2011 for the Survey of Recent Bachelor’s Degree Recipients, 2003-2004 and 2008-2012 for the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and 2010-2011 for the Graduating Senior Exit Survey.

Findings:

Response rates for NSSE have declined over the years: 54% (56% for freshmen and 52% for seniors) in 2003; 36% (34% for freshmen and 37% for seniors) in 2004; 41% (39% for freshmen and 44% for seniors) in 2006; 39% (40% for freshmen and 38% for seniors) in 2007; 29% (27% for freshmen and 31% for seniors) in 2008; 26% (27% for freshmen and 26% for seniors) in 2009; 22% (21% for freshmen and 23% for seniors) in 2010; 20% (20% for freshmen and 20% for seniors) in 2011; and 20% (19% for freshmen and 20% for seniors) in 2012.

Response rates for the Survey of Recent Bachelor’s Degree Recipients were: 21% in 2006-2007; 17% in 2007-2008; 16% in 2008-2009; 15% in 2009-2010; 17% in 2010-2011; and 19% in 2011-2012. A slight increase in response rate in 2011-2012 could be attributed to introduction of a paper version of the survey.

Response rates for the Graduating Senior Exit Survey were: 33% in 2008-2009; 43% in 2009-2010; 35% for 2010-2011; and 43% for 2011-2012

How did you use findings for improvement?

Because a slight increase of response rates for the Survey of Recent Bachelor’s Degree Recipients could be attributed to the paper option, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment continued using a paper version of the survey for 2012-2013. Because the response rate could also reflect inaccurate address information, return service was requested in 2012-2013; and return rates due to bad addresses will be monitored.

To address the low response rates for NSSE, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment requested assistance from Student Affairs to disseminate information about NSSE. During 2013 survey administration, NSSE flyer was posted on the web site for auburn.edu/auinvolve and in the Student Center. The information about NSSE was also provided via This Week @AU (e-mail information digest for Auburn University students).
Method: Review of Assessment and Self-Study Reports

The 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 assessment reports were explored for use of student and alumni surveys in college-level and degree-level assessments. The Program Review Self Study Reports were searched for indications of need for survey support in the units.

Findings:

Several Self-Study Reports indicate the need for survey support. For example, the Self-Study Report for Kinesiology mentions that “[a] successful tracking program with meaningful response rates will require financial resources and staff in place to survey our alumni and their employers” (p. 19). The Self-Study Report for Economics states: “Unfortunately, we currently lack any formal graduating senior or post-graduate survey data regarding the acquisition of jobs and graduate/professional education” (p.6).

Based on assessment reports for Academic Support offices in the colleges and schools, the offices frequently conduct student advising surveys. Less common surveys are parent surveys and exit surveys. Undergraduate exit surveys at the college and school level are a concern due to overlapping with the university-wide Graduating Senior Exit Survey.

Over 30 undergraduate degree programs utilized exit surveys in their assessment for 2011-2012 academic year. Alumni surveys were less frequent, but have been used by programs in College of Human Sciences and by several programs in College of Liberal Arts (e.g., Health Science Administration, Communication, and Journalism). Many graduate programs utilize surveys. Again, the most common survey type is an exit survey. In some cases—e.g., 2012 Assessment Report for History, PhD—surveys are planned as improvements to the existing assessment methods.

How did you use findings for improvement?

Because college- and program-level surveys of graduating seniors and alumni compete with university-wide surveys, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment has created exit survey reports by college and has shared college-level results with the University Assessment Council.

To address the need for survey research at the department level, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment developed NSSE survey reports at the department level. The office is currently working on exit survey reports at the department level. The office will also offer embedding department-level questions to the university-wide exit survey.

To address the need for survey research at the graduate level, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment is collaborating with Auburn University
Graduate School in developing a Survey of Graduating Graduate Students. A preview of the survey is available at https://auburn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_9tPBUW5rzLkgN0x&Preview=Survey&BrandID=auburn.

Additional comments:
None

Expected Outcome: Support for Digital Measures Implementation

Supplement face-to-face Digital Measures training sessions with Online Demonstrations that are available at the web site of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment at https://oira.auburn.edu/digitalmeasures/default.aspx and via Auburn University portal.

Method: Traffic to Digital Measures Online Demonstrations

Number of views of Digital Measures online demonstrations was reviewed to assess the effectiveness of this type of training.

Findings:

The number of views for the four online demonstrations were: 444 for Background Information, 577 for Faculty Guide, 139 for Department Chair Guide, and 326 for SACS faculty Roster. These findings indicate the relative success of online demonstrations compared to face-to-face trainings. Only three faculty members signed up and two attended the Digital Measures training in fall 2012 and ten faculty members signed up and seven attended spring 2013 Digital Measures training.

How did you use findings for improvement?

Due to a relative success of online demonstrations for Digital Measures, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment is planning to introduce online assessment trainings to supplement the face-to-face meetings with department heads and program-level assessment coordinators in 2013.

Additional comments:
None

Expected Outcome: Assessment Management Software

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment will select and adopt the new assessment management software for Auburn University.
Method: Assessment Software Survey

To evaluate Auburn University’s current needs for assessment management software and to assess different software options and criteria that Auburn University should use in the process of software selection, an Assessment Software Survey is being conducted in February 2013. The topics covered by the survey include: the level of satisfaction with the current homegrown assessment management system; importance of different features of assessment software; the level of use of different software options that are licensed for use by Auburn University faculty and staff; and evaluation of different software options available for purchase. The survey instrument is available for review at https://s.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_e4ZTgpeczBpGHRz&Preview=Survey&Bra ndID=auburnoir .

Findings:

The survey is still in the field, but preliminary results are already available. Of 254 users of the current software invited to participate, 71 responded for a response rate of about 28%. Only 37% of respondents indicated that they are satisfied with the current assessment software, 30% were neutral, and 33% were dissatisfied.

The most commonly indicated reasons for dissatisfaction are problems with truncating or eliminating text in the current model and inability to upload files. Based on responses, the most important aspects of the next assessment software are: ease of use (survey mean on a 4-point scale was 3.88); ability to customize assessment reports for a unit, department or college needs (survey mean on a 4-point scale was 3.57); ability to upload and download documents, such as assessment instruments or data reports (survey mean on a 4-point scale was 3.52); and customer support (survey mean on a 4-point scale was 3.48).

13% of the respondents indicated that they used Tk20; 16% - Campus Labs; 67% - Digital Measures; 3% Xitracs; and 19% mentioned other assessment software options. However, only 23% of respondents indicated that the familiarity with the new system adopted by Auburn University is important to them. 52% of respondents indicated that the new system should be compatible with other systems they use.

When asked to evaluate different software options on a 4-point scale, many respondents indicated “Unable to rate” for most software options. Based on 63 responses, the current software received a rating of 2.11. Based on 33 responses, Digital Measures received a rating of 1.73. Based on 28 responses, ability to file documents in Word format received a rating of 2.07. Based on 7 responses, adoption of Tk20 campus wide received a rating of 1.71. Based on 10 responses, adoption of Campus Labs campus wide received a rating of 3.30.
How did you use findings for improvement?

The survey results will be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the Committee of the University Assessment Council on February 27th, 2013. Based on the survey responses, the committee will make a decision on demonstrations by different software providers.

Additional comments:
None

Method: Analysis of peer practices

To select software providers for demonstrations, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment reviewed information about assessment management software at Auburn’s peer institutions. The list of institutions included in this review: Clemson University, University of Texas – Austin, University of Virginia, University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Maryland, Texas A&M University, University of Florida, University of Georgia, Virginia Tech, University of Alabama, Florida State University, North Carolina State University, University of Oklahoma, University of Tennessee, University of South Carolina, University of Kentucky, Louisiana State University, Oklahoma State University, University of Arkansas, Mississippi State University, West Virginia University.

Findings:

Based on our review, the software that is frequently used by our peers is WEAVEonline. Five of 22 institutions included in our review use this assessment management software. Other software options included TracDat, Campus Labs, OATS, and homegrown systems or documents submitted in text format.

How did you use findings for improvement?

WEAVEonline is the first software option that has been selected for demonstration. The Weave demonstration for the Committee of the University Assessment Council has been scheduled for February 27, 2013.

Additional comments:
None