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Academic Assessment Update

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Georgia Southern University

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ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT UPDATE

APRIL 2020



COVID-19 ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT NEEDS INVENTORY

Following the move to remote instruction, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness developed an academic assessment needs inventory survey that was distributed to core course and program assessment coordinators as well as college and department leadership.

The feedback provided by this survey continues to inform OIE's resources and response through this period. While many departments and courses report that the shift to remote

instruction will not impact their usual assessment processes, concerns have been raised regarding data integrity, time constraints, challenges to working collaboratively, and the effects of stress on student and faculty performance during this period.

As one professor pointed out, ***"Students are just trying to get through this semester, so it's possible that they won't take the quiz as seriously or may skip it all together. When we write the assessment report, we will definitely discuss the fact that the transition to online learning probably had an impact on our results."***

Another response highlighted the need to adapt teaching strategies and assessment processes:

"The online transition of classes has changed the way we administer assessment tools. The problem is recording the true level of learning because the whole process changed mid semester. There are a lot of moving pieces and faculty has been extremely creative in changing different dimensions of teaching in a short span of time. This affects assessment at every level."

Flexibility and adaptation are required for both delivering instruction and assessing student learning during this period. OIE encourages assessment coordinators to track any adaptations made to facilitate instruction or adjustments to the assessment process, along with descriptions of any factors that may compromise the data collected during this time. We are aware that any data collected during this period will need to be viewed within the context of emergency remote instruction and that each department will have to make judgement calls about how best to assess student learning during this time.

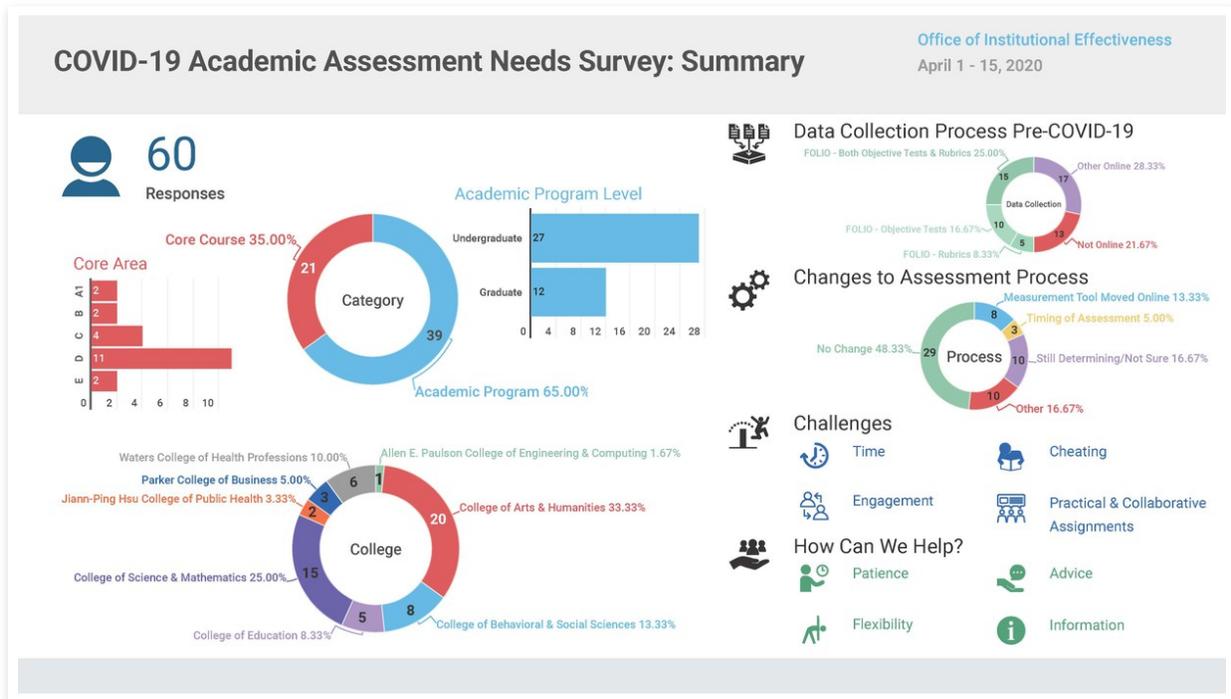
In spite of the myriad challenges facing faculty and students during this period of remote instruction, there are still opportunities to use these circumstances to reflect on curriculum, teaching, and student learning. One professor expressed a sense of curiosity about the results of this shift in instruction:

"[I'm] Curious if students will do about the same as they have in the past now that the last 5 weeks of course content...most of which is covered in the course assessment will be learned through self-guided activities online."

We anticipate that this period of remote instruction will have long-term implications in the field of higher education, and in a sense we are pioneers of this rugged new territory. We hope, as this professor expressed, that we might gain insights during this time that can improve our response to future crises or even open possibilities for innovative methods when we return to our usual modes of instruction.

We appreciate the commitment of our faculty to delivering the best possible learning experience under difficult circumstances, and we are here to offer support as you consider how assessment can provide insights into student learning, even in a time of uncertainty.

If you have not yet participated in this survey, please [complete the needs inventory](#) as soon as possible. Your insights are critical as OIE strives to serve faculty in support of student learning.



GUIDELINES AND ASSISTANCE FOR 2019-2020 ASSESSMENT REPORTING -- WITH A LARGE ASTERISK

We understand that our faculty are balancing many new and shifting responsibilities during this period of remote instruction. OIE offers this [message of support and appreciation](#) for all that you are doing. We are providing the following update on our plans as we continue to respond and adapt based on feedback from faculty and academic leadership.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Academic Programs and Core Courses should plan to submit an annual student learning assessment document by **October 1, 2020**. We understand that any assessment data collected in the spring semester will have to be viewed in light of the transition to emergency remote instruction and we are working with assessment coordinators and reviewing committees to provide an appropriate level of support and flexibility. *We anticipate a large asterisk next to this year's data*, and this is being reflected in guidelines provided by national organizations and accreditors.

RESOURCES IN DEVELOPMENT

OIE is working to develop additional resources to support those responsible for drafting the assessment documents, including handbooks with examples and tips for writing each report section and writing workshops throughout the summer and early fall. A **virtual writing group** will provide workshops, examples, and writing resources for completing each part of the assessment documents as well as opportunities to collaborate with peers and receive feedback on early drafts. If you're interested in participating, please [add your name to the list](#) to receive updates on registration and scheduling.

INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS

OIE met with 30 programs and 31 core courses prior to the transition to remote instruction. We will continue to reach out to core course and program assessment coordinators to schedule virtual meetings addressing assessment cycles, understanding the significant time you are investing in providing online instruction and managing additional responsibilities as a result of COVID-19 protocols.

ASSISTANCE REQUESTS

If you have immediate questions or need additional support, please submit a request through the [Assessment Services Request Form](#), and someone from OIE will follow up as soon as possible.

UPDATED ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT POLICY

The Academic Assessment Steering Committee has recently made updates to the Academic Assessment Policy to help improve the clarity and efficiency of student learning assessment and reporting for academic programs. Under the new policy, departments no longer need to report on stand alone minors. Stand alone graduate certificate programs do need to report under the new guidelines. OIE will be reaching out to stand-alone graduate certificates following final approval of the revised policy to begin developing plans for implementation of student learning outcome assessment moving forward. The full policy will be available following approval by the President's Cabinet.

GENERAL EDUCATION RE-DESIGN PREPARATION

OIE is working with the General Education and Core Curriculum Committee (GECC) to prepare for the upcoming [General Education Redesign](#) initiated by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents. We wish to encourage participation from faculty, staff, and students as we consider the value and purpose of general education at Georgia Southern.

MORE INFORMATION

OIE invites you to join an online round table discussion for collaborative trouble shooting of any assessment issues that may arise as you transition to completing academic assessment for online courses in the spring semester.

[Register here.](#)



OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

[Assessment Services Request Form](#)

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