Mar 26th, 10:00 AM - 10:45 AM

Nursing's Role in Developing and Implementing an Academic Assessment Process at a Comprehensive State University

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Recommended Citation

Garno, Melissa K. and Thornton, Kathy, "Nursing's Role in Developing and Implementing an Academic Assessment Process at a Comprehensive State University" (2015). SoTL Commons Conference. 3.  
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Session Objectives

This presentation will discuss the collaborative role of the School of Nursing (SON) during the adoption of an institution-wide assessment process through the following objectives:

- Describe the history and challenges of an institution-wide focus on assessment.
- Overview the strategies implemented at the institutional level to initiate a culture change among faculty.
- Explore how the SON collaborated with interdisciplinary departments to model assessment of student learning at the programmatic level to measure program effectiveness.
- Discuss the results of faculty engagement at the departmental level.

History of Assessment at Georgia Southern University

- 1990’s – program and institution had system
- 2000’s – Administrative changes; less emphasis on academic assessment; Each college had own system; Those with external accreditors had process, others did not.
- 2005 – SACS reaffirmation visit identified AA as weakness.
- 2009 – recharged focus on AA at institutional level with adoption of WEAVEOnline
- 2010 – Office of Institutional Effectiveness Created
- 2011 – Put on monitoring report by SACS; Dropped WEAVEOnline; New institutional process established
- 2013 – Successful outcome in 2013

Challenges:

- Assessment was decentralized and inconsistent
- Some academic programs were not engaged in assessment activities
- Other academic programs did not distinguish between course grades and assessment processes
- Assessment initially became an exercise in report writing
- Success was measured by “turning the box green” upon uploading reports

What we did institution-wide:

- Implementation:
  - Singular Assessment model adopted
  - Reporting format adopted for use across institution adapted from James Madison University
    - Mission/Purpose statement
    - Outcomes/Objectives
    - Measures
    - Types of measures and the relationship between measure and outcomes
    - Data collection and integrity
    - Targets
    - Findings
    - Presentation of results
    - Interpretation of results
    - Action Plans
Assessment Model Adopted:

What was done:

- Created team members
  - AA steering committee – 2 reps from each college
  - Evaluate reports
  - 3 subcommittees
    - AA policy subcommittee
    - Rubric development subcommittee
    - Symposium subcommittee
  - 3 Program Assessment Leaders
    - assigned to respective colleges

Nursing’s involvement:

- Always one nursing faculty member of AA steering committee
- Evaluated reports
- 3 subcommittees
  - Nursing faculty on AA policy subcommittee
  - Nursing faculty chaired Rubric Development subcommittee
- Nursing faculty one of three Program Assessment Leaders
  - assigned to COE and CHHS

Series of workshops and retreats offered to educate faculty

- 3 day retreat for all faculty to learn about cycle
- Supported by stipends
- Report writing retreats with available support
- Participatory
- Supported by stipends
- 77% representation in 2013;
  - 87% representation in 2014
- Nursing heavily involved in modeling activities...

Exemplars from Nursing’s Assessment Process

Characteristics of Targets:
- Acceptable target level:
  - What is the minimum level of achievement that you expect of students on any given measure to be successful?
  - How did faculty decide on this minimum?
  - How many students do you expect to meet the minimum?
- Desired target level:
  - Higher level of achievement that you strive to see in your students.
  - How did faculty arrive at this desired target?
  - How many students do you think is reasonable to meet this level?
  - What is the decision based on?

Example of Targets in SON:
- Acceptable level:
  - 80% of graduating seniors will reach “competent” levels on all rubric elements related to student learning outcomes on their senior capstone project.
- Desired level:
  - In addition, 30% of the students will reach “outstanding” on three of the five main elements. These targets are based upon an analysis of previous spring’s results conducted by program faculty at last year’s annual planning retreat.

Exemplars from Nursing’s Assessment Process

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Exemplars from Nursing’s Assessment Process

**Correct Report of Portfolio Findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Faculty Evaluations</th>
<th>Student Self‐Evaluations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Junior Level</strong> (N=96)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Apply core knowledge and problem‐solving principles in evidenced‐based decision‐making to provide therapeutic nursing care within a health promotion framework.</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assume responsibility and accountability for professional nursing roles.</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Apply scholarly inquiry and analysis for decision making, critical reasoning, and creative thinking to improve nursing practice thereby enhancing healthcare outcomes.</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Incorporate caring, compassion, and empathy in all aspects of nursing practice.</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Develop collaborative partnerships to promote, maintain, and restore health.</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Apply leadership principles in nursing practice.</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Demonstrate competence incorporating healthcare information and technology in providing nursing care.</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Senior Level** (N=115)

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Apply core knowledge and problem‐solving principles in evidenced‐based decision‐making to provide therapeutic nursing care within a health promotion framework.</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assume responsibility and accountability for professional nursing roles.</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Apply scholarly inquiry and analysis for decision making, critical reasoning, and creative thinking to improve nursing practice thereby enhancing healthcare outcomes.</td>
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<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Incorporate caring, compassion, and empathy in all aspects of nursing practice.</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<td>2.37</td>
<td>2.29</td>
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</table>

Series of workshops and retreats offered to educate faculty

**SON collaborated in workshops...**

- Action plan workshop
- Rubric development workshop
- New faculty orientation workshops
- Assessment symposium  
  - 2013 Attendance -30
  - 2014 Attendance -76

Institution‐wide Results:

- All programs use consistent assessment process and format for reporting
- Regained compliance with accrediting body standards
- Increased faculty involvement in the assessment process
- Greater emphasis on student learning /awareness of evaluating student learning instead of faculty teaching
- Disciplines can talk with each other in common language
- Fosters interprofessional collaboration in designing teaching/learning endeavors

Recommendations:

- Ongoing faculty development
- Faculty turnover
- Varied competency levels
- Sustaining a culture that values academic assessment
- Form an outcomes committee in each college
- Promoting continued faculty involvement
- Resist reverting back to the monitoring program effectiveness as an administrative concern