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

Melissa K. Garno  
*Georgia Southern University, mel@georgiasouthern.edu*

Kathy Thornton  
*Georgia Southern University, kthorn@georgiasouthern.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/sotlcommons](https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/sotlcommons)

Part of the *Curriculum and Instruction Commons, Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons, Educational Methods Commons, Higher Education Commons, and the Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education Commons*

**Recommended Citation**

[https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/sotlcommons/SoTL/2015/3](https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/sotlcommons/SoTL/2015/3)

This presentation (open access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences & Events at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in SoTL Commons Conference by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.
Nursing’s Role in Developing and Implementing an Academic Assessment Process at a Comprehensive State University

Melissa Garno, EdD, RN, Associate Professor, BSN Program Director
Kathy Thornton, PhD, RN, Associate Professor, RN-BSN Program Director

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

Challenges:

- No consistent process of assessment across the institution
- No consistent reporting format required at the institutional level
- Faculty inexperienced in engaging in a structured assessment process
- It is still:
  - Often undertaken to satisfy accreditation demands
  - Externally mandated by the administration
  - Confused with evaluation
  - Not well understood as a vehicle for improving/maximizing what we do
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
- Participation:
  - Supported by stipends
  - 77% representation in 2013; 87% representation in 2014
- Nursing heavily involved in modeling activities...

Exemplars from Nursing’s Assessment Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Name</th>
<th>Primary Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 level?
  - How many students do you expect to meet this 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 that decision based on?

Example of Targets in SON:

- Acceptable level:
  - 50% 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, 50% of the students will reach “outstanding” on three of the five rubric elements.

- Incorrect Report of Portfolio Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portfolio Findings</th>
<th>Student Ratings</th>
<th>Faculty Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Level Average</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portfolio Findings</th>
<th>Student Ratings</th>
<th>Faculty Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2012</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Level Average</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Level Average</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exemplars from Nursing’s Assessment Process

Correct Report of Portfolio Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Level</th>
<th>Student Self Evaluation</th>
<th>Faculty Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Junior</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assume responsibility and accountability for professional nursing roles.</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorporate caring, compassion, and empathy in all aspects of nursing practice.</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop collaborative partnerships to promote, maintain, and restore health.</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apply leadership principles in nursing practice.</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate competence incorporating healthcare information and technology in providing nursing care.</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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