



ASSESSMENT MATTERS:

May 2017

Once Upon a Time In Assessment Land

Assessment is about telling a story. A story of what you are doing, how it is working, and how it can work better. Therefore, to end the academic year, we have some assessment stories to share. We hope you find them not only entertaining, but enlightening. Assessment is important to help maintain the integrity and quality of all programs. **Once upon a time.....**

Once upon a time, in OIA land, the Assessment elves ungleefully noted that many units on campus were not doing annual updates of their assessment webpages. So the elves set out to find what evil forces were at bay. Eventually, they learned that the dragon guarding the assessment webpages made updating cumbersome and confusing. They also learned that the old leaders were gobbled up by the dragon before they could pass along existing assessment information to new heads or directors, so the new leaders were often starting from scratch. The elves held a tribunal and decided it was time to take action and slay the assessment dragon beast. One elf, Elaine Marchello, began the quest for a tool that would help the elves manage assessment of learning outcomes and rid the campus of its fiery dragon. After several vendor presentations, the elves settled on Taskstream, which will also help us with reports for our upcoming HLC accreditation visit (another dragon to slay). Because of that, the OIA Assessment elves will be working to move all units' assessment reporting into Taskstream. When this task is complete, and the evil assessment dragon is vanquished, we will finally have a central location for units to store their assessment reporting, which will allow us to better track their progress and allow units continuity in their assessment of student learning outcomes.

Once upon a time, there was wonderment about whether use of library study rooms reserved via the D!bs utility contributed to students' valuing the UA Libraries as their "happy place" to work and study. Every day, UAL staff dutifully gathered data on room reservations but were left wondering whether the use of the rooms actually contributed to student appreciation for the service, being an indicator that perhaps room use was a factor in their successful persistence/retention at UA. One day, Jerry Perry and John Miller-Wells from UAL met with Marla Franco, Director, Assessment and Research, SAEM/AISS, to think through how UAL room reservation data could be analyzed via the Civitas Illume utility in combination with other student retention-related data. Because of that, John started to work on the nature and quality of our room reservation data in order to provide Marla with a sample data set to trial using Illume. Because of that, we are hoping to start to answer our question about the value of our room reservation service as a contributing factor toward student persistence and retention, as key components of ultimate student success. Until finally we affirm the contribution this service makes regarding retention, we will continue to refine our data gathering processes and consider other data sources with which to share with Marla and her colleagues.

Once upon a time, the GIDP, Second Language Teaching & Acquisition, wondered how they could accomplish learning-outcomes assessment, as the program only has volunteer faculty members and no assigned staff. Every day, as their Academic Program Review was "looming in the headlights," they worried how they would be able to develop learning outcomes and assess them. One day, they decided that coordinating their program-wide assessment needed to be the new responsibility of a single Program Coordinator, with input from the Director and Executive Council. They also reached out to the OIA for help in developing their learning outcomes and assessment activities. Because of that, they learned about direct and indirect measures of student learning outcomes. Because of that, they did some "real hard thinking about what a learning outcome was, what an assessment tool was, whether it was measuring what it was supposed to, and how to go about implementing it." At every step, the Program Coordinator said, "Whew! I'm glad that is finished!" Until finally they realized that "we were not finished. Assessment never ends! It is not something that you do and then are finished with until your next APR. Student learning outcome assessment could not be treated separately from our daily running of the program." SLAT now has a robust system for collecting assessment data, utilizing Qualtrics surveys. And they were the only unit in this year's APR cohort to earn 4s in all four of our rubric criteria!

For more information on student learning outcomes assessment, contact:



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