Half-way through the 2021-2022 Assessment Cycle

Can you believe that we are almost half way through the academic school year?  Time goes by quickly and assessment plans fade into the background. Therefore, mid-semester is a good time to take a peek at your fall assessment measures and findings and think about the changes you proposed in last year’s assessment cycle.  Have you successfully implemented those changes?  If no changes were necessary, did you look at your targets and readjust them?

Some Internal questions:

If we remember that learning outcome assessment is to help improve learning, there are a few questions it is good to ask ourselves periodically to make sure we are on the right track.

- How does student learning align with our program’s mission?
- What fundamental knowledge/skills should all of our students have by completion of the core curriculum?  The program?
- How can we know/be confident that the cumulative effect of the curriculum has produced the desired learning?

Some Quality and Utility questions:

- Do you have clearly defined learning outcomes?  Are they meaningful, measureable, and manageable?  Are they at a high cognitive level; e.g., evaluate, synthesize, analyze?
- Do your faculty have a common understanding of how your curriculum supports learning of your expected outcomes?  Do your course learning outcomes align with your program learning outcomes?

And most importantly:

Are students engaged in their own learning?

Do they know what is expected of them?

Do they get timely feedback on their performance?
Flowchart for Student Learning Outcome and Assessment Review

*SLOs should be: Learner-centered, Specific, Measureable*

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Original UA Cactus Garden, Will McBride & Friends

The University’s original cactus garden (located in front of Old Main from 1896 to 1929) was begun by Professor James W. Toumey, the Botanist for the Agricultural Experiment Station, in the fall of 1891 on grounds just north of the Pump and Engine House, where he began establishing varieties of native cactus. The garden was moved in 1896 to the area shown here. A soil cover of about twelve inches over a base of solid caliche, it soon developed into a garden of over 600 species, an interesting contrast to the surrounding lawns, shrubs, and trees. Professor Toumey was one of the University’s six original faculty members. Reference number: azu_azswp_gardens_cactusgarden_fl1_a

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If you have any ideas for items in this newsletter, please send to evm@arizona.edu