A MODEL OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP: HOW TO ENGAGE A LARGE CAMPUS IN ASSESSMENT

Su Swarat, Peter Nwosu & Jyenny Babcock
California State University, Fullerton

WASC ARC 2016
ASSESSMENT: ANYONE?

- “Does assessment make colleges better? Who knows?” (Gilbert, 2015)

- Faculty skepticism toward assessment (Cain, 2014):
  - Pedagogical usefulness
  - Academic freedom
  - Institutional/departmental recognition and reward
  - Language/terminology of assessment
  - Methodological expertise
“Too often, assessment is orphaned to the province of a small group of dedicated faculty and staff, isolated from the mainstream, who understand assessment’s benefits and are willing to engage its costs.” (Hersh & Keeling, 2013)

“Consequential assessment requires leadership… Managing, as the saying goes, is about doing things right; leadership is about doing the right thing.” (Kuh, Ikenberry, Jankowski, Cain, Ewell, Hutchins & Kinzie, 2015)
CSUF: A LARGE CAMPUS

38,948 STUDENTS (FALL 2015)

2,160 FULL & PART-TIME FACULTY

109 DEGREE PROGRAMS (55 UNDERGRAD & 54 GRAD)
“Heroics of leadership” is not sufficient

Distributed leadership: Dynamic interactions of leaders, followers, and situations (Spillane, 2005, 2006; Spillane & Mertz, 2015)

- More emphasis on leadership practice
- Less emphasis on leaders
MULTIPLE LEADERS, SITUATIONS, AND INTERACTIONS

- Senate Assessment Committee
- College-Based Assessment Liaisons
- University Assessment Events & Milestones
- University Leadership

Policy
Practice
Community
Accountability
MULTIPLE LEADERS, SITUATIONS, AND INTERACTIONS (CONT.)

Structure, reward and roles determined by the situations of each college

- COLLEGE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
- DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR
- DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM CHAIR/COORDINATOR

Lead | Support | Connect
BENEFITS OF A DISTRIBUTED MODEL

- Multiple situations to engage with assessment
- Multiple individuals taking roles of leaders and followers
- Multiple means of communication
- Control over assessment activities by faculty
- Shared best practices and lessons learned
- Collegial feedback provided by peers
- Customized training and support provided
“CLOSING THE LOOP” AT THE INSTITUTION LEVEL: REPORTING

- 88% of required programs submitted AY 14-15 assessment reports
- Collective effort to eliminate reporting errors:

*Error = Step 4 summary field is blank
“CLOSING THE LOOP” AT THE INSTITUTION LEVEL: PARTICIPATION

97% of Undergrad Programs Developed Student Learning Outcomes

79% of Grad Programs Developed Student Learning Outcomes

GE Program Developed Own Student Learning Outcomes

*As of 03/22/16
“CLOSING THE LOOP” AT THE INSTITUTION LEVEL: COVERAGE

- 548 outcomes reported (as of 03/22/16)
- 348 outcomes* linked to the University Learning Goals (ULGs):

*An outcome can be linked to multiple ULGs
“CLOSING THE LOOP” AT THE INSTITUTION LEVEL: QUALITY

AY14-15 Assessment Review Results

% of Units Completed the Step Appropriately*

*Includes all AY14-15 assessment reports (colleges & divisions)
ASSESSMENT: AN INSTITUTION-WIDE COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

- Institution-wide participation in assessment
- “Leaders” of assessment at multiple levels
- Engagement in assessment in various forms
- Aiming for a transparent, actionable, and sustainable process