

Texas A&M University at Galveston Assessment Plan 2007-2008

Major Products

- Demonstrate continuous improvement cycles for campus/program improvement and SACS accreditation compliance for institutional effectiveness.
 - Academic departments must demonstrate student learning outcomes.
 - Administrative units must demonstrate customer service outcomes or measures.

- Define and implement Quality Enhancement Plan for Galveston campus in conjunction with TAMU to promote inquiry/research-based education of undergraduates.

Measure what you value... not to value only what you measure

Background

- Implemented IE process circa 1998-99
- Developed modest intra-net site 2000
- SACS accreditation visit 2002
- Sporadic/inconsistent use of IE
- Some program outcomes tied to budget process
- Maritime Systems Engineering - ABET (2005)
- Marine Engineering Technology – ABET (fall 2007)
- Maritime Administration (MARA) preparing for accreditation
- Standards for Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) demonstration of “Quality Standards System” – audited 2006
- Full participation in TAMUS and State accountability systems
- Some campus-wide institutional survey participation (CORE, NSSE, Library, CIS)
- Formed campus assessment council 2006

TAMUG Assessment Council Charge

The Assessment Council is responsible for advising the Vice President and CEO through the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs on a broad range of assessment initiatives. The committee will maintain communication and compliance with the TAMU Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Council acting as a college level council and the Assessment Advisory Committee. Institutional Effectiveness is an integral function of the SACS accreditation to demonstrate the institution’s commitment to “enhancing the quality of programs and service within the context of their missions, resources, and capacities, and to create an environment in which teaching, public service, research and learning occur. “ (Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and School, Principles of Accreditation) In 2006, the focus of the QEP was defined to improve the inquiry/research-based education of undergraduates. Furthermore, the TAMUG Assessment Council is charged with general oversight of the TAMUG institutional effectiveness process including appropriate documentation and dissemination of the Galveston processes.

Assessment Council Members:

Dr. Joan Mileski, Associate Professor, Maritime Administration
Dr. Glenn Jones, Professor, Marine Sciences
LCDR Roderick Shannon, Department Head, Naval Science
Dr. Bernd Wursig, Professor, Marine Biology
Ms. Victoria Jones, Lecturer, Maritime Systems Engineering
Dr. Samuel Mark, Associate Professor, General Academics
Mr. Todd Sutherland, Director of Student Life
Mr. Steve Conway, Director, Computing and Information Services
Mr. Ken Bailey, Assistant Director of Career Planning and Placement
Mr. Truman Glenn, Associate Director Registration and Institutional Reporting
Ms. Natalie Wiest, Library Director

Institutional Effectiveness

- Determine model for campus (from a multi-disciplinary perspective)

MODEL ONE	Centralized Outcomes and Centralized Measures	-broadest scope of outcomes -can be perceived as generic education -difficult to engage (dept.) faculty in the improvement process -easiest measurement/resources -can use some ongoing (i.e.NSSE) but does not get to direct measures
MODEL TWO	Decentralized Outcomes and Decentralized Measures	-not able to compare department/program/college etc. -best change at department level -can embed ABET, MARA, & STCW and other external requirements -able to uniquely describe programs -significant use of human resources
MODEL THREE	Centralized Outcomes and Decentralized Measures	-only if good buy in for outcomes -not able to compare measures -can use some ongoing measures -still significant use of human resources

- Determine process
 - Determine if using "TAMU Assessment Plan Optional Form"
- Determine training or support requirements
- Develop TAMUG websites (or repository)

Submit initial DRAFT plan including student learning outcomes to TAMU for inclusion in SACS draft December 14, 2007.

Quality Enhancement Plan

In 2006, the focus of the QEP process was defined "to improve the inquiry/research based education of undergraduates." (The focus was refined from the original four themes included in the original 2002 TAMU QEP submitted to SACS). The focus seeks to increase student learning as well as highlighting the role of the research intensive institution.

During early spring 2007, TAMU conducted a baseline survey to inventory current practices. Galveston faculty completed surveys for 40 courses. Of those submitted, four courses were selected as good practices. A good portion the responses indicted a substantial amount of inquiry based activity.

What is inquiry/research based education of undergraduates?

Courses, activities, programs, etc that intentionally seek to develop student's abilities to:

- ask questions that are grounded in an articulated conceptual framework
- select methods for answering the questions that are appropriate to the discipline
- collect, record, and analyze information to answer the question
- link evidence to the explanation
- communicate valid conclusions
- critique explanations or models using evidence or information
- draw inferences from data or information
- place finding in a social and historical context (<http://qep.tamu.edu>)

As a point of departure the Galveston campus will adopt the student learning outcomes for inquiry/research-based education identified in the Inventory of Inquiry-rich courses developed by the university-level QEPC.

Students will be able to:

- Formulate good questions and/or identify problems within the discipline;
- Examine, identify, and gather information regarding the questions and/or problems;
- Analyze, interpret, and present results;
- Formulate conclusions an/or select the best solution with appropriate justification; and
- Evaluate the worth and importance of those conclusions-indicating their placement in a social, environmental and historical context, as appropriate.

Background

- Implemented four themes of original QEP in 2000 by delineated QEP items on annual IE documents submitted by departments
- Sporadic and inconsistent demonstration of student learning outcomes
- Committed \$5000 annually in TAMUG budget to support department initiatives
- Academic departments “volunteered” to define and implement QEP initiatives
- Little to no sustainability
- Conversations with academic leadership
- Strong historical participation of undergraduates in research (but little tracking or assessment documentation)
- Good participation in spring Student Research Week

2007-2008 Quality Enhancement Plan Initiatives

(1.) Use inquiry-based education as the theme for the 2007 Faculty Forum to be held Friday, August 24, 2007. Invitations extended to Dr. Bob Webb as keynote speaker followed by an afternoon workshop including both Dr. Webb and Dr. Loraine Phillips. The Forum will generate awareness and hopefully additional interest and participation.

(2.) There is some consensus that the Galveston campus has historically provided undergraduates with unique research experiences. Due to a small number of graduate programs and hence students, undergraduates are heavily involved in faculty research. In addition, most Galveston curricula include some form of capstone or field semester coursework. These experiences are included in formal courses, independent study courses (485), undergraduate research courses (491), undergraduate internship courses (484), and student employment. The current QEP initiative is to develop an appropriate means to identify and track these experiences across programs and to identify appropriate method or process to assess the student learning outcomes facilitated by these experiences.

(3.) To further promote these experiences and engage undergraduates in the scholarly process, we propose to create a grant template to expand education programs. The template will contain standardized text concerning campus demographics, inquiry-based education, and assessment and can be used or modified as desired (and appropriate) for faculty submitting research proposals.

(4.) Although undergraduate research is prevalent, it is predominantly an experience available to upperclassman. We propose to explore a freshman year experience with an emphasis in research. A faculty member will be designated as the program coordinator beginning September 1, 2007. The new coordinator will facilitate conversations with faculty teaching entry level courses and may include pedagogy, course design, extracurricular activities and programming. Hopefully, these conversations will formulate future plans and initiatives.

The campus has committed \$5,000 of current operating funds as well as some reserve to be used at the direction of the Assessment Council.