

Proposal:
Assessment Plan for Undecided Students

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Assignment

I have developed a 1000-1200 word project proposal that explains the rationale for my final project and outlines its major components. This includes a task-based timeline. A functional link to this assignment was posted on the online portfolio by the due date along with this short abstract.

Abstract

To complete this assignment I have chosen to focus on my own professional environment, which needs the benefit of this content, and which will professionally afford me the time required to complete the assigned project at a level of professionalism and quality with which I am capable.

Keywords: Assessment Plan, Proposal, PhD, Assignments, Lang, ENGL 5365, Summer 2010, Assessment, Academic Advising, Texas Tech University

The author wishes to thank Dr. Elizabeth Teagan for recruiting me to this professional role, for entrusting me with these opportunities, and for supporting me in pursuing a terminal degree in this field that I enjoy and value so highly.

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Assessment Plan for Undecided Students

After much deliberation, I have chosen to focus my efforts on my own most immediate vicinity: by planning and executing the creation/revision of an assessment plan for the students, programs, and personnel of Texas Tech University Advising.

Rationale

There are four key reasons to proceed with this project by focusing on my own department. These are stated succinctly in the following four keywords: responsibility, requirement, significance, and propulsion.

Responsibility

First, these tasks already exist as part of my assigned job responsibilities as the Unit Associate Director for Texas Tech University Advising. As a former knowledge management consultant with experience in business process reengineering, systems design, and change management, one of my first tasks in this professional role was to update the department's strategic plan.

I completed this assigned task initially in 2007; since that time our department's annually reported quantitative metrics and qualitative vignettes have been clearly connected with the larger goals, objectives, and benchmarks established for the entire institution.

On the hem of my initial success, the alignment project was quickly followed by one whose goal was to reduce and improve our extensive reporting processes/responsibilities. Since that time I must confess that I am not satisfied with the current level of quality and adoption. There are many reasons for this; the completion of this elusive goal has been frustrated by personnel turnover, the distractions of other, more urgent, responsibilities, and a reduction of available resources. Despite these challenges, I can honestly report that my team and I have

successfully accomplished this second task by unifying, consolidating, and in some cases, automating and/or eliminating a substantial number of items from our extensive list of regular and ad hoc reports. Even so, when faced with targets that are aptly described as “moving” it should be no surprise to learn that these improvements are now out-of-date with recently updated policies, procedures, and expectations in the departmental, institutional, and governmental spheres.

At the bottom line, our current assessment processes and tools are no longer aligned with internal and external developments. Further, our communication of completed assessments is limited primarily to upper-level university administration who *might* be inclined to actively seek it out. These realities created by these conditions do not serve to guide our work, neither do they position me (nor my unit) to accomplish our charge and enjoy the fruit of our labors. In short, the responsibility for completing this important work falls to me.

Requirement

Second, as a result of accreditation requirements dictated for its member institutions by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the University will soon (or already has) adopt[ed] a new appreciation of deliberate assessments of student learning and program performance. Further, the University is now in the transitional year of implementing Responsibility-Centered Management (RCM), a new approach to fiscal decision-making and institutional planning whose reporting requirements will likely be best addressed by an updated and clear assessment process that incorporates all three levels in my purview: student, program, and department.

Continuing the logic of the *requirement* rationale, the fledgling field of Academic Advising diligently pursues scholarly and institutionally-valued standards of practice. Accordingly, it seems appropriate and beneficial to proactively adopt processes that align with and run parallel to the standards of practice found in the academic disciplines which our advising efforts support. Rhetorically speaking, critically evaluating and thoroughly communicating the impact of our department's work is most likely to be effective with faculty and administrators when our approach to assessment, analysis, planning, and scholarly inquiry is consistent with their own.

Significance

Third, as a principle-based leader, I recognize that I am most productive when I can clearly and confidently explain how the daily work of our team (and partners, by extension) supports and fulfills the larger goals of our parent institution. Additionally, the enormous value of completing this process prior to the beginning of the next fiscal year (FY11) will have a significant positive impact on my own psyche. This encouragement will result from my own growing recognition that I will possess a thoroughly and creatively designed assessment structure that can be implemented and maintained with great confidence and enthusiasm.

Propulsion

Finally, the deadlines and artificial urgency created by the course's timeline will accelerate and propel my own completion of the tasks for which I am responsible. I appreciate the opportunity this course, and this assignment in particular, afford me. This process has already begun to generate the requisite pressure that I will require to aggressively engage and complete this formidable task.

Major Components & Task Based Timeline

Context

The initial component of this project requires me to thoroughly investigate and familiarize myself with current and relevant practices and research which will inform and guide my efforts.

1. Analysis of Advising Standards and Self-Assessment Process prescribed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) for Academic Advising (July 13)
2. Review of the Literature and Best Practices in Assessment of Academic Advising (July 14)
3. Review of TTU Strategic Plan (July 15)
4. Review of TTU Assessment Standards (July 16)

Goals

Essential in any assessment process, I will focus here on defining the high level program and student-learning outcomes who reside in two important departmental documents.

5. Revision of University Advising Strategic Plan (July 17-19)
6. Revision of Advising Syllabus (July 20)

Information

This third component will involve taking the process to the next level of granularity and scheduling each part of the assessment process to establish continuity for future iterations of the annual cycle.

7. Definition of Assessable Measures for Desired Student Learning Outcomes (July 21)
8. Identification of Points of Measurement, Assessment Cycle, and Documentation Mechanisms (July 22)

9. Identification of Responsible Parties (July 23)

Action

At this point I will turn my attention to the action-oriented plans, reports, and individuals with whom the actual front-line assessable measures and the subsequent decisions will reside.

10. Create Annual Points of Analysis and Define Decision Process (July 24)
11. Identification of Accountable Stakeholders and Communication Portals (July 26)
12. Identify and Plan Next-Level Assessments for Programs and Personnel (July 27)
13. Documentation of Process (July 28-30)
14. Publication/Presentation (August 2)

Online Location

The online copy of this file is posted as part of my online course portfolio at the following web address (url): <http://barronfam.com/?p=793>