

Antioch University

Assessment Resource Team (ART): Recommendations re: University Surveys

September 18, 2012

Introduction: The recommendations listed in this document reflect one aspect of ART’s mission as a consulting group—to develop system-wide standards and guidelines for the assessment of student learning. Also, in December, 2011, the team articulated two goals that provide context for our recommendations about surveys:

1. Get efficiencies of scale in the assessment of student learning from being one university.
2. Foster a sense of consensus across programs that also allows for uniqueness and innovation.

In June, 2012, the team noted that AU-wide efforts like the SSSC's surveys (of employees, students, alumni, and full- and part-time faculty) have proven to be very useful in providing evidence for our HLC self-study. More generally, university-wide surveys are doubly valuable: they provide a useful resource to campuses and enable the university to inform its stakeholders. However, we also noted several issues for consideration. For example, absent an SSSC, who identifies needs and oversees or coordinates university-wide surveys? Also, local surveys (campus, program level) have mushroomed, are perceived as needed, and are therefore likely to continue. Finally, respondent survey fatigue seems to be a growing problem.

With these and other issues in mind, ART makes the following recommendations:

Recommendations:

- 1) The university should identify what kind of data we want from all programs and then implement a well-designed, regular (as opposed to ad-hoc) use of surveys to assess the quality of teaching and learning, as part of a broader approach to assessment that uses multiple methods and data sources.
- 2) As a first step, create a list of all assessment-related surveys currently being done at each campus (We have posted a Google.doc template “[AU Surveys Spreadsheet](#)” for this purpose).
- 3) Identify which surveys might be done efficiently and effectively as university-wide efforts versus which surveys might not be well-suited to that approach (i.e., which surveys might be better suited to campus/program- specific efforts).
 - a) Set up a university-wide system to coordinate university and local survey efforts, including a regular schedule of university-wide surveys to meet both internal and external informational

needs; e.g., “every ___ years a faculty survey will be done, every ___ years a student survey,” etc.

b) Identify and distinguish between (1) "global" common elements that would be captured by the *same* survey questions across the university, and (2) customizable parts that would reflect program- and campus-specific elements and that would require *unique* survey questions.

c) Consider the best methods for meeting local (campus, program) unique survey needs, such as gathering data for state (or professional) accrediting bodies' requirements, or capturing the inherent value of a program's unique purpose, design, student population, assessment needs, etc.

d) Plan for the most useful data analysis, e.g. have the capacity for data to be disaggregated by degree program to provide information as specific as possible for faculty use in program review/assessment.

4) Prioritize survey needs, at least at the university level, where we have a gap between assessment needs and available data. For example, alumni surveys seem a top priority given the DOE, HLC, and our own need for data on alumni’s postgraduate experience: how their Antioch education prepared them for work, for further education, and/or otherwise benefitted them, and what weaknesses they report (e.g. lack of career center services).

5) Establish a university-wide function, office, or position/person that would administratively coordinate system-wide surveys (e.g. as part of Institutional Research). Assign adequate personnel/resources to design, conduct, and analyze results of AU surveys.

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