Assessment Oversight Committee
Student Housing – Review
October 12, 2009

Assessment Plan – attached

1. What evidence do you have that students achieve your stated learning / expected outcomes?

UWP Student Housing has utilized EBI (Educational Benchmarking Inc.)/ACUHO-I (Association of College and University Housing Officers – International) assessment and evaluation tools since 1997. This is a nationally normed, longitudinal assessment that also offers the opportunity to include up to 10 institution specific questions. We may also compare each question / factor data to a “select six” group of universities that we select, our Carnegie class, and all participating schools.

These surveys are a significant part of our assessment program. We use the Resident Study and attempt to administer it to all residence hall students in November of the Fall semester. Last Fall, we received 2170 responses or 81%. We also use the EBI Student Staff Assessment and administer it to all live-in undergraduate staff (101 students). Last Fall, we received 99 responses or 99%.

A review of the results for the 19 factors in the Resident Study (attached) indicate very positive scores and several of the factors provide specific data to support effective learning outcomes. Although all the data is relevant to consider, Factors 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 address the issues contained in the department’s Mission / Purpose and Learning Outcomes.

Our additional evaluation tools include Staff evaluation by resident; RA performance appraisal; SA performance appraisal; RA Evaluation of SA; Desk Clerk Performance Appraisal; Desk Clerk Evaluation of SA; RD Performance Appraisal by Staff; RD Performance Appraisal (including categories and normed ratings with Performance Now software); self evaluations for each level.

Evaluations of staff training provide information for the staff to use as they plan ongoing or annual sessions and make changes and improvements.

Focus group discussions takes a couple of different formats – hall councils and RHA are utilized for feedback, information, ideas, and to determine level of awareness of various issues; SurveyMonkey is used to address quick and/or regular feedback regarding issues that need attention or evaluation. It can also assist other departments as well.

Incident reports individually and collectively document the type and frequency of issues that receive attention. Programming reports do the same thing and promote reflection about process, outcomes, etc. Our programming model focuses on 3 words – Observe, Interact, Act. It reflects the same desire to be needs-based, intentional and strategic with what is offered. Our programming data reflects a strong focus on community and philanthropic programs.

2. What have you learned as a result?

It is very useful for us to utilize nationally normed, longitudinal surveys and evaluation tools because of the credibility of external, independent assessment. The comparative findings (Select 6) provide new perspective on the meaning of our scores. The longitudinal analysis tracks progress over time to provide evidence of improvement or areas of concern. The institution specific questions have allowed us to seek feedback / assessment regarding topics that were not addressed in the general survey.

It is important to review the results regularly and individually with various constituents – halls, supervisors, other departments, etc.

We have found that changes and/or new directions as a result of the survey results have rationale and support and are responsive to needs. Students and staff have a sense of investment in the process.
Currently, we intend to continue utilizing wing meetings for student participation rather than the on-line version of the survey – our % of participation is extraordinarily high and we appreciate that!
RHA annually reviews the Housing budget and participates in discussions regarding priorities, issues of concern, and review of policies and services. They have readily endorsed decisions to spend money in such areas as upgrading the heating system and eliminating resident room landlines because the data supports it. The department’s Annual Report describes the activities, actions, programs, achievements, and areas for improvement. It’s another tool that chronicles the effectiveness of staff and the data related to incidents and programs.
We have learned that we need to really look at the data and reflect /discuss /interpret the findings. What is it telling us? Is this working? How do we apply the “evidence” to decisions?
We also recognize the need to celebrate accomplishments.
If we are candid regarding problems / issues, we can work together to make changes and make improvements.
Assessment will often allow you to put your resources where they will have the biggest impact and identify areas that have performed well.
We are pleased with the congruency with resident survey data and staff assessment data regarding similar topics.
We have learned the importance of providing tangible reminders / descriptions/ of our department’s mission. We make laminated signs, include it in our publications, etc.
We understand the significance of sending messages regarding diversity through a variety of formats – posters (staff on the rock), responding to incidents, staff training and development sessions, bulletin boards, newsletters, READY activities at each RHA meeting -- that reinforce our values and promote learning about one another. Being consistent in your actions and words is very important.
Resident Directors are able to utilize building specific data that provides impetus for making changes, monitoring concerns, and celebrating successes.

3. **Document specific changes that have resulted from your assessment efforts.**

The inability to control temperature within each individual residence hall room was a continuous complaint and received low scores in the EBI survey. We researched options and hired a company to install individual register controls in each room. The results were very immediate and tangible and we were also able to spread the cost over a number of years.

Our staff selection process has gone through a number of changes as a direct result of effective assessment. The institution specific questions have provided the opportunity to gather data on issues that needed some scrutiny. For example, the decision to discontinue providing landlines was assisted by the data collected in the longitudinal survey. We were able to see very consistent data that supported that removal. We also dealt with the needs of some constituents who still needed alternate phone use, reduced monthly payments significantly, and were able to provide rationale to supervisors to discontinue the service without inconvenience and provide significant budgetary relief.

We are currently monitoring responses regarding use of basement computer labs to determine whether to continue to support them.

Attachments:
Summary – 2008 EBI Resident Study results – Factors 1 – 19
Summary –2008 EBI Student Staff Assessment – Factors 1 – 11