

Assess & Progress:

A Strategy for Building Time and Space for Assessment in Student Affairs

NASPA CONVENTION

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Outcomes of this Presentation

- 1 Explore using the Expectancy-Value-Cost Model to inform the development of professional development opportunities that actively engage staff in assessment activities.
- 2 Articulate the critical role of leadership in nurturing a robust culture of assessment.
- 3 Advocate for leadership support and communicate the intrinsic value of assessment work.

Background

- **2019:** Student Affairs partnered with the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) at JMU to conduct a needs assessment.
- The goal was to determine to what extent staff in student affairs valued assessment and evidence-informed practice and whether they had the skills to engage in this work.
- Staff were asked questions such as:
 - How much time do you spend examining literature to help you design effective programming?
 - Do you value the creation of evidence-informed programming (EIP)?
 - Do you value the assessment of program effectiveness?
 - Are you confident that you possess knowledge and skills to engage in EIP and assessment?

Results of the Needs Assessment

- Most **SAPros value assessment** of program effectiveness, recognizing its importance for advancing the profession.
- SAPros reported that they were **least likely** to use current research to build programming.
- Barriers to EIP/assessment included no time to read literature or implement EIP, and lack of expectation from leadership.

A Culture of Evidence

- These findings mirrored existing literature (Wawrzynski et al., 2015).
- Despite valuing assessment internally, motivation to conduct this work was lacking, aligning with a ‘culture of good intentions’ (Culp & Dungy, 2012).
- In response, we aimed to shift towards a ‘culture of evidence.’
- In a Culture of Evidence:
 - SAPros can explain what they are doing.
 - SAPros use data to inform processes.
 - Assessment is clear to everyone.
 - A clear measurement of success is defined.
 - Assessment is linked to strategic planning.

Use of Motivation Theory

- We framed the lack of motivation using Barron & Hulleman's (2015) Expectancy-Value-Cost (EVC) model.
- This model suggests that optimal motivation for assessment/EIP occurs when a person:
 - Believes they can do the task [Expectancy]
 - Wants to do the task [Value]
 - Is free of barriers preventing them from engaging in the task [Cost]

Think, Pair, & Share

Take 2 minutes to discuss with the folks next to you.

Take 5 minutes to share out with the full group as you feel comfortable.

Motivation to Engage in Assessment

- What factors do you think influence a staff members motivation to engage in assessment?
- What are some ways that you can influence motivation to engage in assessment on your campus?
- What challenges might you face? What support might you need?

Motivation in Our Division

- While professionals valued EIP and assessment, their value was undermined by a lack of expectancy and perception of costs.
- When SAPros **lack expectancy** and **face** significant cost **barriers**, their **motivation** to engage in assessment efforts **decreases**.

Goals of the Series

- **Goal 1** - Address **lack of motivation** to engage in assessment using the Expectancy-Value-Cost (EVC) model.
- **Goal 2** – Address lack of expectancy with clarity by developing a year-long professional development to **increase engagement in assessment**.
- **Goal 3** – Encourage attendees to engage in professional development and **use tailored educational resources** to build expectancy and value.
- **Goal 4** – Encourage **leadership buy-in** and **protect time** for SAPros to engage in assessment work.

A Year-Long Professional Development

Intentional Structure to Address Barriers

- First Friday of each month (10 total—August to April)
- 3 hours total
 - 1.5 hours for PD
 - 1.5 hours to work on assessment projects and receive expert support
- Sequence of PD designed in alignment with the assessment cycle
- Interactive activities for each PD
- Emphasis on alignment with professional standards (CAS)
- A core tenant of equity-centered assessment practices

PROGRAM THEORY

A Guide to Getting Started



THREE COMMON PROGRAMMING STATES

There are 3 common states student affairs professionals find themselves in when asked to implement a program "new to them". Identify which state best represents a current program, strategy or intervention that you are looking to assess. The next few pages will outline a series of steps you can take to articulate why this program should be effective (i.e., Program Theory).

Inherited Program - Limited to No Control

You are inheriting a program that is already built. You may or may not have inherited program theory with this program.

New Program - Total Control

You are starting a new program and have total control over the programmatic aspects including the distal and program level outcomes.

New Program - Some Control

You are planning a new program that has some parameters - perhaps you are given a distal outcome that you must map your program towards

CAS Standards

- The functional area must provide a **research-informed, theory-informed, or evidence-based rationale** for designing programs and services, strategies, and tactics intended to influence student learning, development, and success goals.
- The functional area must use **theory, research, and evidence** to develop and implement its programs and services to achieve stated mission, goals, and outcomes.
- The functional area must enact **culturally responsive, inclusive, respectful, and equitable practices** in providing programs and services.
- Functional area leadership must utilize **research, scholarship, evidence, philosophies, principles, and values** to guide the work of the functional area.
- Functional area leadership must develop, adapt, and improve programs and services in response to the needs of changing environments, populations served, **current research**, and evolving institutional priorities.
- Functional area personnel must engage in **continuing professional development activities to apply current research when developing new programming, improving existing programming, or advocating for the discontinuation of existing programming.**

Criterion 2 – Program Theory

Does the report include program theory?			
If yes, then ...	Complete current block	If no, then ...	Provide an “average score” of zero, and move to next set of criteria

Using Theory and Research to Create and/or Map Programming to the Outcomes	A synopsis of the specific theory and research used in the creation and mapping of each programming element is provided.				
Criteria	Exemplary (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)	Missing (0)	Score
Outcome-Programming Mapping	All program elements are mapped to their respective outcomes.	Most program elements are mapped to their respective outcomes.	Some program elements are mapped to their respective outcomes.	No program elements are mapped to respective outcomes or elements are not clearly identified.	
Program Theory	A theoretical framework is identified, cited, and applied to all the elements of the program (mapping between programming and outcomes is clear and justified).	A theoretical framework is identified, cited, and applied to most of the elements of the program.	A theoretical framework is identified, cited, and applied to some of the elements of the program.	A theoretical framework is not identified, cited, and applied to any element of the program.	
Evidence-Based Practice	Evidence-based practices have been articulated and provide rationale for all program elements.	Evidence-based practices have been articulated and provide rationale for most of program elements.	Evidence-based practices have been articulated and provide rationale for some of the program elements.	Evidence-based practices have not been articulated and do not provide rationale for any program elements.	
Reasonable	Outcomes are reasonable given length and strength of program and are extensively supported by evidence (from previous research).	Outcomes are reasonable given length and strength of the program and are minimally supported by evidence (from previous research).	It is unclear if the outcomes are reasonable given the information provided in the report.	Outcomes are not reasonable given the length and strength of the program.	
Equity Centered	Clear articulation about if and how the etiology of the outcomes differs across different student populations. Intersectionality of students' identities is considered and addressed. Student feedback is solicited on the clarity of the applied program theory.	Clear articulation about if and how etiology differs across different broad student populations.	Unclear or limited articulation around the differences in etiology across student populations. Acknowledgement that this assessment process may be the first step in identifying these differences.	No discussion of potential differences in etiology.	
Comments:				Average Score:	

Sub-Criterion Definitions:	
Outcome-Programming Mapping	Outcome-program mapping involves a diagram or table to show how each outcome is addressed by program elements.
Program Theory	Program theory explains how and why programming is expected to work. Why should engaging in these programming elements (e.g., activities, content, pedagogy) result in the stated outcomes?
Evidence-Based Practice	Evidence-based practice refers to programming that has been empirically evaluated and been shown to effectively impact intended outcomes.
Reasonable	Reasonable outcomes are appropriate or sensible for the context of the program and population being served. Some outcomes cannot be achieved for particular populations or with the resources afforded by the university.

Success of the Series

- Long-Term Involvement of Staff
- Ability to Connect Training to Annual Review Processes
- Production of Annual Assessment Reports
- Tailored Support for Individual Staff
- Performance Evaluations



Challenges of the Series

- Miscommunications and differing priorities around assessment
- Consistent participation
- Leadership visibility in the process
- Hybrid modality
- Intentional time for assessment being utilized for “other work”
- Ability for some offices step away for this time
- Managing expectations between participants and supervisors

Maintenance & Moving Forward

Changes to Content

- Heavier emphasis on Programming (Steps 1, 2 & 4 of assessment cycle) and Use of Results (Step 7 of assessment cycle)
- Focusing on the primary functions of student affairs educators
 - Evidence- and theory-based program development, implementation fidelity, and use of results for improvement (Strine-Patterson et al., 2024)
- Encouraging SA professionals to partner with assessment specialists for measurement (Steps 3, 5 & 6 of assessment cycle)

SA Professionals supported by Assessment Specialist



Maintenance & Moving Forward

Equity Considerations

- Increasing use of Qualitative Data
 - Collecting & analyzing qualitative data
- "Student-Centered" Approaches



Maintenance & Moving Forward

Changes to Process

- Revisiting the 2019 needs assessment
 - Is there a need to conduct a second needs assessment
- Continued conversations with senior leadership
 - Requiring participation from certain staff each year
- Reconsidering hybrid vs. In person model
- More structured approach to the "working time"

Questions?



Scan Me!

References

Barron, K. E., & Hulleman, C. S. (2015). Expectancy-value-cost model of motivation. *Psychology*, 84, 261-271.

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Thank you!