

# Building the Basics of a Program Improvement Narrative

## A Simple Step by Step Guide

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# Outcomes

1. Participants will understand the importance of closing the loop AND improving rather than merely monitoring their outcomes.
2. Participants will gain simple steps to meaningful improvement narratives intended to build and strengthen their programs from year to year.

# What do we want to Improve?

- Our students' expectations vs. their perceptions
- How are under-represented student populations performing in our programs?
- Are students satisfied with what they're learning?
- Retention is implied through improvement!!

# What Data Really Matters?

## Interesting Information vs. Useful Information

- Never ask a question without a meaningful end.

**Important Note: This does not mean we avoid questions we're not sure we want the answers to.**

# Assessment vs. Improvement

- Assessment = Procedure
- Improvement = Process
- Assessment = Proposition
- Improvement = Change
- Assessment = Discussion
- Improvement = **Action**

# Assessment ... to what end?

## 3 Steps of Assessment

1. Outcomes we expect for our students.
2. Information – How well students achieve these outcomes.
3. Action – How we use this info to *improve* student learning. (Closing the loop)

Walvoord (2010)

# Why Improvement?

The most important consideration in assessment “is whether the assessment process is leading to improvements in academic and co-curricular programs.”



Banta and Palomba (2015)

# Why Improvement?

Linda Suskie (2018) takes this idea a step further and suggests “building a culture of evidence and betterment” which informs change ... in “curricula, teaching/learning strategies, learning goals, co-curricular experiences, and support systems.



# Improvement Process

Action Plans should  
drive Improvement

or...

At the very least seek  
Improvement

# Improvement Process

Conclusion

We want to track

Action Plans

Intended to achieve

Improvement!!



Annual Reporting  
Building  
The Improvement Narrative

# Building the Narrative

## The Four Steps

- Process
- Positives
- Challenges
- Action Plan

# Building the Narrative

Process: What work has been done to develop learning outcomes, make changes, and achieve meaningful improvements?



# Building the Narrative

Positives: What were good things that came out of the improvement process based on the results/data?



# Building the Narrative



Challenges - What things didn't work out as expected? Results aren't always cooperative – and that's okay!

# Building the Narrative

## Action Plan for the Next Year

### Offer actions in detail

- Training/added reading, etc.
- Instruments (New/Adjusted)
- Added treatments to a previous year's actions



# Building the Narrative

## Year Two

### Process, Positives, Challenges

- Information for these areas will be directly pulled from results/data discussed in the previous year's **Action Plan**.

# Building the Narrative

Year Two

Action Plan (s)

- At this point, changes can be made that will strengthen last years results.
- From the changes made here, improvement can be measured.

# Building the Narrative

Year Three

Improvement Narrative

- Does the program recognize improvement(s)?
- Choice – additional changes to improve further or focus on another outcome.

### Media Communication Improvement Narrative, 2019-2020

During the 2019-2020 academic year, Media Communication faculty continued our assessment process by evaluating senior portfolios and providing feedback. Faculty members evaluating senior portfolios included Mary Liz Brooks, Kim Bruce, Nancy Garcia, Emily Kinsky, Li Chen, Michael McFarland, Patrick Osel-Hwere and Randy Ray. The Media Communication Studies program has learning outcomes that we measure each year through the senior portfolio websites. We evaluated 44 portfolio websites for the academic year. Of the 44 submitted, 40 received passing scores (90%) which meets the benchmark (90%) we had set. Kim Bruce assisted the students who failed to receive passing scores for all sections of the portfolio until they submitted sufficient documentation of their learning to earn a passing score. In the goals of leadership, media production, media convergence/media global environment, cultural influences, media theory, professional and civic responsibilities; and managing new technologies and media, students are excelling as evidenced by their work in Media Communication organizations such as KWTS, competitive advertising and public relations teams and 1910 PR. Others serve the campus with WT Leadership, Buff Athletics and the Office of Student Engagement and Leadership. In the area of media production, our students participated in a variety of competitions. This chart summarizes their accomplishments in national, regional and state competitions:

NEA Awards	TIPA Awards	Addy Awards	NSAC Awards
6 national production awards 4 chapter & individual awards	7 awards (4 first place awards, 1 second place awards, 2 third place awards)	Four Gold ADDY Awards, two Silver ADDY Awards and a Special Judges Award	Placed 5 <sup>th</sup> in Regional Competition (performed virtually)

Adobe Certifications completed this year include:

Photoshop	Illustrator	Premiere	inDesign
25	8	3	2

While the total number of certifications (38) is fewer than the 45 certifications earned last year, it is significant to note that restrictions placed on students because of the COVID 19 pandemic may have led to the decrease.

The area where we continue to seek improvement is in written communication skills. In reviewing senior portfolio websites, we found writing errors that students need to correct. We purchased copies of the Associated Press Manual and placed them in the MAC Lab. We continue to encourage students to take advantage of the campus Writing Center.

#### POSITIVE

Our assessment process is working well, and as the courses moved online in the Spring of 2020, faculty adapted final course presentations to the online environment using technological tools such as Adobe Spark pages, Zoom meetings and shared screens. Buffalo Advertising put their plans book together virtually, as well as competing in the first virtual competition held by NSAC.

#### CHALLENGE

Because of the hands-on approach used in many of our courses, we faced challenges recreating that experience in an online environment that was made necessary due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Even though students had access to applications through Adobe Creative Cloud, their devices or lack of Wi-Fi connection created significant challenges in some of our courses. Our plans to offer a faculty-led study abroad experience in Cuba for fall, 2020 was placed on hold because of the limitations placed on travel.

#### ACTION PLAN FOR 2020-2021

We will continue to use senior portfolios for assessing learning, but at the same time stress to students that their portfolio gives them an added advantage in the job search process. As we move to delivery of more hybrid classes for the fall, using online meeting technology, we will adjust our assessment process as needed. Kim Bruce will continue to collect student responses for the MCOM Program Assessment. We will continue to encourage our students to take advantage of the services offered by the campus Writing Center, which are also available online, by including that information in all departmental course syllabi.

#### SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS:

- Evaluation of MCOM Senior Portfolios—completed by MCOM faculty as assigned by Kim Bruce
- Transitioning course material to hybrid delivery—will vary by faculty member but will be coordinated by Dr. Hanson
- Collection of student responses for program assessment—Kim Bruce collects this information in MCOM 4191 taught in fall and spring; Dr. Hanson collects information in the summer session class.
- Encouraging use of the Campus Writing Center—all Media Communication faculty through statements in their courses syllabi and announcements in classes

# Media Communications Improvement Narrative

# References

Banta, T.W. and Paloma, C.A. (2015). *Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing, and Improving Assessment in Higher Education*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Suskie, L. (2018). *Assessing Student Learning; A Common Sense Guide*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Walvoord, B.E. (2010). *Assessment Clear and Simple; A practical guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Jossey-Bass Publishers.

# This is Our Island!!!

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