

Notes from September 23, 2008 BUCCS Conversation

Responses to Question 1:

- Psychology does an exit interview, but what are the results?
- English and Education conduct assessments at the departmental level, but what about the University level?
 - Holding on to every student is important
 - Our ability to retain students is important
 - Do we have data relating to College readiness (this can help inform how prepared students are coming in, and help us understand where they are at.)
 - There are placement exams for math and foreign languages. We have data in math.
 - Would it be possible to do special program assessment? Turning point only follows students for 1 semester->Are there things Center for Learning Assistance can do to follow students through to graduation?
 - What do we know about transfer students? What are they doing? How are they doing?
 - What do we know about international students? What are they doing? How are they doing?
 - Barbara Carraway's office has information on why students leave.
 - What about reports on co-curricular activities? Are there practical applications to these?
 - How many students actually go to grad school? How many actually succeed in Graduate School?
 - Why do students choose Bradley? Does this data exist?
- How can this information be translated to the unit level, e.g. why are education students leaving? (Have the most direct contact with my own students). This can be the greatest potential for impact, at our own level. Is there something we can change to help retain students?
- What about students changing majors multiple times? Do we have data on these students, and if so, how is it being used?
- What are education and math doing that computer science and history are not doing? Education has someone to collect data, whereas LAS doesn't.
- Pre-assessment->what are the skills students have coming in? How does this translate to gen eds? What do they know coming in? (Students can't identify a pronoun, don't know what one is.)
- It is part of the culture in professional schools to do assessment. This needs to be acknowledged from the University level: look at what is going on out there, and not be blind to that.
- Support staff to help gather data would be helpful.
- Feedback or critique on what we are already doing? Are these good outcomes? Do they make sense?

- What is not assessable? (How would you assess whether graduates can derive joy from a concert? Are they deriving pleasure from life? This is all part of life education->how would that be assessed? Can that be assessed? Should that be assessed? NCATE does ask for assessment of professional attitudes, and there is research supporting this assessment.
- Also helpful to have support staff help departments generate vehicles that generate usable data. As there been a change in knowledge? What do we want to look at here at Bradley: a change in knowledge or competence to perform according to an external norm?
- What about major field tests?
- GRE exam at Bradley?
- We are perhaps finding something out but not sure what.
- Math is using major field test->can others use that? Who has seen the results?

Responses to Question 2:

- 8 key things to move forward over 4 years:
 1. Pull together current data
 2. Decide on Standards (national?)
 3. What are our competitors doing? (What are they using to recruit students?)
 4. Identify expertise across campus.
 5. Overall organization: how is assessment plan organized?
 6. Staff to design data instruments
 7. Staff to interpret data
 8. What is learning to teaching link?
- Standard=Goals. We need to define our Target, e.g. Our students can write a complete paragraph in standard English. What does success look like when it walks out the door? What does it look like coming in? Aggregate & disaggregate data: Disseminate, and Share data on what we know about students.
- Digitize information incrementally->interacting databases.
- Faculty activity report system may interact with data.
- Program review and assessment review data coordinate. Within the next 4 years, it would be helpful to have a reasonable support structure to collect data and have a general discussion about terminology->What do words mean across disciplines?
- Can we invite individuals from HLC schools to talk about assessment practices? We can listen to various models.
- What are the President's expectations for our students? Who are we and who do we want to be?
- Does BUCCS 1 have endorsement from the President and the Provost?
- Can BUCCS 1 be our guiding point? Is there a need for additional conversations on assessment for BUCCS?

Notes from September 24, 2008 BUCCS Conversation

Question 1:

- 9 points of helpful information/resources:
 1. A place to centralize assessment results that can be used by faculty/administration. We can find out what others did. What about standard demographic information? Some questions have been asked by different accreditors? What are the commonalities?
 2. List of data items that exist, e.g. alumni surveys; demographics; standardized test scores; Placement rates; and salary levels.
 3. Standardized survey instrument for alumni. Assistance with surveys at the departmental level.
 4. Data mining of the web->what information do we know about students. We can find out what folk are doing.
 5. Assistance in analyzing data. Individual departments do an exit survey or an alumni survey, but nothing is ever done with the data.
 6. An independent assessment of student work->samples of work with names removed->know whether they can read/write.
 7. Help with departmental pre-post testing. Idea of what they have learned.
 8. Process to link data to broader institution: how does this assessment data relate to US News?
 9. Assistance in developing course evaluation documents that are meaningful.
- Time: need time to read student papers
- Serving on departmental assessment committee is extra work->can the departmental director of assessment be given course release time to do this well?
- Structure of assessment person in each department to work with Jenny/Assessment Lab.
- General education: What is going on there? May be easier to handle assessment at the departmental level than general education.
- Assessment Lab can help with ethics->are other people measuring ethics? What else is out there? How are others measuring similar things? Grant writing can be included in a course. How do we make sure gen ed objectives are included in gen ed? Can we tie assessment together? Can we review syllabi of gen eds to make sure criteria are included in gen ed? Faculty may spend time struggling with grammar over content. How much are students being asked to write in their first year?
- The psych verbal GRE score has been going down over the years: how can Eng help with papers in other courses?
- Development of Philosophy when measuring student outcomes: do students perform better on achievement test with consequences? Incentive can influence outcome. Some programs have consequences for not doing well on an assessment, others, e.g. Psych, do not. Are there consequences? Education has "gates" along the way. Nursing has high risk testing. What has changed on

campus in regard to individual v. group writing assignments. Quality of group assignment v. individual assignment. Large numbers increase time to grade individual assignments.

- What about a writing center in all 5 colleges? The center can work with faculty & students to deal with writing issues.
- List of errors that are being seen across campus.
- Psych: what about a pre-post to look at why GRE Verbal is going down? Is this a trend at other schools? A trend in other departments?
- Can we pull data from other Universities? Post examples of other University assessments. Some departments may need more help than others. Link to other schools and what they are doing.

Question 2 responses:

- Electronic data to pull out for all departments: Pull GRE scores for all Colleges, especially for those with accreditation reports. What are GRE scores for my department? College? The University? Something similar for LSTAT?
- Electronic access to common data needs; comparative information.
- How do we capture that information? Students don't have to release that information->we only know when students tell us what they get. Can faculty write down scores? What about FERPA? Can Bradley pay for every student to take GRE?
- What common data would be helpful?
- Is there a minimum graduation requirement for each program? Does every student need to do a thesis?
- Database on what we have needs to be made available.
- Support to help with data analysis: how do we analyze what we have? Where do we go from here? We have all of these numbers now, so what?
- Identify a group of experts on assessment who are able to meet with & consult with faculty->identify and consult with faculty in systematic way.
- We need a really good handle on what gen ed is doing well and not well. Back to BUCCS 1. Can we link desired outcomes to gen ed? Are gen ed courses advancing specific skills or not? The Bradley experience needs to be articulated in gen ed. Get information from alums (5, 10, 15, 20 yrs out). Current students HATE gen ed. Grads know how they have used gen ed in their working lives. I wish I had taken more _____.
- Make effort to sell Bradley brand to Gen Ed should be the first project undertaken.