Project Summary

Title: Assessing Learning Outcomes of Undeclared Students
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As providers of services to Kutztown University’s undeclared students, the Department of Academic Advisement’s assessment project sought to develop a written comprehensive systematic assessment plan that would expand the department’s assessment practices to include outcomes-based assessment of student learning. In addition, the identified outcomes were aligned with both the Advising Center’s and the University’s mission statements.

While the Advising Center was utilizing several self-developed assessment tools to measure student learning, we also recognized the need for an expert who could evaluate our services and assessment methods for purposes of program improvement. In particular, we sought to both improve the services we provide to undeclared students and boost these students’ retention rates. The consultant assisted us in developing student learning outcomes that contained cognitive, skill, and affective elements associated with academic advising, as well as reviewed our current assessment tools. Moreover, he helped us develop new measurement tools, identify and map student learning opportunities, specify benchmarks, develop a schedule for measurement, and create a written assessment plan for implementing and evaluating revisions and changes.

With the comprehensive assessment plan in place for the 2009-10 academic year, the Advising Center’s faculty and staff collected evidence related to 18 freshman student learning outcomes. To illustrate, three learning outcomes concerned identifying students’ 1) vocational personality, 2) academic strengths and limitations, and 3) preferred learning style, with the intent of assisting students with meeting the goal of gaining self-understanding and self-acceptance of their abilities, interests, and limitations. Results showed that students effectively met 88% of the targeted goals. These findings were used to revise strategies related to the three targeted outcomes for which students did not attain the expected level of performance. One such altered strategy involved the Advising Center creating an informational pamphlet listing and identifying appropriate resources about majors and careers to better assist students in integrating their self-assessment information with information about potential majors, careers, and co-curricular activities. Project results will continue to assist the Advising Center in strengthening its overall program in general and its advising services in particular.

Additional information about the project can be obtained from the Project Director.