

Columns of Student Learning and Development

2014-15 ASSESSMENT PROJECT BRIEFS



Student affairs professionals care deeply about maximizing student success in and outside the classroom. We have defined the following learning outcomes as essential to student success.

- Interpersonal development
- Intrapersonal development
- Practical competence
- Knowledge acquisition and integration
- Critical and reflective thinking
- Humanitarianism and civic engagement

The Division of Student Affairs systematically gathers learning data in support of these Columns of Student Learning and Development each academic year. The results from these studies inform continuous improvement and strategically determine what makes a difference for students today, and in the future.

TEAM MIZZOU

MizzouRec

Emily Bach, Laura Salerno

Learning Dimensions: Meaningful Relationships, Sense of Belonging, Interdependence & Advocacy

The MizzouRec's student development program, Team Mizzou, creates and reinforces a value-based service culture

of excellence, responsibility and lifetime relationships. Through experiences as a Team Mizzou member, students should graduate from the program with important skills and experiences necessary for substantial career advantage.

This assessment project identified and measured student employees' connection with one another and their ability to articulate what they learned through their employment and how it relates to their career goals.

Assessment methods included quizzes, surveys, and Team Mizzou retention and demographic data.

KEY FINDINGS

Overall findings suggest Team Mizzou students identify themselves as building strong, meaningful relationships and recognize their experience as purposeful in developing transferable skills, preparing them for post-graduation.

Nearly 80 percent of Team Mizzou members were able to restate the department mission and vision. This indicates they understand how their role relates to the bigger MizzouRec picture.

All Team Mizzou members indicated their motivation for employment was more than just a pay check; they recognize the skills and experiences Team Mizzou offers.

IMPLICATIONS

- Strengthen job performance assessment tool
- Continue to focus on developing stronger Team Mizzou connections, providing leadership development and opportunities to earn rewards and recognition within the department.

STUDENT EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Campus Dining Services

Kristen Hasan, Melissa Riley, Kim Stonecipher

Learning Dimensions: Collaboration & Team Work, Meaningful Relationships, Managing Career Development, Managing Personal Affairs, Effective Leadership

Campus Dining Services employs 750 student employees. About 120 students work in supervisory or management positions. The student management program emphasizes skill development to help students be successful now and in the future.

This project focused on assessing development of time management, organization, conflict resolution and respectful working relationship techniques in order to improve the student management program.

Assessment methods included critique of position charts and shift summaries, student performance observation rubrics, checklists, focus groups and interviews.

KEY FINDINGS

With assistance, students can recognize transferable skills developed through their employment. Students indicated extra training is valuable.

The students need more development opportunities related to professionalism and cultural responsiveness.

Students are looking for more definitive tools and tips to use on a daily basis (as opposed to discussing leadership styles and theory).

Students can more efficiently manage their time after being trained to use tools that assist with time management (e.g., evaluation forms, position charts, and shift summary forms).

IMPLICATIONS

Based on these findings, we implemented the Student Management Training guide this year to help start all new student managers and supervisors on the same page. Students reported that they want more formal training, and this is the first step in that effort. We have started inviting students to professional staff training sessions when the topic applies. Finally, we have encouraged professional staff to focus on learning outcomes assessment and improvement in their meetings with student managers.

INVOLVEMENT TO CAREER

Center for Leadership and Service, Student Life
Kathleen Duffy

Learning Dimension: Managing Career Development

The Department of Student Life encourages students to make meaning of their involvement experiences. The Involvement to Career initiative provides students tools and resources to reflect upon their experiences in leadership and student employment.

Assessment methods included exit interviews with student leaders and student employees, pre- and post-skill rubrics, and a post-workshop evaluation with a pilot group of student leaders.

KEY FINDINGS

All participants were able to identify at least three transferable skills as a result of the workshop and reported an increase in knowledge about how involvement can benefit them as they prepare for a future career.

Student employees self-identified enhanced skills including prioritization, understanding and application of research information, time management and communication with people of varying age levels.

Pre- and post-skill rubrics showed that students are gaining written and verbal communication skills through their involvement experiences. They are also better able to connect what they are learning outside of the classroom to what they are learning in the classroom, and vice versa.

Exit interviews revealed students are learning and gaining skills from their involvement experiences, but they do not always have the language to accurately articulate what they are learning.

IMPLICATIONS

Results indicate this program is working, so we want to enhance and expand this program to a wider audience to increase student success. Student employees would benefit from the development of a separate training program. Providing more opportunities for students to reflect on their involvement opportunities throughout their college career will improve students' ability to share what they have learned with others, including potential employers.

BRIDGE TO MU

Disability Center

Justin Lozano, Becca Terry

Learning Dimensions: Meaningful Relationships, Managing Personal Affairs, Maintaining Health & Wellness, Self-Awareness, Sense of Belonging

Bridge to MU is a transition program for incoming freshmen registered with the Disability Center. It is designed to provide students with the strategies, tools and resources they need to thrive in the university environment. Assessment was conducted during the third year of the program.

Assessment methods included program evaluations (pre and post), session evaluations (pre and post), a focus group and individual interviews towards the latter half of the participants' first semester at Mizzou.

KEY FINDINGS

Data from both the pre- and post-assessments were deemed statistically insignificant, due to low response rates. Attempts were made to gather additional data through focus groups and individual interviews with incentives, without success. Because participants did not fully engage with the assessments, we did not have sufficient data to demonstrate learning.

IMPLICATIONS

Much was learned about the barriers to engaging students in assessment. These lessons will be applied to future assessment of student learning outcomes for the Disability Center.

ETHICS AND VALUES SEMINAR

Residential Life
Office of Student Conduct, Student Life
Beth Lauchstaedt, Julie Drury

Learning Dimensions: Commitment to Ethics & Integrity, Taking Responsibility for Individual Choices & Actions

The Ethics and Values Seminar is a new discretionary sanction that hearing officers can assign to students who are found responsible for violating the Standard of Conduct. Through the educational seminar, students review the university's values in consideration with their own personal values. Facilitators discuss ethical decision-making skills and evaluate a number of scenarios that are common occurrences on campus to help students make better choices.

Assessment methods included reviewing participant essays using a rubric, and pre- and post-tests.

KEY FINDINGS

Most participants (70 percent) improved their knowledge of campus policies, as indicated by pre- and post-tests.

All participants were able to identify where to find Residential Life policy and correctly identify information about the University Standard of Conduct.

Students met seminar expectations or higher in the following areas:

- Student is able to examine the relationship between their values and the university values (64 percent)
- Student articulated how their values are congruent or incongruent with the university values (59 percent)
- Student articulated how their actions during the referring incident are congruent with university rules, regulations and values (67 percent)
- Student related the "Seven Steps" to the incident that got them referred to EVS (65 percent)
- Student formulated an alternative outcome for the incident (62 percent)
- Student utilizes their personal and university values in the exploration of ethical decision making in future situations (53 percent)

IMPLICATIONS

Several changes were made to the seminar as a result of this assessment. Notable changes include restructuring the seminar to make it more interactive and replacing the ethical decision-making model with a model that is more understandable at a traditional college student's developmental level.

PROJECT-BASED INTERNSHIPS

Student & Auxiliary Services
Amanda Purchase Roberts

Learning Dimensions: Collaboration & Team Work, Managing Career Development

Student & Auxiliary Services offers internships in varying career fields, including marketing, retail, IT, event planning, interior design and general business. Interns are assigned a specific project and present to professional staff at the end of their internship.

Assessment methods included self-reported pre- and post-skills tests, evaluations at six weeks and at the end of the internship, scoring intern presentations using a rubric and an exit survey.

KEY FINDINGS

Students reported an increase in proficiency in the following areas:

- Ability to analyze quantitative data (80 percent increase)
- Technical knowledge related to the job (67 percent increase)
- Ability to create and/or edit written reports (60 percent increase)
- Ability to sell or influence others (54 percent increase)
- Presentation skills (53 percent increase)
- Verbal communication (53 percent increase)
- Ability to make decisions and solve problems (40 percent increase)
- Ability to plan, organize and prioritize work (33 percent increase)
- Proficiency with computer software programs (20 percent increase)
- Ability to work in a team structure (20 percent increase)

IMPLICATIONS

A long-term goal is to offer more joint internships between departments in SAS. This would allow more

networking opportunities for the intern, a well-rounded experience including varying supervisory styles, and a better understanding of how departments within SAS are connected.

GROUP THERAPY

Counseling Center

Kerri Schafer

Learning Dimensions: Meaningful Relationships, Sense of Belonging, Self-Awareness

Group therapy is aimed at helping students develop and enhance a number of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills including giving and receiving support and feedback, experiencing and expressing emotion, increasing general self-awareness, and practicing more effective and satisfying ways to relate to self and others. The current assessment project surveyed students participating in the following groups: an interpersonal process group, grief and loss support group, and two graduate and non-traditional student support groups.

Assessment measures included the four-item Group Session Rating Scale (GSRS; Duncan & Miller, 2007), a normed and validated measure of therapy group cohesion. Students also responded to the open-ended question, “What is the most important thing you have learned about yourself in group?” Assessment was administered four times throughout the semester.

KEY FINDINGS

Overall findings affirm that the Counseling Center’s rapidly-growing groups program is benefiting students’ intrapersonal and interpersonal growth. Students in all groups reported experiencing a sense of belonging in the group and development of meaningful group relationships.

Scores were significantly lower in the Interpersonal Process Group, which may be expected given the nature of concerns that would result in referral to that group, and the lack of obvious shared experiences compared to other groups.

Students’ responses suggested that the most valued aspects of group included normalization of experiences, increasing self-validation, self-acceptance, and self-care; interpersonal learning; and general self-awareness.

IMPLICATIONS

Results were shared with Counseling Center staff to inform group therapy leadership, particularly highlighting the importance of intentional, ongoing attention to group cohesion in Interpersonal Process groups. The Group Session Rating Scale has also been offered for use as an intervention tool in therapy groups.

MISSOURI STUDENTS ASSOCIATION LEADERS

Student Life

Farouk Aregbe

Learning Dimensions: Meaningful Relationships, Communication, Effective Leadership, Collaboration & Teamwork, Professionalism

With the goal of improving the experience of future leaders, we conducted exit interviews with outgoing Missouri Students Association (MSA) leaders. Those interviews revealed a gap in the ability to articulate their experience into transferable skills.

To address this gap, our office identified five learning outcomes around which MSA student leaders articulate what they have learned from their experience.

MSA student leaders complete a self-evaluation via a rubric at the beginning and end of their term in office.

KEY FINDINGS

A remarkable (and unintended) benefit is that the MSA student leader rubric served not only as a tool for reflection at the end of the term but also as a benchmark for expectations at the beginning.

The competencies “difficult conversations” and “challenging behaviors” scored the lowest with all student leaders in pre-test.

The most significant growth (1.2 or greater difference pre and post on a 4.0 scale) were in the competencies “challenging behaviors,” “visioning and planning for the organization” and “team development.”

IMPLICATIONS

Beginning in January, we are adding a difficult conversations workshop to our MSA student leader training at the beginning of their term.

The student government adviser will schedule a discussion with MSA student leaders about their individual learning outcome assessment results and growth.

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