

Appendix 3

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Context for Assessment:

Miami University was founded in 1809 with the intent of providing “good education, virtue, religion and morality.” Since its inception, Miami has advanced liberal education as a central part of its educational identity, offering strong undergraduate liberal arts and professional preparation and select graduate programs.

The Mission of Student Affairs is in part to provide a supportive environment and create and extend student learning opportunities outside the classroom that heighten student intellectual and personal growth and produce citizen leaders who make substantive contributions to their communities. This divisional mission shares the central university focus of providing an environment conducive to effective and inspired teaching and learning, scholarly inquiry, and informed citizenship. Further, the Division of Student Affairs was instrumental in advancing Miami’s Statement of Diversity and has advanced it as an integral part of its work.

Assessment Focus

These three areas serve as the central focal points of our assessment plan.

Annual divisional goals have historically focused upon specific elements of our mission:

- Intellectual climate and student learning opportunities
- Inclusion
- Citizen leadership

Assessment Principles

“Best Practice” in evaluation suggests the use of evaluation approaches that are responsive to program issues. The evaluation should be important to stakeholders, connected with mission, flexible, and use data gathering that includes the participant voice. Using this notion as a framework, Student Affairs has crafted an approach that uses regular data collection points with both qualitative (e.g., focus groups) and quantitative measures. We strive to obtain both focused qualitative and quantitative measures from all stakeholders (student participants, faculty and staff), and use these data to inform our practice. Assessment, in our view, is natural and integral to improving practice; it is not evaluative in judging the worth of programs or people. Therefore, we seek to create an environment that invites and welcomes assessment as a constructive process of enhancing our work.

Assessment Plan – Implemented on three levels:

Level I [MACRO]: Assessment of division-wide efforts - This assessment occurs at a division-wide level and connects to our divisional goals and our contributions to the university mission as a whole. Often assessed with national surveys (e.g., CIRP, NSSE),

the data reflect clearly the perception of our students, faculty and staff in regards to the learning environment or other core aspects of the university community (e.g., inclusion). These data are collected in cooperation with University-wide assessment initiatives. Specific student experiences, reported educational outcomes, and satisfaction items are available to measure how the overall Student Affairs and broader University culture affect student learning. Specific Miami questions are routinely added at the end of these surveys; and they provide the opportunity to assess the finer detail related to progress in achieving program and service goals. These data then serve to shape system changes. *Divisional assessment is implemented in coordination with the all-University Committee and typically occurs annually.*

Level II [MESO]: Assessment of “unit specific work” – Each department and program can use the division-wide assessments to target specific populations or program participants within the broader pool. An example would be analyzing students’ response who resided in a living learning program against the broader all-resident student population. By conducting comparative analysis within a shared data set, Student Affairs will gain a deeper understanding about the effectiveness of our various programs. In addition to using existing information, some departments may design questionnaires that address issues more specifically. Other forms of assessment may analyze retention, GPAs, perception toward judicial decisions, or other program productivity information and chart these comparisons over time. *Departmental and program assessment should occur on a regular basis with evidence provided at least every five years.*

Level III [MICRO] Assessment of individual work – The most basic of individual evaluations is analysis of how one meets the expectations of one’s position description. All staff in the Division of Student Affairs have position descriptions on file; these should be reviewed regularly and those holding them provided feedback on how well they are doing in fulfilling those expectations. Additionally, individuals set goals consistent with Divisional goals each year; evaluation of progress will be compiled by the individual and her/his supervisor. The Divisional Policy Group members will receive annual feedback from staff throughout the Division relative to their Divisional-level responsibilities. Program Administrators will receive tri-annual feedback based on instruments they help to design and based on critical need areas within their areas of responsibility. These evaluations will be circulated among colleagues as well as those supervised by them. At least once every six years, Program Administrators will submit a summary of these evaluative findings to their supervisor. Minimum and merit based salary determinations occur at this level annually as well as recommendations for performance improvement. *Individual evaluation should be completed at least annually.*

Anticipated Outcome:

Progress in fulfilling the mission of the University and the Division of Student Affairs requires purposeful work and analyses. Using a variety of sources of information allows the individual, office/program, and Division to become more effective. The results of divisional and office/program assessment is generally assumed to be public and available to anyone who would like to see it. Outside consultants or evaluators should be invited to

review such information and may visit campus to assist in these efforts. Assessment of this nature creates a candid, open, and forward-moving Division, ever improving in its service to students. In addition, it provides stakeholders (including the public) information regarding the effectiveness of their institution. Individual evaluation provides the opportunity for personal and professional development. Record of individual evaluations are maintained at the Divisional and office/program level.

The Division of Student Affairs Assessment Committee will serve both as a catalyst and resource to the rest of the staff in the Division. It is unclear if additional dedicated resources will be required to increase the attention given to assessment in the Division. Until a determination is made that specialists are needed, the Committee will consult, meet with, and guide those in the Division who seek their assistance.