A New Role for Institutional Research: Institutional Quality Improvement

Julie Brandt, Associate Director
Quality Improvement
Mardy T. Eimers, Director
Institutional Research & Quality Improvement
University of Missouri
2013 AAUDE Annual Meeting
Washington University
St. Louis, MO
Quality Improvement

• “A formal approach to the analysis of performance and systematic efforts to improve it.”¹

• Quality improvement approaches in higher ed²
  • Process improvement
  • Continuous quality improvement
  • Student learning assessments
  • Preparation for accreditation
  • Baldrige

¹http://patientsafetyed.duhs.duke.edu/module_a/introduction/introduction.html

Core Concepts

• Most problems found in processes, not in people
• Improved process ~ improved quality
• Quality is relative
  • “All ____ forms will be processed within one week of receipt.”
  • “__% of graduates will find employment within 6 months of graduation.”
  • “__% of undergraduate students will find internships between their junior and senior years.”
Core Concepts

- Must be able to assess
- Improvement efforts are most effective when they become a natural part of the way everyday work is done
- Teams and collaboration
  - Project sponsorship
  - Teamwork and collaboration
  - Frontline engagement
University of Missouri

• Trends
  • Significant decreases in state funding
  • Increased scrutiny from the public, legislators
  • Growing enrollment
  • Several efforts to reduce expenditures, share services
  • A lot of band-aids
University of Missouri

- QI: Provost Initiated
  - Could QI work at MU?
  - Hired QI associate director; began May 2012
  - Genuine benefits to IR and QI connection
  - MU IR&QI reports to Provost
Quality Improvement @ Mizzou

• Higher Learning Commission: Accreditation

  • HLC piloting new accreditation model
  • Key component: A campus-wide QI initiative
    • Academic Program Review (APR)
  • QI presence in APR process
  • Access and opportunity in administrative and academic processes
Approach at MU

• Improvement projects
  • Administrative – improving *processes* within administrative areas
  • Academic – improving *processes* that impact teaching, learning, research and service
    • Assist departments with achieving goals for improvement
    • Identify patterns frustrating many departments/units
    • Assessment of the Academic Program Reviews process – did it work as designed?
QI Initiatives at MU

- Student Information System Request Management
- International Admissions Redesign
- Graduate School Admissions Optimization
- Department of Communication – Senior Exit Survey
- Department of Philosophy – Undergraduate Satisfaction Survey
- Parent-Student Communication Improvement Effort
Quality Improvement @ Mizzou

• Challenges
  • Building capacity university-wide
  • Clarifying what QI is and is not
  • Quality improvement lexicon
  • Building credibility
    • Acceptance on academic side
  • Celebrating successes
  • Prioritizing
Quality Improvement @ Mizzou

- Recommendations
  - Strong leadership support
  - Importance of early successes
    - Projects that touch key processes and multiple areas
  - Do not go uninvited
  - Report through academic organizational structure
  - Establish leadership advisory committee
  - Conduct self-assessment
  - Get involved nationally in QI - NCCI
Questions?

Mardy Eimers eimersm@missouri.edu
Julie Brandt brandtju@missouri.edu