

Slide 1: Matthew - Hello and thank you for attending our session Assessing Assessments: Delving into the Pilot Review Process of Academic Assessment. We look forward to sharing insights into how the process of evaluating annual academic assessment reports helped strengthen the culture of assessment at Mason and the lessons we learned along the way. If you would like to continue the conversation, we encourage you to reach out to us via the contact information we list at the end of the presentation. You can also join us at the Innovations of Teaching and Learning Conference on Tuesday, September 21, from noon – 12:45pm at the Q & A session with On Demand Group A.

Slide 2: Matthew - Before we get started, I would like my co-presenters to introduce themselves. My name is Matthew DeSantis, and I'm the Executive Director for Institutional Effectiveness within OIEP. I've been at Mason since September 2020 and one of my responsibilities is supporting Academic Program Review. I am the co-chair of the Mason Academic Assessment Council (MAAC) whose work we will highlight in the presentation and now I will pass things over to my colleague.

Sheena - Thank you, Matthew, my name is Sheena Serslev and I am the Associate Director of Institutional Assessment at OIEP and my role is focused on supporting annual assessment efforts at Mason - one of the ways I do so is through co-chairing the Mason Academic Assessment Council or MAAC – this group includes representatives across all colleges and has been instrumental in advancing assessment practices at MAAC.

Adrienne – And my name is Adrienne Sullivan. I am the director of Accreditation in the Accreditation and External Reporting Office in the College of Education and Human Development here at Mason, and I serve as a CEHD representative on MAAC. I had been at Mason for 11 years, focusing on accreditation and assessment data collection efforts in CEHD. I am glad to be here and am honored to participate in this session with Matthew and Sheena!

Slide 3: Matthew - By the end of our “On Demand Video Presentation” we hope that participants will be able to summarize the reasoning for implementing an academic assessment process; draw connections between teaching and learning with annual program assessment; and finally, to illustrate institutional progress towards building a culture of assessment.

Slide 4: Matthew - Starting with the “why,” we wanted to share the impetus for creating a new process at Mason to review academic assessment. Firstly, we wanted formative feedback to be a kicking off point for dialogue and a means of prioritizing improvements in assessment. This process was also illuminating for us to be able to create tailored support resources while acknowledging the exemplary work of our colleagues. And finally, this largescale effort allowed us to step back and look at academic assessment efforts across the campus in a way that allowed us to weave different levels of

assessment together to get a bigger picture of how effectively students are learning the outcomes we establish for them.

Slide 5: Matthew - We encouraged units to use annual assessment as an opportunity to connect with academic program review and engage in assessment that already reflect the planning efforts within their area. It's critical for units to understand how they fit into the larger framework of assessment at Mason and having them tie their annual assessment work to the seven-year cycle of Academic Program Review, external accreditation efforts, and linking their outcomes to support of the strategic plan was a way to building efficacy and engagement as to the importance of annual assessment. In much the same way a program might map learning outcomes throughout their curriculum, so too could they map their learning outcomes up to the broader institutional initiatives they support.

Slide 6: Sheena - The following categories of Mission, Curriculum map, Student Learning Outcomes, Methods, Results, and Improvements reflect the data our campus collects for each academic program annually and in the next few slides will give a brief synopsis of exemplary attributes for each category as reflected in the Assessment Plan Feedback Rubric that is also provided in our session materials.

Slide 7: Sheena - When reviewing the Mission statement of a given program key indicators for success included alignment with the mission of the college and institution while also articulating unique attributes of a program. Units were also encouraged to articulate stakeholders and keep the length succinct.

Slide 8: Sheena - The review of curriculum maps made sure that program's visualized student learning outcomes and coursework. A curriculum map should also integrate a progressive scale, convey scaffolding, and ensure that student learning outcomes are directly addressed through program coursework.

Slide 9: Sheena - Looking holistically at assessment plans, programs articulated measures, results, and improvements for at least one of their student learning outcomes. Exemplary assessment plans included aligned direct and indirect measures there were aligned measures; clearly articulated findings with appropriate supporting documentation; in addition to a description of relevant improvement plans and actions to support student learning and continuous program improvement.

Slide 10: Adrienne So as a member of MAAC, I participated in a three-member group to evaluate the annual assessment submissions of academic programs. My wonderful group included me, director of accreditation in CEHD; Dr. Shannon Davis in her past role as Chair, Faculty Senate; and Dr. Rick Hess, the Director of Analytics, Assessment, and Accreditation in the School of Business.

We met initially to talk about our approach of reviewing each program's submission – which programs we were going to review and how we were going to review them. We tried to keep the role of the review central – essentially we were pretending to be

outsiders, like SACSCOC reviewers, coming in to review programs we know nothing about. We knew that we were not looking at actual content – like I am not an expert in nutrition or history or business – but that what was presented by each program was clear and concise and that a person outside of their field would understand what the program’s mission was, what their student learning outcomes were, and so on.

We first evaluated the program submissions independently, and scored the OIEP rubric independently, and then we met to talk about our individual scores. If we found a massive discrepancy, we’d talk about it. For example, one reviewer may have said “the layout of the curriculum map made it hard for me to understand where the Student Learning Outcomes were being assessed,” while reviewer 2 may have pointed out “well, according to the curriculum map key..,” or something that reviewer one totally missed, which then made reviewer one amend his or her score. OR another example was one reviewer may have said “I can see that this is a good assessment, but I don’t see how it measures this specific SLO...” In cases like this, we may have provided additional comments for the programs.

Slide 11: Sheena - stepping back and looking at how Mason performed as an institution we can see that overall programs had the most success with articulating their mission, student learning outcomes, and findings while there were some additional challenges with developing curriculum maps and improvement plans.

Slide 12: Sheena - Building on the quantitative scores, programs emphasized how this inaugural feedback was incredibly valuable in making the assessment process more meaningful. Common feedback is captured in this table.

Slide 13: Adrienne - So I can provide some perspective as a reviewer. When my great group submitted our final scores to OIEP, we provided a list of what we called “disclaimers” about the overall process.

First: we wanted to be sure that the programs knew that we knew that we were not program experts.

Second, the biggest point for programs was a request for basic clarity. For example: Don’t use program nomenclature.

Make sure that the number (and language) of your Student Learning Outcomes in your Curriculum Map matches the number and language in your Tk20 submission.

And finally, provide context. If you have an external accreditor that requires ten specific standards or student learning outcomes, let the audience know.

In other words, write to an audience knows nothing about your program and that is learning about what is important to your program.

Finally, our group sometimes did struggle with the differentiation of a score of “2” or “3” on the OIEP rubric. I know that OIEP has refined the rubric for future use, and plans to share the rubric with programs so that they have a better understanding of their future submission expectations. This is a great idea which will help programs for sure!

Slide 14: Adrienne - So wearing my other hat, as the rep for CEHD, how did I take the feedback? Sometimes I realized that the reviewer didn't know that a certain program had external accreditation standards (like what I mentioned before). That yes, the program had actually 10 standards on which to report, so I needed to clarify that information. I appreciated the curriculum map feedback about showing progression across assessments. Basically, I appreciated the new point of view!

What I think is critical to keep in mind is that this process was not to punish or criticize programs, but to provide constructive feedback, and to ensure that each program provided the most accurate and informative information for the upcoming SACSCOC review – it was better to get this feedback from a Mason colleague than from a SACSCOC reviewer!

Slide 15: Adrienne - Thank you for taking the time to view our On Demand video. I, as a MAAC member, enjoyed the process and appreciated all of the support and work of my wonderful colleagues in OIEP and across Mason. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions. You can also find this video and related resources on the Innovations of Teaching and Learning conference proceedings webpage.