Designing Assessment for Continuous Improvement—It's Easier Than You Think

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Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is:

- Discuss how parent/family offices can use assessment to evaluate their programs and services

- Share strategies for assessment from long-standing programs, as well as strategies drawn upon creating an atmosphere of assessment within a brand new parent program.

Presentation Outcomes

Participants will

- Have an understanding of the value of assessment
- Learn achievable methods for conducting assessment
- Be prepared to measure, articulate, and determine outcomes and institutional benefits of parent/family programs and services

Introduction

Parent/family programs may have many good ideas about:

- How to reach parents with information
- Generating affinity for the university
- Channeling parent energy into involvement

But…

- Are these programs and ideas effective?
- Are they doing what a parent office intends?
- Are they a good return on investment?

Purpose of Assessment

- Develop learning and development outcomes
- Measure program and service effectiveness
- Design new programs and services
- Focus time, energy, and resources
- Devise staff development
- Guide strategic planning
- Justify resources for program

2015 Survey Results

What kinds of tracking, assessments, evaluations, or surveys did your office routinely conduct?

Participant survey following specific events	56.7%
Website analytics	38.8%
Surveys measuring satisfaction with programming	38.2%
Logs of questions	35.4%
Assessments on how parents use information	25.3%
Assessments on positive impacts of parental involvement	11.2%

CAS Standards

1. Mission
2. Program
3. Organization and Leadership
4. Human Resources
5. Ethics
6. Law, Policy, and Governance
7. Diversity, Equity, and Access
8. Institutional and External Relations
9. Financial Resources
10. Technology
11. Facilities and Equipment
12. Assessment and Evaluation

"CAS does not prescribe or proscribe ways of using the standards; rather they are intended to be tools for practitioners to improve practices."

Assessment Plan

- Make/confirm program goals
- Benchmark: Assessments of needs with
  - Parent/family program colleagues
  - On-campus partners
  - Parents
- Create/refine or redesign programming based on needs
- Continued assessment
- Make revisions/additions to programming
- Repeat

Make/Confirm Program Goals

Must consider:
- What are the institutional values?
- What are the best practices in the field?
- What are the needs of the parents and students?

CAS: PFP must be:
- Intentionally designed
- Guided by theories and knowledge of learning and development
- Integrated into life of the institution
- Reflective of the developmental and demographic profiles of the student population
- Responsive to needs of individuals, populations with distinct needs, and relevant constituencies
- Delivered using multiple formats, strategies, and contexts

Make/Confirm Program Goals

Goals for RIT Parent and Family Programs:

- Provide regular communications to educate parents about:
  - Timely issues
  - RIT policies
  - Services and opportunities available to their students
  - Student development and appropriate parental involvement
- Become the primary resource for parents of RIT students
- Become the primary parent information resource for RIT offices
- Create and promote meaningful engagement for parents through events and service opportunities
- Provide a voice for parents across campus

Make/Confirm Parent/Family Outcomes

CAS has a set of Learning and Development Outcomes
- Outcomes identify relevant and desirable student learning that each functional area should be meeting; all functional areas should help students gain
    - Knowledge acquisition
    - Cognitive complexity (critical thinking, reflective thinking, effective reasoning, creativity)
    - Intrapersonal development
    - Interpersonal competence
    - Civic engagement
    - Practical competence
- Parent/family outcomes provide evidence of the program's contributions toward *student* learning and development

Parent/Family Outcomes

Cumberland University Parent Association

As a result of actively utilizing the Cumberland University Parent Association resources, parents and families will:

- Be able to identify campus resources available to students
- Refer their students to campus resources as needed
- Be aware of healthy college student development issues

Texas A&M

Families contribute to student success by:

- Understanding the student experience and knowing about resources available at Texas A&M University
- Supporting the University's goals for student learning and development
- Understanding and supporting Texas A&M University's commitment to: 1) its core values of excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect and selfless service; and 2) the Aggie Code of Honor
- Knowing when to step in to help their student and when to empower their student to take responsibility
- Developing an affinity for Texas A&M University and the Aggie Family

Benchmark

Benchmarking includes doing assessments of needs and including:

- Parent/family program colleagues
- On-campus partners
- Parents

Benchmark
Parent/Family Program Colleagues

CAS: The mission must be consistent with the mission of the institution and with professional standards

Develop a mission statement:

RIT's Parent and Family Programs office fosters relationships between parents and the university in order to support student success and generate lifelong affinity for RIT. Utilizing research and best practices, the Parent and Family Programs office is committed to empowering families as they support their student's personal and professional development, educating the campus community about how family diversity impacts the student experience, and affirming the important role parents play in their students' lives.

Benchmark
Parent/Family Program Colleagues

Develop program priorities:

Most Common Services	Solely or collaboration	At institution
Parent website	98.8%	100%
Email response to questions	98.8%	100%
Parent orientation	77.7%	98.2%
Phone response to questions	96.5%	98.3%
Parent/family weekend	88.2%	94.7%
Email newsletter	92.3%	94.7%

Benchmark
On-Campus Partners

CAS: PFP must collaborate with colleagues and departments across the institution to promote student learning and development, persistence, and success

Use assessment to learn how staff work with parents:
- Survey of Student Affairs staff
- Meetings with staff across campus
- Sent website content to partners for review

Use assessment and informal methods to learn about ways to partner:
- Look at campus websites
- Share resources at events, including assessments of attendees

Benchmark

Parents

CAS: Assessments must include direct and indirect evaluation…to determine whether the mission, goals, and outcomes are being met

Indirect parent assessment:

- Track all incoming calls/emails
- Learning about parent concerns from campus partners
- Talking with parents at events

Direct parent assessment:

- Surveys following specific events
- Satisfaction surveys measuring satisfaction with services
- Assessments of how parents use information from institution

Create/Refine Programming

CAS: PFP must:

1. Distribute information on a timely basis
2. Encourage parents and families to work with their student
3. Assist parents and families to investigate and navigate institutional resources, services, and programs
4. Collaborate with essential campus partners
5. Consider diverse populations
6. Provide information for faculty members and staff to help them interact effectively with parents and families
7. Advocate for the appropriate distribution of emergency information to parents and families

Create/Refine Programming

PFP can:

1. Utilize social media and an email newsletter

Create/Refine Programming
Distribute timely information

RIT Parent and Family Programs
October 12 at 9:27am · 🌐

Parents--It's RIT's annual Muesday/Odd Monday week! If you chat with your sons and daughters today, remind them that tomorrow (Tuesday) will follow a Monday course schedule, and Wednesday classes will resume as normal. We hope that your students are enjoying their Monday off from classes!

--A Time for Conversations
When students arrive home at the end of the semester, you may notice significant differences in your son's or daughter's appearance and attitude. We hope the changes are all about growing up and becoming more independent, but sometimes reconnecting after time apart can highlight worrisome behaviors. While most change among college students is normal, it is important to take notice if a student seems dramatically different; is highly stressed, anxious, or persistently unhappy; has lost or gained a significant amount of weight or seems malnourished; or indicates signs of heavy drinking or drug use. It can be difficult for both you and your student to discuss these issues. University Counseling & Consulting Services offers suggestions for how to begin a difficult conversation.

As you read through this email, please consider having conversations with your student about some of the topics below. The first week home is probably not the best time to bring up college business, but maybe after January 1.

Create/Refine Programming

PFP can:

1. Utilize social media and an email newsletter
2. Develop website content that helps parents understand their role

Create/Refine Programming
Encourage parents

PROBLEM	SUGGESTED PARENT RESPONSE	STUDENT'S CONTACT AT SMU
Alcohol (excessive)	Try to determine the extent of use and/or abuse. Encourage student to secure help from a substance abuse counselor in Counseling Services, located in the Health Center.	Counseling Services, Residential Community Director, Peer Health Educator (PHE)

If your student is sick and needs to visit the Student Health Center, allow him or her to make the appointment. This way, your student can work the appointment around class schedules and learn to advocate for his or her own health needs. You should, however, help your student understand how to use insurance and [refill prescriptions](#) while at RIT.

Create/Refine Programming

PFP can:

1. Utilize social media and an email newsletter
2. Develop website content that helps parents understand their role
3. Develop materials that direct parents to the correct resources

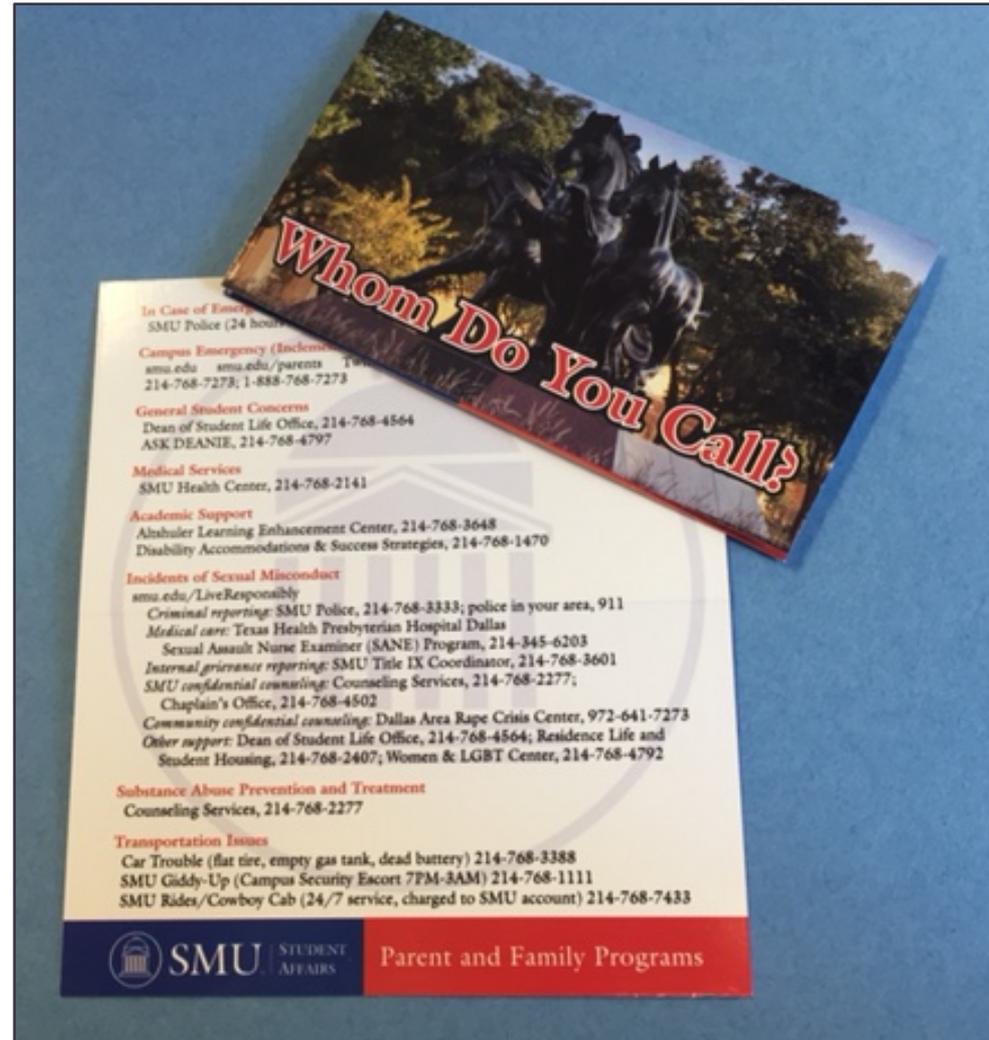# Create/Refine Programming
Navigating resources

Parent and Family Programs
Rochester Institute of Technology

www.rit.edu/parents
facebook.com/RITparents

parents@rit.edu
(585) 475-4198

Student Alumni Union 2410
44 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, NY 14623-5604

Create/Refine Programming

PFP can:

1. Utilize social media and an email newsletter
2. Develop website content that helps parents understand their role
3. Develop materials that direct parents to the correct resources
4. Collaborate across campus
5. Consider diverse populations of parents
6. Develop information for faculty and staff
7. Be part of an emergency communications committee

Create/Refine Programming

- CAS:
  - Educational planning
  - Academic policies
  - Career planning
  - Money management
  - Financial aid
  - Educational costs
  - Health and wellness
  - Disability services
  - Visitor services
  - Academic support services
  - Diversity and international programming
  - Student involvement
  - Safety
  - Transition issues
  - Parent/family expectations
  - Conduct policies

Continued Assessment

CAS: PFP must have a clearly articulated assessment plan to document achievement of stated goals and learning outcomes, demonstrate accountability, provide evidence of improvement, and describe resulting changes in programs and services.

Can include:

- Assessments following specific events
- A comprehensive parents assessment every two years
- Continuous tracking of incoming questions
- Monthly polls on websites or social media

Continued Assessment

CAS Domain/Student Outcome: Practical Competence

What you measure:

- Parents' knowledge acquisition, integration, construction, and application

How you measure:

- Questions on how parents use, reinforcement, and response to parent/family program messages; if parents are supporting student development outcomes

Continued Assessment

The Parent/Family Program publishes an email newsletter for parents and guardians and sends it electronically about every two weeks. Do you read...

_____ All or most of it

_____ Some of it

_____ Little or none of it

_____ I do not subscribe to it

_____ Not aware of it

Have you discussed with your student any of the topics covered in the email newsletter? If so, what topics?

Continued Assessment

If my student voiced a concern to me about the following topic*, my first response would be to:

        ___Refer on campus

        ___Refer off campus

        ___Provide assistance myself

        ___I would ask my student what to do

Topics: academics; career planning; finances; health/ safety; living situations; personal relationships; time management/study skills

Continued Assessment

Since beginning college, has your student considered dropping out of school? If so, what was the reason?

    ___Academic difficulties
    ___Changing plans for major/career
    ___Finances
    ___Health/safety
    ___Living situations
    ___Personal relationships
    ___Time management/study skills
    ___Other

Were you or someone else able to help student resolve the issue?

    ___No, student dropped out
    ___Yes, I helped
    ___Student resolved the issue on his/her own
    ___A counselor/advisor/instructor helped
    ___A residence life staff member helped
    ___Someone else helped_____

Make Revisions/Additions

Revise services:

- Family weekend
- Transition print materials to electronic sources

Introduce new services based on need:

- Social media
- Parent calendar
- Information cards

Cut back on services:

- Print newsletter
- Additional events

Conclusion

- Assessment is an essential to making decisions about programming and learning if programming is effective
- There are many types of assessments
    - Formal and informal
    - Large- and small-scale
    - Direct and indirect
- You are probably doing assessments without realizing it!
- It is necessary to:
    - Use your findings
    - Track your findings

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