

## ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

### 1. STATE THE STUDENT LEARNING GOALS OF YOUR PROGRAM(S) AS THEY APPEAR IN YOUR PROGRAMS' ASSESSMENT PLANS.

#### A. MEMORIAL UNION STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

The following learning outcomes statements for FY09 apply to the 40-60 students employed in Memorial Union service areas each semester. They are stated on the memorial Union's website and contained in the Union's Student Employee Handbook.

- 90% or more of the student employees who respond to the annual Student Employment Survey will strongly agree/agree that their employment with the Memorial Union has provided them with learning opportunities as demonstrated by reviewing the results of the survey administered at the end of the spring 2009 semester.
- Student employees who respond to the annual Student Employment Survey will be able to list (as a group) at least six ways their employment has connected to institutional and employer expectations as demonstrated by comparing the results of the survey to the expectations listed in institutional resources and NACE survey data. Institutional resources include: UND Mission Statement; University Strategic Plan; General Education Requirements. NACE stands for National Association of Colleges and Employers Annual Job Outlook Survey. As a minimum, these learning outcomes include:
  - Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.
  - Think critically and creatively.
  - Access & use information to make informed choices.
  - Understand how conclusions are reached.
  - Acquire knowledge over a broad spectrum of subject areas.
  - Enhance your cultural awareness.
  - Use technology.
  - Use ethics and values in decision-making.
  - Use time management skills to prioritize work tasks and meet deadlines.
  - Enhance your interpersonal skills as you work as a team with co-workers.
  - Enhance your customer service skills through your service to others.
  - Demonstrate your understanding of standards and expectations, and use them to manage an efficient and professional work environment.
- Students employees will be able to explain (put in plain words) at least two things they learned during the school year that they feel will better prepare them for employment after graduation as demonstrated by an interview with their supervisor during their performance evaluation.

- Student employees who attend the annual ACUI Region 10 conference will be able to describe: (a) at least one new technique or knowledge item they learned that could help them improve their supervisory or leadership skills; (b) at least one new technique or knowledge item they learned that they might apply to their personal life and how they could benefit from it; and (c) at least one or two new ideas they learned that could be applied to their particular service area or the Memorial Union (as a whole) and how the Union (or those we serve) could benefit from it, as demonstrated by reviewing reflection papers they submit to the Director after their return from the conference.

B. INSTITUTIONAL/PROFESSIONAL DATA SOURCES

In support of the missions of both the University of North Dakota and the Division of Student and Outreach Services, the mission of the Memorial Union is to be student-centered in all that it does, resulting in a sense of community that improves the campus climate for learning and living. As the "Heart" of UND, the Memorial Union is the gathering place of campus and provides services and conveniences that members of the campus community need in their daily lives. As an integral part of the educational mission of the University, the Union complements the academic experience by providing students a wide range of opportunities to balance course work and free time as cooperative factors in their personal development and college experience. Overall, the Memorial Union is a source for programs, activities, events, services, and facilities that, when taken together, represent a well-considered plan for the community life of the university.

That said, in order to assess the effective of the Union's ability to fulfill this mission, the Union staff regularly uses a variety of sources who collect data on the student's university experience. The outcome of these efforts is to analyze how well the Union, as a facility, supports learning.

**2. MAKING PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE STUDENT LEARNING GOALS YOU HAVE ESTABLISHED FOR YOUR PROGRAM(S), DESCRIBE THE SPECIFIC METHODS YOUR DEPARTMENT HAS EMPLOYED THIS YEAR TO ASSESS WHETHER STUDENTS ARE LEARNING WHAT YOU HAVE STATED YOU WOULD LIKE THEM TO LEARN.**

A. MEMORIAL UNION STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

There are two methods used to assess achievement of learning outcomes by student employees: an annual survey and a reflection exercise.

At the end of the spring semester, the Union administers a Student Employee Workplace Survey to all student employees, through its partnership with UND's Workforce Development Office. Student responses provide a wealth of information on job satisfaction, workplace communications, student/staff relations, likes/dislikes, training, etc. The survey also provides excellent data on what student employees feel they are learning. 2009 marked the 6<sup>th</sup> year the survey was used, also providing longitudinal data. The survey is both quantitative and

qualitative, in that it asks student employees to reflect on and describe in their own words what they felt they learned from their work experience.

Staff benchmarks survey responses with learning outcomes identified in referenced resources. The following questions are asked: How closely do we compare? Are we still meeting expectations? Does our employment experience still provide students the opportunity to learn the skills employers are seeking from college students after graduation? Does our employment experience still connect to the academic mission of the University?

A reflection exercise is used to assess learning outcomes achieved by students who attend the regional ACUI conference each fall. Students are given a series of questions to reflect on prior to departure, and they are asked to submit a reflection paper upon their return answering the following:

- Describe how the conference improved your supervisory and management skills.
- What did you learn that you can apply to your personal life and how could you benefit from it?
- Describe 2-3 ideas you learned that could be applied to your particular service area or the Memorial Union as a whole
- What was your favorite educational session and why?
- Overall, how do student employees benefit from attending ACUI regional conferences; should we continue to send students and why?

#### B. INSTITUTIONAL/PROFESSIONAL DATA SOURCES

Several assessment methods are used to determine how well the Union, as a facility, contributes to a student's university experience. This includes how well the Union creates and sustains an environment for living and learning. Therefore, companies such as Educational Benchmarking Incorporated (EBI) are used, as well as reports available through UND Institutional Research.

### **3. SUMMARIZE THE RESULTS OF YOUR ASSESSMENT PRACTICES THIS YEAR. WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED THAT AFFIRMS ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING GOALS AND WHAT, PERHAPS, HAVE YOU LEARNED THAT INDICATES OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVEMENT/CHANGE?**

#### A. MEMORIAL UNION STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Results of the survey administered at the end of the spring 2009 semester are as follows:

Question: *Do you agree that your employment with the Memorial Union has provided you with learning opportunities?*

- 31 responded out of 48 student employees were given the opportunity

- 65% response rate
- 23 students (74%) said: “Strongly Agree”
- 6 students (19%) said “Agree”
- Remaining 2 said they were unsure

Question: *List those skills or work traits that you have learned while working at the Memorial Union?*

- 18 provided comments. Students reflected on the work experience and described in their own words the following learning outcomes they achieved:
  - Independent responsibility
  - Courtesy towards customers
  - Critical thinking
  - Upbeat attitude
  - Interviewing skills
  - Strong communications skills
  - How to work well with co-workers
  - Learned a lot of technical stuff
  - Learned to deal with people a lot better
  - Patience!
  - Time management
  - Computer skills
  - It’s improved my people skills and understanding of individuals as I work with others who share different views and opinions from that of myself
  - Leadership, hard work, dedication
  - Work as a team, not as an individual
  - Dealing with people that are not very friendly
  - Customer service
  - Attention to detail
  - Helping develop responsibility
  - Conflict management with angry customers
  - Teamwork
  - Effective choices
  - How to work with different personalities to obtain one goal
  - This job is one of the best experiences of my college career

Overall, 93% of those who responded said they strongly agree/agree the Union provides them a learning experience. From a longitudinal perspective, this is the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row that results have been over 90% (since these questions were added to the survey to collect data on learning). Student reflective responses also show that what they are learning matches the learning goals that have been established in the Union’s assessment plan.

Student employees who attended the annual ACUI Region 10 conference also submit a one-page reflective journal describing their learning experience. A sample of those statements reflects the following:

- Self-confidence in my leadership and supervisory skills
- Time Management (prioritizing tasks, achieving goals)
- Desire to learn new things
- Confidence to challenge myself more
- Leadership fundamentals (patience)
- Different methods for approaching conflict
- Enjoy what we do and appreciate co-workers
- Diversity of thought
- Bonding opportunity leading to better teamwork
- Develop interpersonal and communications skills

B. INSTITUTIONAL/PROFESSIONAL DATA SOURCES

In the spring of 2003, the Memorial conducted a campus-wide satisfaction survey to assess, among other things, the attitude and perceptions students at UND had regarding the quality of services provided by the Memorial Union. The survey instrument was developed jointly by Educational Benchmarking, Inc. (EBI) and the Association of College Unions International (ACUI). Five hundred surveys were distributed over a two-week period in May of 2003 at select locations across campus. These included: Wilkerson Hall (34.5%), Memorial Union (33.5%), Gamble Hall (22%), and in random spots on campus (10%). Of the 500 surveys distributed, 342 were completed. In addition to assessing how our students perceived our Union, the survey also allowed us to compare our results to 6 other participating schools we selected and to other participating schools in our Carnegie classification (Doctoral/Research Universities-Intensive).

The survey results were received back from EBI in July 2003. Highlights of the results from the survey are as follows:

- The top three reasons students visit the Memorial Union were and to meet people (34%). Other reasons listed included computer access, both e-mail and non e-mail (25%), to relax (13%), information services (11%), game room (11%), attend a program or event (10%), photocopy services (8%), student organization meeting (7%), and other (14%). The top three reasons from UND's results were very similar in comparison to the other participating schools.
- Nationwide results showed significant differences in the following areas: visit bookstore (39%), attending a program or event (30%), postal services (20%), relax (27%), and student organization meeting (20%).
- Frequency of visits to the Union were 2-3 times a week (22%), 4-5 times a week (17%), 2-3 times a month (15%), once a week (14%), more than 9 times a week (8%), 6-7 times a week (7%), once a month or less (7%), once or twice a semester (6%), and 8-9 times a week (4%). These results were also similar to the other schools participating.

- The top three times of day to visit the Union were 9 am to 2 pm (66%), 2 pm to 5 pm (34%), and after 7 pm (17%).
- Compared to the other participating schools, 39% of UND students never participate in a Union activity. Forty-five percent stated that they participate 1-2 times a semester, and 13% participate 1-3 times per month.

The following results from the survey included questions with a seven scaled response ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7), very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (7), and not at all (1) and extremely (7) with a response of four being neutral or moderately.

- The level of agreement that the Union was a place to study was 5.34. This is in comparison to the overall average of 4.74 and placed UND in the top 5 of all schools participating.
- The satisfaction with the Union's eating establishments in regards to food prices (4.36), food quality (4.94), and hours of operation (4.95) placed UND 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> respectively in comparison to all schools participating.

The following areas were rated "low" and are perceived by students as needing improvement:

- Satisfaction with how the Union publicizes opportunities to (1) join student organizations and (2) publicizes sponsored activities and programs of interest.
- The Memorial Union is not seen as a place to get involved in campus life or as a source for a wide variety of entertainment.
- Overall, students did not feel the Memorial Union fulfills its mission as the center of college community life.

To summarize, the survey was administered at what is considered to be the "low point" in the Memorial Union's history. The University's bookstore was taken over by Barnes & Noble, who relocated bookstore and textbook operations to a new location in September 2000. The bookstore was historically a "destination" for students and the campus community and accounted for much of the building's traffic. The space occupied by the bookstore stayed vacant from September 2000 until construction started on the current renovation project in November 2002. As a result, the Union's image and popularity saw a downward trend, which is reflected in the survey results. When the survey was administered in the spring of 2003, the Union was under major construction. The vast majority of students and campus were not yet aware of the vision to once again, restore the Memorial Union as the "center" of college life. The survey was administered intentionally to use students' perceptions as "baseline" data.

Reports available from UND Institutional Research were used after the Union's major renovation projects were completed. These reports were used to determine if decisions to

renovate the Union, as well as decisions to invest financial resources over the years to improve and upgrade amenities, were effective. The results of the following reports show – over time - that student use and satisfaction is high, and the Union is seen as being essential to the institutional mission.

*(Note: Performance gap scores (importance rating minus satisfaction rating) show how well UND is meeting students' expectations overall. A large performance gap score for an item indicates that UND is not meeting students' expectations while a small or zero gap score indicates that UND is meeting students' expectations.)*

*2002 Student Satisfaction Inventory.* The top 5 items with the *smallest* performance gap (positive ratings):

- Males and females have equal opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics.  
(the item with the smallest gap)
- I have or plan to participate in research activities or conduct research projects.
- The **student center** is a comfortable place for students to spend their leisure time.
- A variety of wellness programs are available on campus.
- The student handbook provides helpful information about campus life.

*2004 Graduating Student Survey.* The top 5 of the 25 offices in the UND campus evaluated by the level of satisfaction are: Admissions, Student Memorial Union, Library, Registrar's Office, and Campus Shuttle Bus. The Memorial Union received an 85.3% satisfaction rating, up from 73.7% in 2001 (pre-renovation). This reflects an 11.6% increase, more than any other organization listed.

*2005 Sophomore Satisfaction Survey.* The Bookstore, Admissions, Library, Memorial Union, and Registrar's Office were the five most used offices on campus. The Memorial Union ranked 4th with 96.5%. The Memorial Union, Library, Campus Shuttle Bus, Student Health, and Recreational and Intramural Program were the five offices rated with highest satisfaction. The Memorial Union ranked 1st with 90.7% satisfaction rating.

*2006 Student Satisfaction Inventory.* The top 5 items with the *smallest* performance gap (positive ratings):

- Males and females have equal opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics  
(the smallest gap item).
- The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit.
- Library staff is helpful and approachable.
- The **student center** is a comfortable place for students to spend their leisure time.
- The student handbook provides helpful information about campus life.

*2007 Sophomore Satisfaction Survey.* Respondents were asked to evaluate the quality of services provided by twenty-six offices on campus. The Bookstore and Memorial Union have been used most often (tie at 98.3%) and the Memorial Union has been evaluated the service with the most satisfaction (90.6%). The Memorial Union also ranked 24 of 26 for the lowest dissatisfaction rating (2.6%) – also good news.

*2008 Graduating Student Survey.* The top 5 of the 26 offices evaluated by the level of satisfaction are: Wellness Center, Memorial Union, ITSS, Recreational/Intramural Programs, and Admissions. The Memorial Union has again seen an increase in satisfaction with a 90.3% rating, up from 85% in 2004 and up from 73.7% in 2001 (pre-renovation). Also, nearly all students (98.2%) reported they utilize the Union, putting us at number 2 for most used (the Registrar's office was number 1 at 99.5%). The Memorial Union also ranked 24 of 26 for the lowest dissatisfaction rating (0.5%) - also great news!

Longitudinal data compiled from outside sources reflects that since the completion of the renovation, which coincides with the start of assessment practices by the staff, the Memorial Union has consistently demonstrated its value and benefit to students. In short, data shows that students are finding that the Memorial Union is essential to their campus experience.

#### **4. WHAT SPECIFIC CURRICULAR OR OTHER IMPROVEMENTS/CHANGES, IF ANY, HAVE YOU MADE OR WILL YOU MAKE BASED ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM YOUR ASSESSMENT PRACTICES THIS YEAR?**

##### **A. MEMORIAL UNION STUDENT EMPLOYMENT**

Longitudinal data demonstrates that the annual survey is a satisfactory method to collect reflective information from students who participate, as to what they believe they are learning from their employment. The outcomes they state they are achieving match learning expectations identified in the academic mission of the institution and of future employers. These expectations will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment is still there. To further close the loop, all staff members review and discuss survey data and adjustments are made to the workplace environment and supervisory practices based on the level of disparity seen when comparing the data.

The reflection exercise administered to students who attend the regional conference also continues to be a solid tool. The data not only reflects that students are learning from the experience, but the data also supports the investment of financial resources towards that end. Students will continue to attend regional conferences based on available resources.

Work with student employment has also revealed the importance of staff development. If staff members are expected to foster a learning outcomes based workplace for students, then

they need to develop the skill set that allows them to better help students make the connection between what they are doing (tasks) and what they are learning. Intentionality is crucial to this process. That said, a three-hour workshop for supervisors has been developed and is offered to supervisors campus-wide, to help integrate learning for student employees into the workplace culture across all departments.

B. INSTITUTIONAL/PROFESSIONAL DATA SOURCES

In FY09, a staff re-organization aligned assessment responsibilities under the Assistant Director for Leadership and Assessment. This emphasizes the importance that the Union is placing on assessment of student learning, both from an outcomes perspective and a facility (environment) perspective. Goals for FY10 include the development of a matrix that identifies all the ways the Union staff is using assessment, identification of the target student population, timelines, and more.

One observation that could be pursued is the correlation between the results of the annual student employment survey and institutional data compiled by Institutional Research. For example, is there a connection between the consistently positive results of the student employment survey, with the consistently high ratings given by students as reflected in Institutional Research reports? What impact does a successful learning-outcomes based workplace for student employees have on service delivery? Has this been a contributing factor in students' perception of the Union?