

Evidence: Program Assessment for Continuous Improvement

Newsletter

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Assessment of Academic Advising

The primary goal of Academic Advising is student success. For students to make the best use of their time at Stockton, they must understand the Curriculum Advising and Program Planning (CAPP) online degree audit, and must be clear about their own roles and responsibilities in monitoring their progress through their courses of study. This academic year the Center for Academic Advising, under the leadership of Paula Dollarhide, Associate Director and Peter Hagen, Director, is engaged in a project to assess students' knowledge of CAPP.

The catalyst for the project was Paula and Peter's participation in a conference on Assessment of Academic Advising in Albuquerque earlier this year. The conference covered important aspects of the assessment cycle, including clarifying or developing values, vision, and mission

statements, and identifying and mapping student learning outcomes. The conference sessions also dealt with special topics such as how to conduct focus groups, develop rubrics and construct and use satisfaction surveys. The two-day immersion in discussions with other advisors exploring similar issues really galvanized Paula and Peter to action on their return to Stockton.

After the conference, Paula and Peter worked with the advising staff to develop mission and value statements, and to refine the elements of the project. This proved useful since anecdotally the staff knew some students have difficulty with CAPP audit, but they had no real data to understand the scope of the problem. The discussions and planning over the summer led them to refine three questions for the project:



1. Are students using the online degree curriculum evaluation?
2. Do students understand the online degree curriculum evaluation?
3. Do students understand that meeting graduation requirements in the end is their responsibility?

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Some are More Satisfied than others: The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE Survey)

Compared to a national sample, Stockton faculty who participated in the COACHE survey, are very satisfied with all aspects of their work, environment, the support that they receive, and the clarity of the expectations of their position. We are actually outliers in some areas of satisfaction, reporting highest scores on satisfaction with interdisciplinary work, collaboration, senior leadership (Provost and President), and mentoring. Our faculty appreciate their colleagues and the support that they get to carry out their work. They are also highly satisfied with teaching, scholarly expectations, and service work. These are affirming and gratifying findings from the COACHE faculty satisfaction survey.

There are, however, internal differences in this very positive picture. Several of the nearly 300 questions from the survey were grouped into 19 Benchmark areas. These include Collegiality (8 questions), Appreciation and Recognition (12 questions), Mentoring (11 questions), and Departmental Leadership (5 questions). Ratings (1- 5 scale) on each of these benchmarks are averaged for comparison. While in most of the benchmark areas we do not have significant gender differences in the satisfaction profile, we do in others, such as Collegiality and Divisional (school) Leadership. In all cases where there are differences, the differences are greater for tenure-track (TT) faculty than for tenured (T) faculty and in all but one, women are less satisfied than men. Figures 1 – 3 below show the gender differences and the disparity in satisfaction between tenured and tenure-track faculty for four of the Benchmark areas in the satisfaction survey.

Gender differences varied by discipline. Deans Gregg and Honaker took an evolutionary perspective in proposing explanations for the gender-neutral satisfaction profile of the Arts and Humanities (ARHU) faculty..

Figure 1: Collegiality Ratings by Gender and Tenure Status

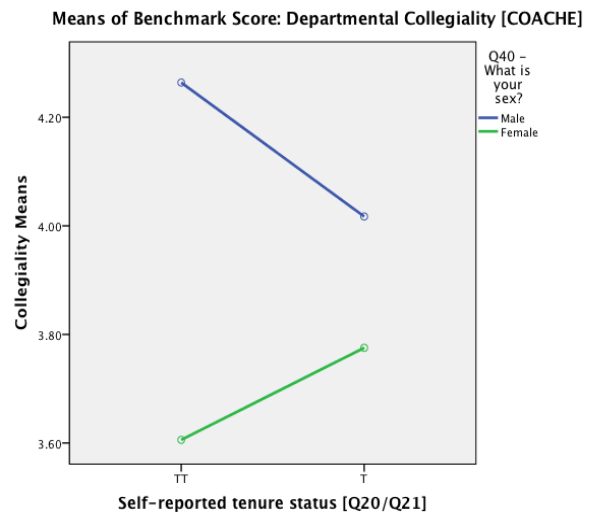
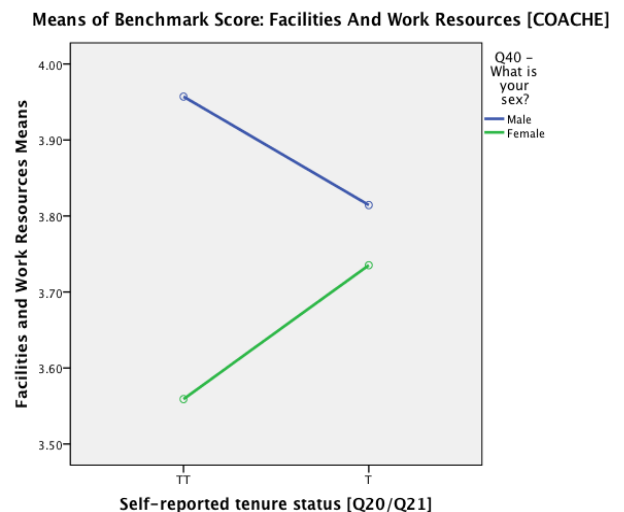


Figure 2: Facilities and Work Resources by Gender and Tenure Status



In most of the COACHE benchmark variables, ARHU faculty were not only among the most satisfied, but they had fewest gender differences in their levels of satisfaction. Both Deans suggested that their current complement of full time faculty, with fewer early-hires than in the other schools, gave them an advantage over the other schools.

Dean Gregg suggested, *"Most programs have members who have all (or almost all) been hired after 1995. A majority of these hires, I believe, were women, or the overall imbalance between men and women that was in place was significantly altered.Every program either has a strong contingent of women, or a very prominent woman member who has taken on a leadership role at the college. So not only were women hired, they also received strong support (which was shared by the men also, of course) so that they made it through tenure, and they have now all taken their turns in leadership roles So I think the gender divide is significantly diminished in ARHU"*. Dean Honaker concurred and added that *"The evolution of a mentality that could not simply be reduced to "us vs. them" got underway with Rob (Gregg)..and being part of the next generation was important"*. Associate Dean Nancy Messina also supported the deans and went on to say that in ARHU, *"Faculty were acknowledged for their work and were encouraged to collaborate with colleagues across programs and schools"*.

These may well be reasonable explanations for Stockton. Jaschik (2010) confirmed gender differences in the job satisfaction of college faculty across disciplinary groups in almost all areas of work, and all of those differences favored male faculty. His review of earlier COACHE data, showed that associate professors in the Humanities were among the most satisfied faculty and that faculty in the Humanities were satisfied with more aspects of their work than were faculty from some of the other disciplines. He also found fewer gender differences in satisfaction among faculty in the Humanities than there were with faculty in the Social Sciences. Kiernan Mathews, director of COACHE, hopes that the survey will start conversations among the faculty and between faculty members and administrators.

Stockton is developing a tradition of using assessment results to inform our decision-making and our use of resources. One important step in the process of assessment is to review and discuss findings from assessments. This only makes sense. In order to get beyond the ratings of satisfaction to the whys of faculty responses, we may have

to ask questions differently and have more discussions to uncover the sources of the differences that we have found and these deeper conversations may give us some directions for future action.

Jaschik, S. (2010, July 12). Job Satisfaction and Gender. Inside Higher Ed. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2010/07/12/coache>

Figure 3: Mentoring by Gender and Tenure Status

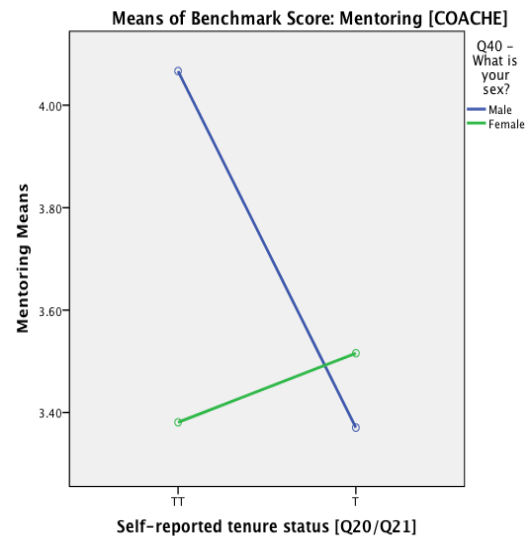
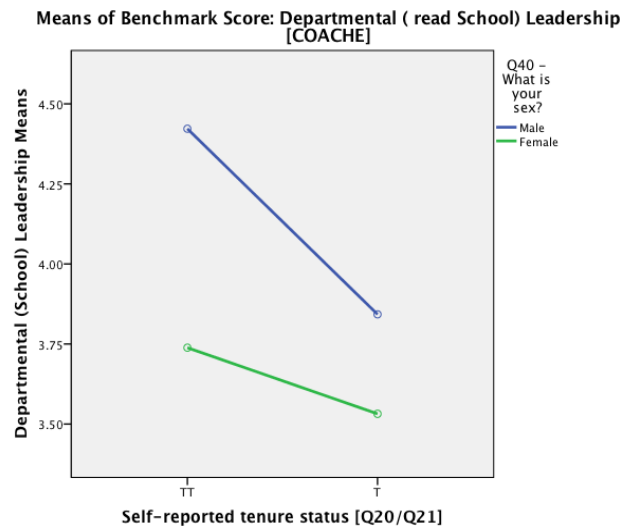


Figure 4: Departmental (School) Leadership by Gender and Tenure Status



Project: With the help of the Director of Assessment, the Advising staff developed a yearlong assessment project designed to answer the three questions. The curriculum maps below show the sampling and measurement details, and the criteria for judging success. The work will take place during this academic year (2014-2015) and the staff have already started on work to improve student knowledge of the CAPP and to begin the dialogue by having advisors speak in Freshman Seminars. During the sessions with freshmen, the advising staff covers how to choose

Learning Outcomes Year 1 2014-2015

#1. Students advised in the Center for Academic Advising will know each curricular component of the chosen major, including Program, Cognate, General studies, and At Some Distance courses.

Goal	Learning outcome	Opportunities to Learn	By When learning will occur	Outcome Measures	Data Instruments	Minimum Performance
Academic advising will assist in the interpretation of General education requirements (CAS standard) general major requirements	Student will know each curricular component of his/her degree requirements of their intended major: Program, cognate, General Studies, At Some Distance	Advising sessions Reading on website Freshman Seminars Transfer seminars	After first year	# or % of students who can identify needed curricular requirements for major # or % of students who can identify needed curricular requirements for major	Advisor asks student to list identify degree components during advising meeting Student correctly selects major required courses from a list of courses (quiz)	80% of the students advised in the Center for Academic Advising or through our contact will be aware of the curricular components of a Stockton degree.

Paula shared some good advice from the Assessment Institute. You don't have to assess everything at once— you can start with few student learning outcomes. She also pointed out that using more than one measure of each outcome is an important validation technique. Valid and useful assessment of academic advising demands more than satisfaction surveys of either the advising process or of the advisor, we must also find out what students know, and what they can do.

#2. Students advised in the Center for Academic Advising will comprehend that they are ultimately responsible for their graduation requirements

Goal	Learning outcome	Opportunities to Learn	By When learning will occur	Outcome Measures	Data Instruments	Minimum Performance
Academic Advising must engage students in the shared responsibility of academic advising (CAS standard)	Student will comprehend that they are ultimately responsible for their graduation requirements	Advising sessions Reading on website Flyers Orientation Freshman Seminars Transfer seminars	At orientation? After first advising meeting? After first semester? After first year?	# or % of students who accept that they are ultimately responsible for understanding and completing graduation requirements # or % of students who accept that they are ultimately responsible for understanding and completing graduation requirements	Advisor asks students if they understand they are responsible for graduation and to make the most of educational experiences Student answers correctly on a (quiz)	80% of the students advised in the Center for Academic Advising or through our contact will be aware that they are ultimately responsible for understanding and completing graduation requirements

#3. Students advised in The Center for Academic Advising will utilize the CAPP degree evaluation tool to determine progress to educational goals

Goal	Learning outcome	Opportunities to Learn	By When learning will occur	Outcome Measures	Data Instruments	Minimum Performance
Academic Advising must employ appropriate and accessible technology to support the delivery of advising information (CAS standard)	Student will utilize CAPP degree evaluation tool to determine progress to educational goals.	Advising sessions Orientation Freshman Seminars Transfer seminars	At orientation? After first advising meeting? After first semester? After first year?	# or % of students who can sign on, run CAPP and use for registration # or % of students who can sign on and run CAPP and use for registration	Advisor asks students to sign on to CAPP and interpret (rubric) Look at CAPP previous evaluations and who is running them	80% of the students advised in the Center for Academic Advising or through our contact will be able to use CAPP to determine progress to degree

Are they studying and reading enough? National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE 2014)

As we begin a new school year with optimism, it may help us to be attentive to students' self-report of the time that they spend outside of class preparing, reading, studying, and reviewing for classes. Last academic year, freshmen and seniors who completed the NSSE, reported similar patterns of time spent on reading and studying. Forty-three (43%) percent of freshmen and seniors reported spending 10 or fewer hours each week preparing for classes. Thirty-three (33%) of both freshmen and seniors spent about half of those hours on assigned readings. Stockton freshmen were lower than the comparison group of other institutions in both these areas and seniors were lower in the time that they spent preparing, but not in the percentage of time spent on assigned reading. It may help students to know that our expectations for them to spend more time preparing and reviewing are not unreasonable,

and that by comparison with similar students, they are underperforming in these areas.

Stockton seniors rate significantly higher than the comparison groups in "discussing course topics outside of class with a faculty member" and in "discussing academic performance with a faculty member." They also give the faculty high ratings for providing prompt and detailed feedback on their work and for fostering higher-level cognitive outcomes.

Our student engagement picture is very positive and it continues to improve. Even in the two areas noted where freshmen underperformed, we have been improving over the years.

You can find out more about our engagement profile for 2014 by visiting the Academic Assessment website.

