# Assessment & Research: Closing the Assessment Loop

During the 2015-2016 academic year, Assessment & Research (A&R) administered a survey shortly after the end of the spring semester to better understand division-wide assessment activity and more importantly to develop a sense of how units used assessment findings to improve their practice. Although A&R worked directly with 65% of units within the division in 2015-16, a survey was sent to a representative from each unit/department. This survey seeks to examine ways in which divisional units **closed the loop**, which is **the process of converting student and institutional performance data into action that makes a difference** (Blaich & Wise, 2011). The cycle of assessment provides a framework to guide this continuous process, which involves clearly articulating expectations for learning, as well as collecting and using evidence to improve outcomes (Baker et al., 2012).

The Assessment Cycle
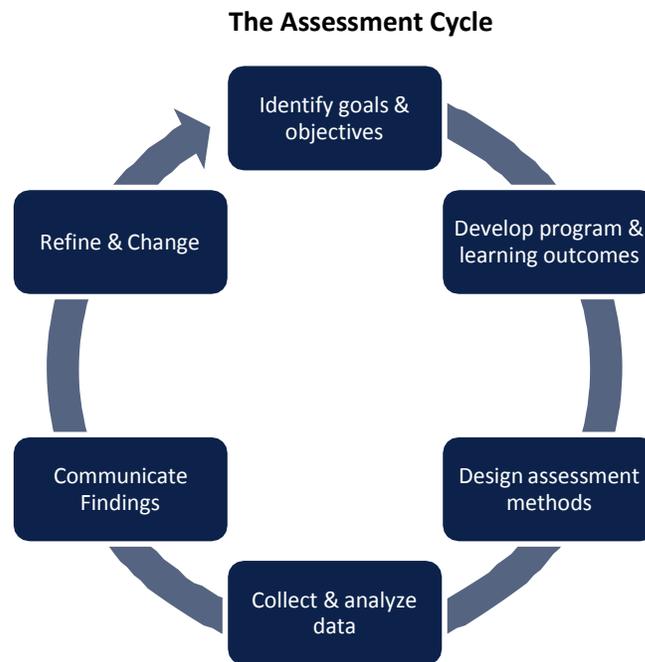
Findings

Table 1. Types of Assessment Conducted

Survey respondents were asked to indicate all types of assessment projects that were planned and or completed during 2015-2016. The 3 most frequently used types of assessment were satisfaction assessment, tracking assessment, and outcomes assessment.

	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
Satisfaction Assessment	**76%**	54%	56%
Tracking Assessment	**60%**	57%	57%
Outcomes Assessment	**52%**	57%	40%
Needs Assessment	36%	32%	30%
Benchmarking Assessment	32%	15%	15%
Student Cultures and Campus Environments	16%	14%	8%
Cost Effectiveness Assessment	8%	11%	6%
National Standards Assessment	8%	5%	4%

Table 2. Types of Data Informed Decisions

Survey respondents were asked how they "closed the assessment loop" using their assessment findings. The top 3 data informed decisions made by units included changing/creating a program, conducting/planning for additional assessment, and changing/creating a service.

	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
Changed/created a program	**64%**	37%	33%
Conducted/planned for additional assessment	**44%**	39%	39%
Changed/created a service	**40%**	22%	15%
Changed/created a process	32%	30%	29%
Identified a new target group	20%	15%	19%
Reallocated staff/funding/resources	16%	18%	14%
Changed/created product	16%	5%	6%
Changed/created policy	12%	10%	6%

4 Most Important Data Informed Changes
The survey asked respondents to describe the most important change their units made using assessment results:
- Improved programs, services, and curriculum
- Improved planning for future assessment
- Expanded efforts to engage students
- Made current efforts more effective

Top 4 Audiences for Sharing Assessment Results
The survey asked respondents to identify with whom they shared their assessment results:
- Supervisors and Internal Staff
- Division and Campus Community (SAEM/AISS)
- UA Students/Faculty
- Academic College Administration

References

Baker, G. R., Jankowski, N. A., Provezis, S., & Kinzie, J. (2012). *Using assessment results: Promising practices of institutions that do it well. National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment*. Retrieved from http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/CrossCase FINAL.pdf

Blaich, C. & Wise, K. (2011). *From gathering to using assessment results: Lessons from the Wabash national study.* National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. Retrieved at http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/Wabash_001.pdf