Assessment Workshop


Courtney Luque and Robert Snyder

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Welcome!

• Introductions
  • Courtney Luque, International Student Advisor, International Services Office (cluque@gwu.edu)
  • Robert Snyder, Executive Director, DSA Planning and Outreach (rsnyder@gwu.edu)

• Learning Outcomes
  • Participants will be able to…
    …define benchmarking and its importance to their work.
    …explain the process of benchmarking.
    …apply benchmarking practices to at least one project on which they are working.
    …relate benchmarking knowledge gained in this workshop to future projects in their department.
How Can We Use Assessment in DSA?

- **Understand** the needs of our stakeholders, especially students and parents
- **Validate** our strengths
- **Align** with national best practices, professional standards, and academic program evaluation methods
- **Guide** continuous improvement and strategic decision-making
- **Amplify** the case for philanthropic and university financial support
- **Advocate** for enhanced services and programs
What is benchmarking?

YOUR PERSPECTIVES
What is benchmarking? *(as defined)*

- “A structural approach for looking outside an organization to study and adapt the best outside practices to complement internal operations with new, creative ideas” (Schuler, 1998, p. 40)

- Discovery of *promising* practices (Newcomer, 2012)

- An opportunity to “...diagnose problems in performance and to identify areas of strength” (Schofield, 1998, p. 14)

- Validate our practices and solicit external perspectives (Alstete, 1996)
Preparing to benchmark

• Why are you benchmarking?
  • Purpose
  • Need(s)
  • Desired outcome(s)

• Three types of benchmarking (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996)
  • Internal (other departments at GW)
  • Competitive (best practices in the marketbasket)
  • Generic (off-list/best practices in the field)
Conducting background research

- Web searches
- **GW Libraries**
- **Education Advisory Board**
- Professional standards (CAS, NASPA/ACPA, etc.)
- Professional associations / listservs
- Professional / personal contacts
- Colleague referrals
- Convenience
  - Consider personal / professional travel, including conferences
Defining market basket

• What is a market basket?
  • Colleges and universities with which GW is most frequently compared and/or to which GW aspires

• How do you use a market basket list?
  • GW’s market basket list
  • Generic/off-list schools
GW’s Market Basket Schools

- American University
- Boston University*
- Duke University
- Emory University
- Georgetown University
- New York University*
- Northeastern University*
- Northwestern University
- Syracuse University*
- Southern Methodist University*
- Tufts University*
- Tulane University*
- University of Miami*
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Rochester
- University of Southern California
- Vanderbilt University
- Washington University in St. Louis

*Also members of the Colonial Group, which also includes Boston College, Brandeis University, Lehigh University, University of Notre Dame, and Wake Forest University
Developing questions

• **Who to include in the conversation and roles?**
  - Leadership
  - Staff
  - Interested colleagues
  - Students?

• **Develop a written list of questions**
  - Build on information from background research
  - Test GW ideas

• **Seek feedback on questions**
  - Ask interested GW colleagues (including leadership) **before** finalizing
Contacting institutions

- **Initial request for benchmarking (via email)**
  - Purpose
  - Likely participants
  - Desired approach (phone, Skype/web conference, in person)

- **Send information in advance**
  - Questions
  - Relevant GW information
  - Confirmed participants
Having the conversation

• **Roles**
  • Facilitator
  • Participant
  • Note taker

• **Conversation using written questions**
  • “What can we do for you?”

• **Follow up items**
  • Any additional information requests
  • Thank you note
Using the results

- **Share the notes**
  - Include additional information from follow up conversations

- **What did we learn from this experience?**
  - For this effort?
  - For other efforts in DSA/at GW?
Now that you know more about benchmarking…

- What else do you want to know about benchmarking?

- How will you use the information?
  - What topics/projects do you have in mind?
  - How will you share this presentation with your colleagues?
References and Additional Reading


Education Advisory Board

GW
Student Affairs

[THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY]

WASHINGTON, DC
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