**WHAT DO SUSTAINABLE ASSESSMENT PROCESS LOOK LIKE:**

**Warm-Up Exercise**

To begin with, focus on an assessment project or initiative on your campus that has stalled. Here are some prompts that may help frame your response:

* Did the project stall at the department level, the program level, or the institutional level? Why?
* What were one or two of the most significant reasons for that assessment project to stall?

**Response:** Given my current position, my awareness of assessment projects and initiatives on my campus is somewhat limited. One of the more interesting projects that I was aware of in the past year was a writing assessment for incoming MSW students; however, I’m not sure of the current status of the project. An additional project that comes to mind is the Course Lead teaching evaluations/feedback that occur each semester in the SocialWork@Simmons program, which in my experience, has been somewhat uneven in implementation. My sense is that the objectives of this assessment are clear at the institutional and program levels, and may become less clear at the departmental/Course Lead level.

Now, consider an assessment process that has been sustained on your campus or elsewhere:

* Why is it continuing?
* What do you consider the three most important features that must be fostered for an assessment project to result in actionable data and sustainable, institutional knowledge about learning?

**Response:** I believe that the three most important features that must be fostered to result in sustainable knowledge and actionable data include:

* Clarity around steps in the process and timeline
* Clear objectives to support appropriate data collection
* Curiosity and interesting around lifelong learning, and understanding assessment within this context (vs. punitive, etc)

**Activity: Identifying Common Hurdles And Key Characteristics Of Sustainable Assessment Practices**

Have you thought of any other hurdles that likely contributed to one of your assessment practices’ stall? Generate a succinct list of the hurdles you’ve encountered.

Response:

* Limited clarity around the role of assessment and goals/objectives for data collection
* Feedback loops may not include direct instructor
* Limited understanding of how/if students are able to utilize and develop skills (i.e.-awareness in foundation year courses that students must have working knowledge of practice theories by the time that they reach clinical practice sequence, though no feedback is available around the students’ ability to actually apply theories, etc)
* Opportunities for feedback and faculty development are built into the program, but evaluations appear to be subjective (vs. standardized)
* What happens to the data?

In both stalled and sustained assessment efforts, how did the individuals responsible for the project move the project forward? Or did they? What happened if the project didn’t move forward?

Response:

* Individual Course Leads have taken specific responsibilities for the instructors in their sections to teach specific content. It’s not clear what happens to this data once it is delivered to the Program Director.

Who else with a particular area of expertise might have been involved in either the planning process for an assessment project in order that the project close the loop effectively and result in actionable data?

Response: We have a gifted core research and evaluation faculty that might provide additional support to assessment practices. I’m wondering as well if making the role of assessment part of new faculty orientation might be beneficial?

What do you consider the three most important features that must be fostered for an assessment project to result in actionable data and for the assessment cycle to close the loop?

Response:

* Clear understanding of the importance of assessment in achieving outcomes for students and how essential this process is as part of good teaching from the beginning
* Standardized processes with an eye toward the benefits for faculty development inherent in the assessment process (including intentional development of learning communities)
* Feedback to instructors about how their role and coursework fit into the overall picture of a student’s work, including specific information as to how students are developing skills within the curriculum.

**Activity: Prospective Hindsight -- A Preliminary Step In Assessment Project Management**

Use your existing assessment plan or a draft assessment plan for this preliminary analysis. A lot of time and energy went into your plan’s design. You will roll it out at the beginning of fall semester, but before you do, conduct a preliminary analysis and ask “what might emerge as potential hurdles in this year’s assessment plan? Why? And what practical action steps can I take to avoid or proactively address a stall in the process?”

The goals of this activity are:

* anticipate potential stalls with the assessment plan before it’s implemented based on these five common hurdles
* consider who else on campus (strategic collaborations) could be consulted and what early actions you can take in order to effectively prepare and resolve them. Include other considerations that are unique to your institution.
* Recall the maxim: measure twice, cut once.

If you are working independently on this activity, review each of the hurdles with the goal of identifying which ones could emerge as potential issues, leading to the plan’s stall. Next, consider strategic collaborations in order to engage and resolve these stalls and/or hurdles.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Hurdle** | **Likely to Emerge As Potential Issue/Hurdles** | | | **Strategic Collaborations to Engage & Resolve Stall/Hurdle** |
| Low | Medium | High |
| Limited time to conduct assessment | Medium | | | Understanding of assessment practices across the institution, expectations of adjunct faculty in various departments  Review of best practices at similar programs to determine if this is a standard expectation  Devote pre-existing/pre-scheduled meeting time to assessment processes (i.e.-Instructor Meetings with Course Leads, Faculty Meetings, etc)  Consider increased compensation for continued participation in assessment processes or work groups? |
| Limited resources to put toward assessment | Low/Unknown | | | Discussion with Program Director to understand current resources and available resources  Collaboration with Center for Excellence in Teaching to identify resources  Collaboration with 2U (program partner and designer) to determine availability of resources |
| Limited understanding or expertise in assessment | High | | | Develop assessment module for delivery through the faculty orientation process  Faculty development workshops focused on assessment  Faculty meeting focused on importance of assessment  Increase training or consider additional module for Course Leads on assessment and relationship of Live Session evaluations to assessment  Explore other area resources (including use of the LARC online series) |
| Communication channels regarding assessment on campus are developing or not consistently defined | High | | | Coordination with Program Director and Dean of SSW to identify current practices and clarify channels  Incorporate this information into Faculty Orientation and regular Instructor Meetings with Course Leads  Identify individuals who can troubleshoot challenges in communication channels re: assessment  Develop understanding of assessment as providing vital data for recruiting and retaining students with 2U (program partner) and determine if there are available structures in other programs that are pre-existing within the company’s structure and/or could be easily replicated |
| Perceptions regarding the benefits of assessment are limited | Medium/Unknown | | | Develop assessment module for delivery through the faculty orientation process  Faculty development workshops focused on assessment  Faculty meeting focused on importance of assessment  Increase training or consider additional module for Course Leads on assessment and relationship of Live Session evaluations to assessment  Identify the role of assessment in relationship to clinical practice and modeling professional behavior, link to NASW Code of Ethics, share information with colleagues about the benefits of assessment through faculty meetings, Instructor/Course Lead Meetings  Devote subsection of Pedagogy Club to assessment  Identify assessment ambassadors throughout the program  Workshop with faculty who benefit from assessment |

**Activity: Final Reflections**

After completing the activities, reflect on the process you have engaged in this module so far by responding to the questions below. You can do this exercise through either individual reflective writing or discussion with a partner.

1. What limitations have you uncovered in the sustainability of your own assessment efforts?

**Response:** I’ve learned a lot about the importance of understanding assessment in a wider institutional context and seeing my limited understanding around assessment as somewhat typical for someone in my position. I’ve uncovered themes around confusing information channels, limited data collection, and the challenges of time and resources in the context of a newly developing program as barriers to sustainable assessment efforts.

1. In what ways have you expanded on your understanding of the potential barriers or hurdles to implementing and sustaining assessment practices?

**Response:** I feel that my understanding of potential barriers or hurdles to implementing and sustaining assessment practices has been exponentially expanded. I started this module with a very limited understanding of both assessment and its importance in my role as a faculty member and now have a strong sense of why this might be so. In thinking about the barriers to assessment from my vantage point, I’ve also developed a curiosity about my program’s practices and an understanding of how I might be able to bridge some of the gaps in my current programs. I’ve also been able to identify my program’s areas of strength, which may help to reduce some of these barriers.

1. What guiding principles have you begun to identify for ensuring sustainable assessment practices?

**Response:** The guiding principles that I’ve begun to identify include:

* Developing a culture of assessment as a collaborative process
* Using assessment to develop actionable data and strengthen student outcomes
* Cultivating a culture of learning, risk-taking, and mutual responsibility
* Using assessment to understand how the various components of a program fit together
* Taking clear steps to ensure that the work of assessment is both manageable and meaningful

1. What steps can you envision taking on your own campus to ensure greater sustainability of your assessment efforts and assessment plans?

**Response:**

* Learning more about current assessment efforts
* Being aware of hurdles when developing or participating in assessment efforts
* Asking problem-posing questions about data and outcomes available within my program
* Encouraging increased collaboration, learning, and curiosity about assessment as an intentional part of faculty development

1. For group dialogue: What is one piece of advice or information that you would give your colleague if they asked for feedback on how to improve and/or re-prioritize their goals for sustainable assessment practices?

**Response:** N/A. This is an individual reflection.

**HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR ASSESSMENT PRACTICES ARE SUSTAINABLE?**

**Warm Up Exercise**

For many of the online modules, we ask you to think about and work on what you are doing in your course, program or academic area in terms of assessment. If you have completed other modules, you have reflected on your own current assessment process in a variety of ways. However, to begin this module, we would like to ask you to think about what is going on in terms of assessment outside of your area of focus. Ultimately, for your own cycle of inquiry to be most sustainable at your institution, you should be able to benefit from the support of others engaged in assessment on your campus.

Take a moment to fill out the table below including your own program as well as any others you have some familiarity with at your institution. If you do not know what is going on in other programs take the opportunity to reach out to at least two colleagues to find out what they are doing. Even if you can only complete a couple of columns for a program, try to include as many programs as you can.

| **Program or Academic Area** | **Goals and Objectives Being Assessed** | **Data Being Collected** | **Process for Reviewing the Data** | **Changes made as a result of using data** | **Use of data for program review or external accreditation** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Library/Literacy Outcomes** | 1) Students will be able to enhance their research by using information literacy skills  2) Students will be able to demonstrate awareness of library resources 3) Students will be able to recognize benefits of using library space | Measuring Information Service Outcome Survey  Honors Program bibliography study  Individual/small group research appointments  Resource usage data via the Library web site  Number of group study rooms booked  Collect student feedback on space needs/use | Data is collected and reviewed by departmental assessment committee and individual program participants | Changing delivery methods, increasing explicit use of library instruction of course content | NEASC Accreditation |
| **Undergraduate Psychology Program** | **Learning Objectives:** Career Development: Students will emerge from the major with realistic ideas about how to implement their psychological knowledge, skills, and values in occupational pursuits in a variety of settings.  Research Methods:  Students will understand and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation.  Theory and Content: Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.  Personal Development: Student will develop insight into their own and others’ behavior and mental processes and apply effective strategies for self-management and self-improvement.  Communications Skills: Students will be able to communicate effectively in a variety of formats | Student assessment scores; All-college assessment scores, standardized measures collected by institutional Research Office across undergraduate programs to determine student outcomes. Methods include student surveys, embedded course assessments/evaluations; peer assessment; graduate school admissions rate, etc. | Program and content review; aggregation of assessment data to the institutional level vis a vis formal assessment reports to the Assessment Committee and Provost | Assignment Revisions (re-wording journaling prompt); Instructional Changes (adoption of “flipped” classroom and active learning techniques; lecture replaced by small-group activities; Assessment Revision | Each non-accredited program is required to develop a four year assessment plan, ensuring that assessment data for student learning outcomes for each program is reviewed regularly. |
| **Graduate Program in Library and Information Sciences (MS)** | **Learning Outcomes:** 1. Apply professional standards, tools, and best practices in the information field and across specialized areas. 2. Communicate effectively to different audiences through use of oral, written, and visual formats across multiple media. 3. Develop appropriate technology strategies across a range of information settings. 4. Critically analyze and apply research. 5. Evaluate and create information services and/or systems to reflect and respond to the needs of diverse communities and stakeholders. 6. Demonstrate individual and collaborative leadership ability. 7. Be guided by professional ethics and values | Alumni Survey Responses;  Graduation Rates;  Library Journal Employment Survey - SLIS data; Course Assessments (based on review of course content and learning objectives in relationship to program learning outcomes) | Reviewed by working groups and shared with assessment committee | Substantial curriculum revisions | American Library Association Committee on Accreditation |
| **Student Success After Simmons** | Rates of employment  Licensure Passage Rates  Loan Default Rates | National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) First Destination Survey; Graduate S3 form regarding Licensure Passage and Job Placement; The Institute for College Access and Success reports |  |  | NEASC Accreditation |

**Warm-Up Exercise Reflection Questions:**

1. Are there any interesting areas of overlap between your program and others in terms of the goals and objectives you are assessing?

**Response:** Yes. The importance of developing professional readiness and identity, ensure critical thinking, ability to apply knowledge in practice contexts, etc. are similar across programs

1. Are you collecting data in similar or different ways from other programs, and can you see opportunities for sharing data or data collection approaches?

**Response:** Yes. We’re tracking post-graduation outcome data using similar data collection approaches.

Did you encounter any interesting ways in which other programs review their data?  
**Response:** This information was limited in my understanding of assessment processes across disciplines and program. The College does have a formalized process for assessment across all levels of the institution that appears to encourage consistency in data review and collection

1. Can your program benefit from considering some of the types of program changes that have been made in other programs?  
   **Response:** Yes! Increased adoption of standardized rubrics, use of different instructional methods, etc. are currently occurring in our program and will continue to benefit our program.
2. To what extent at your institution has the assessment process been integrated into the process of program review and/or external accreditation?

**Response:**  Recent NEASC reports indicate that our institution has attempted to integrate assessment throughout programmatic review and external accreditation across its multiple stakeholders in programs (CSWE and its counterparts in Library and Information Sciences, Management, Nursing, Physical Therapy, etc.) as an explicit part of accreditation planning and simultaneously developing institutional culture(s) of assessment.

**Activity: Frame Analysis**

In the warm-up activity for this section of the module, you looked at a few of the programs on your campus and began to consider what you could learn from them, or potentially contribute to them. For this activity, you should continue that exercise, but now looking at it through the lens of each of the four frames. Brainstorm what is happening at your campus, or if necessary reach out again to colleagues on your campus or others to learn more. Pick two or three assessment efforts that are underway with which you could see building a network to support your own assessment work. Restrict yourself to 2-3 besides your own to keep your plan manageable. Fill out the table below, and after briefly describing the assessment effort, complete the other columns with your evaluation of the strengths of each assessment effort (if any) from the perspective of each of the four frames.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program or Academic Area** | **Brief summary of relevant parts of assessment plan** | **Symbolic Frame Strengths** | **Political Frame Strengths** | **Structural Frame Strengths** | **Human Resources Frame Strengths** |
| School of Social Work | Assessment of student learning outcomes: mastery of the competencies that comprise the accreditation standards of the Council on Social Work Education. These competencies are dimensions of social work practice that all social workers are expected to master during their professional training. SSW standard is 80% competency across all areas of professional competence as defined by CSWE. | CSWE standards and measurable data are linked to the ethical standards of the SW profession, including understanding of professional competence, improving agency culture, and modeling appropriate practice behaviors for students. Assessment is a way of providing professional accountability in training for students, our professional colleagues, and the public at large. | **Allies:** President; Provost; All Simmons Assessment Committee; Center for Teaching and Learning; CSWE; All College Curriculum Committee | Clearly identified, ongoing assessment practices, including data collection methods and structures for reviewing data. Continuous feedback loops with students and stakeholders. Representation on All Simmons Assessment Committee (meets every two weeks); Practices align with CSWE accreditation standards; formal positions at all levels of the institution with responsibility for assessment | Training and support available to faculty; incorporation of assessment |
| **Levers to support change:**  Centering of assessment within institutional culture; intensive focus on assessment within institutional culture as part of NEASC accreditation, and intensive training, development of common language of assessment and institutional prioritization of assessment-driven practices; trends toward evidence-based practice; increased opportunities with launch of new online program; increased alignment with Simmons’ wider culture and goals |
| **Opponents:** Part-time faculty with limited buy-in; faculty struggling with standardized rubrics or feeling that pedagogical style may be constrained through extensive use of standardized assessment measures; individuals concerned that greater alignment with all-college priorities and streamlining will result in loss of organizational capital, program’s uniqueness, etc. |
| **Levers of resistance/obstacles:**  Concerns around need for specialized knowledge among faculty; limited understanding of current assessment objectives, etc; large numbers of adjunct faculty hired to staff the online program who may be less invested/involved in institutional culture, etc. |
| **Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences** | Assessment of student learning outcomes in relationship to professional competencies, aligned with the American Library Association (ALA) Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies | Integrates the culture of assessment across the curriculum, noting individual faculty responsibility for students’ professional development vis a vis the assessment process. Learning outcomes are explicitly embedded in the curriculum and drive the development of all aspects of coursework and educational milieu. | **Allies:** President; Provost; All Simmons Assessment Committee; Center for Teaching and Learning; CSWE; All College Curriculum Committee; ALA | Commitment to assessment is identified as a central driving force and essential part of the culture. Information is shared with all stakeholders on program website, including access to resources, all reports, and data. Timelines for assessment are clearly identified within course syllabi, committee descriptions, and expectations of faculty members. Program is represented on the All Simmons Assessment Committee; | Training and support available to faculty; incorporation of assessment |
| **Levers to Support Change:**  Centering of assessment within institutional culture; intensive focus on assessment within institutional culture as part of NEASC accreditation, and intensive training, development of common language of assessment and institutional prioritization of assessment-driven practices within the program; extensive training around assessment practices for all faculty; expectation of extensive reports for ALA accreditation. |
| **Opponents**: Faculty struggling with standardized rubrics or feeling that pedagogical style may be constrained through extensive use of standardized assessment measures; part-time faculty; alumni who may not have had access to such data-driven practice, etc. |
| **Levers of Resistance/Obstacles**:  Extensive demands of assessment process (including related committee work, report development, etc) and competing demands on faculty time; |

**Exercise:**

Now that you have examined a few different assessment efforts, consider what strengths in one area might also represent potential opportunities for your own assessment effort, either through some partnership or through learning from and building on the work in another area. Please provide a list of opportunities for your own assessment efforts through each of the different frames by responding to the questions provided below:

Symbolic Frame Opportunities: How can you better connect your assessment efforts to the campus mission, strategic plan, international or national standards and/or accreditation?

**Response:** Increase awareness of assessment practices among adjunct faculty and connect online SW program instructors with assessment practice partners, introduce campus mission and strategic plan as part of new faculty onboarding within the online community, etc.

Political Frame Opportunities: How can you better connect your assessment efforts with critical stakeholders who have the potential to help insure its sustainability?

**Response:** Increase availability of information to stakeholders, including prospective and current students, alumni, and partners borrowing practices and learning about infrastructure from GSLIS.

Structural Frame Opportunities: How can you insure that you have the proper organizational and communication structures in place to sustain the level of assessment you have planned?

**Response:** Utilize existing structures, including Course Lead meetings, instructor peer evaluations, and communication with program director. Learn more about assessment infrastructure in the “on the ground” program and coordinate with 2U, Inc (partner) and/or collaborative ally MSW@USC program to learn more about best practices and sustainability within other organizations

Human Resources Frame Opportunities: How can you insure that you have provided appropriate support in the form of professional development resources, personnel, time and rewards to sustain your assessment process?

**Response:** Faculty needs assessment around the appropriate professional development needs and meaningful incentives, retreat planning, alleviation of other committee/service responsibilities, streamlining processes, and collaboration/review with other partners as noted above.

**Activity: Planning for Initiatives to Support Your Assessment Efforts**

In the prior activity you identified strengths of a number of campus assessment efforts through each of the four frames and then considered **opportunities** to build on those **strengths** in the work of your own program. In the prior section of this module you also identified potential **weaknesses**of your own assessment efforts on campus, and common **threats**or obstacles to the sustainability of assessment practices. Now that you have also considered sustainability even further with a particular emphasis on the human resources frame, you should begin to have some ideas about how to approach sustaining assessment efforts in your own area. One common tool for this kind of planning is to complete a SWOT analysis, where the kinds of **Strengths** and **Opportunities** you have already identified can be combined with careful reflection on **Weaknesses** and **Threats** to your assessment efforts identified in the first part of this module.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Initiative Description** | **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** | **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| Increasing alignment of individual assignment rubrics with broader program learning outcomes and CSWE Competencies | Learning outcomes/CSWE professional competencies are already delineated in current syllabi with some links between assignments and competencies. Established culture of collegiality, importance of competence and best practice, and intentional community-building and professional development of adjunct faculty to reduce turnover and increase pedagogical and institutional knowledge over time. Significant efforts are expended to ensure that online adjunct faculty feel connected to both the online and on the ground programs, which promotes a sense of community and dedication that is unique to the SW@Simmons program. This is a powerful resource, Program provides unique opportunity to pilot practices with potential for large-scale data availability due to number of students and faculty involved. | Limited awareness or link to institutional culture of the greater Simmons Community within the SocialWork@ Simons program. Explicit links are made between the online and on the ground programs, but link to the wider Simmons culture is missing . Wider Simmons culture may not always make information or professional development resources accessible to online faculty, limiting availability for cross-program collaboration, etc. Large number of faculty can lead to challenges around fidelity with rubric implementation, etc. Limited time for adjunct faculty who are recruited due to their direct practice experience, who likely do not have time to add additional responsibilities to workload. | Building on SW@Simmons’ sense of community and desire to align with best pedagogical practices, increase competence, and serve both the profession and the wider school. Learning opportunities may also exist to develop cross-program knowledge sharing wherein SW@Simmons might draw on expertise of GSLIS in transparency around data and accreditation reporting and SW@Simmons might provide opportunities for learning about online pedagogy and experiences in return. | Limited information provided to current adjunct faculty at SW@Simmons re: assessment practices at program and/or institutional levels; strained resources around time; concerns around fidelity and buy-in of adjunct faculty. |

**Activity: Final Reflection**

As you move into the next section of this module you will begin to consider how to plan for sustainable assessment. After completing the table in the preceding activity, take a moment to reflect on the following questions. You can do this exercise through either individual reflective writing or discussion with a partner.

1. For the 1-3 initiatives you have identified what would be the first steps you would take to try to strengthen your assessment efforts?

**Response:** Meeting with program leadership to understand current assessment practices at the program and institutional level and how current assessment tools (i.e.-current existing rubrics) fit into those practices. Learn more about what’s been accomplished already and identify additional strengths to be leveraged to overcome areas for growth in the assessment process.

1. Do you feel that one or two of the frames in particular: symbolic, political, structural, or human resources, poses the greatest challenges at your institution in terms of sustaining assessment?  
   **Response:** Human Resources, particularly due to the rapid scaling/growth of the program in the 16 months since its inception.
2. What are the key questions you feel always need to be answered to determine if assessment practices are sustainable?

**Response:**

* “Who wants what from whom and how is this to be accomplished?”   
  (Staples, L. (2004). Roots to power: A manual for grassroots organizing (2nd. Ed). Westport, CT. Praeger Press.).
* What implicit and explicit messages are we conveying about assessment and teaching practices? Do these messages support sustainability?(Symbolic frame)
* Who are our institutional allies and coalition members that can provide resources and support to overcome obstacles? Are we leveraging these resources appropriately to increase momentum and share the workload?(Political frame)
* What will this process entail? When does it need to be accomplished? Who will hold responsibility for this process? Is this reasonable/sustainable for faculty (especially in context of other responsibilities)in each step of the process? (see notes re: data collection, etc.) How will our efforts impact our program and institution (will they provide meaningful, actionable data to increase student learning and faculty’s sense of efficacy)?
* Do we have the appropriate resources, training, support, and individuals in place to sustain these efforts? How can we build on existing processes?

1. For group dialogue: What is one piece of advice or information that you would give your colleague if they asked for feedback on how to improve and/or re-prioritize their efforts at supporting one or more of their initiatives?

**Response:** N/A. This is an individual reflection.

**HOW DO YOU PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES AT YOUR INSTITUTION?**

**Warm-Up Activity**

Read the [case study](https://mghinstitute.desire2learn.com/content/enforced/170219-LEARN_ASESS/Case%20Study_sustainability.pdf?_&d2lSessionVal=2dxhegAoM6B1oowfM64GnsIMj&ou=170219)on one institution’s plan and process for assessing an undergraduate general education curriculum and then respond to the questions below:

1. If this assessment process were taking place at your institution, how do you think you would be engaged in the process, given your current position?  
   Response: If this process occurred at my institution (assuming that it is generalizable to/within the online graduate program in which I teach), my engagement in the process would involve improving student outcomes, assessing student learning, participating in course and program revisions. Additionally, in my role as occasional Course Lead (which functions differently within the SW@Simmons program), additional participation would include developing embedded assessment measures, data collection, report development, etc.
2. Which aspects of this assessment process struck you as positive, beneficial, or innovative? How do you think assessment benefits the continued improvement of the PLAN curriculum?  
   **Response:** There are multiple components of the assessment process that came across as positive, beneficial, or innovative, including the simultaneous bottom-up/top-down structure of the process; direct participation of students; centering faculty expertise; providing extensive support and collaborative resource sharing from both faculty/student expertise and assessment professionals; incredible levels of resource development, etc. I love the continuous feedback loop that appears to run through the process, and as an adjunct faculty member within this institution, I can say that I have benefitted tremendously from the use of Communities of Practice. This level of individual investment is not present for part-time faculty at any of the other institutions that I’ve worked with, and the sense that the program cares about my development as a teacher and values my input is a significant factor in my desire to continuously improve my pedagogy and provide students with the best training possible. Assessment provides the driving factor for the continually improving the PLAN curriculum by providing continuous feedback, identifying strengths and areas for growth, and continuing to build the culture of assessment through embedding the concepts of assessment through the curriculum and its related approval processes.
3. Did you see any gaps or potential for improvement in the data that is gathered? In how the data is shared or used?  
   **Response:** It may be beneficial to increase data collection measuring faculty’s understanding of the assessment process, including the data being gathered and its relationship to the continuous improvement process outlined in the case study. (I wonder if it might help faculty who teach on a part-time basis to know how their individual coursework ties into these larger objectives within the overall curriculum). It may also be useful to track data targeting linkage between effective pedagogical practices and stronger student outcomes.
4. What is the one aspect of this assessment plan that might be most sustainable? The least sustainable?

**Response:** The full-assessment process appears to have sustainability as a driving factor, and one of its strengths is the clear and thoughtful structure through which the assessment process occurs. Additionally, the levels of input derived from all levels of the institution is a strength allowing for a comprehensive understanding of contributing factors to positive student outcomes; however, this may also prove challenging as the process appears quite labor-intensive (and may be the least sustainable). The timelines around report development, retreat attendance, data collection, etc. may prove to be overwhelming and challenging if/when faculty are expected to provide this information while also teaching a full courseload, publishing, advising, participating in other service responsibilities, etc. However, I think that the efforts to provide support across the assessment process and structure while tying assessment into professional development outcomes are notable mitigating factors to decreased sustainability of data collection.

1. If you were an assessment consultant to this institution, what advice would you give them going forward?  
   **Response:** The advice that I would offer to this institution is to consider participation in the assessment process when considering promotion and tenure review, and to support part-time faculty’s direct understanding of their role in the assessment process.

**Activity: Analyzing the Sustainability of the Case Study**

**A) Establishing intentional connections with other campus processes, structures, systems, or rituals to create complementary relationships.**

Evidence of the establishment of intentional connections:

**Response:**

* 1. Establishment of Working Groups
  2. Use of regular working group retreats and mandatory course design intensives sharing workloads across levels of the institutions
  3. Development of Communities of Practice

Ideas for strengthening sustainability in this area  
**Response:**

1. Increase the depth of faculty expertise in assessment by continuously developing strong course faculty into Course Lead role
2. Consider development of Co-Course Leads to promote increased collaboration and share responsibilities
3. Increase availability of information gained through the assessment process to all faculty members (perhaps this occurs at the yearly retreats, but it might be interesting to have this information readily available at all times, particularly rationale for changes to course content so that it is available to faculty when teaching the revised content).

**B) Committing resources that support assessment, such as professional time, funding, professional development, or investment in data-gathering or management software  
Response:**

Evidence of the commitment of resources:

1. Development of Communities of Practice and attendance at retreats, intensives, etc. as intentional opportunities for professional development
2. Use of resources from the Center for Teaching and Learning, Provost’s Office, and Office for Institutional Research to support assessment process
3. Clear understanding of professional time required to participate in this process and institutional prioritization of this time

Ideas for strengthening sustainability in this area

**Response:**

1. Increase professional development funding for faculty who develop expertise in assessment processes through participation in the various PLAN structures
2. Consider use of data-gathering software to promote student feedback and streamline processes
3. Increase investment and use of electronic sharing resources (Google Collaborative documents, ongoing course reflection files, etc) to streamline process

**C) Regular campus practices that demonstrate intentional recognition for the value of assessment work in both institutional growth/health and the teaching and learning process.**

Evidence of regular campus practices that demonstrate the value of assessment  
**Response:**

1. Continual time and discussion allocated to assessment work across every level of the institution, demonstrated through active participation in the assessment process by organizational members across all institutional levels
2. Prioritization of learning outcomes for all incoming students and continuous incorporation of outcomes and quality improvement processes in developing course content
3. Prioritizing opportunities for faculty growth, development, and collaboration through active participation in the assessment feedback, including reflective learning opportunities around course work (I.e.-practices for soliciting immediate student feedback while teaching, which increases responsive pedagogical practices), small group meetings, and multiple opportunities for peer consultation through participation in Communities of Practice

Ideas for strengthening sustainability in this area  
**Response:**

* 1. Intentional development of second line leadership for Course Leads, Course Designers, Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching, Provost, etc. specifically related to assessment process and to decrease erosion of institutional knowledge
  2. Obtain continuous feedback from Course Leads and other key players in the assessment process to identify ways to streamline processes and improve accuracy in data collection
  3. Increase recognition for individuals involved in the assessment process

**Activity: Applying Sustainable Assessment Principles**

You have now reviewed several frameworks for describing criteria that contribute to sustainable assessment. In the space below, please list the top 5-10 guiding principles for sustainable assessment that you think will be most relevant or beneficial to you in your role

**Response:**

1. Constant engagement of key players for feedback, building relationships, and knowledge/resource sharing
2. Simultaneous grassroots and top-down institutional organization
3. Consistent linkage around assessment practices and effective pedagogy/improved student outcomes
4. Continuous quality improvement and cultural commitment to engagement in lifelong learning and effective practice through assessment
5. Specificity, specificity, specificity around learning outcomes, faculty understanding of data, etc.
6. Investment in professional development for faculty members
7. Development of second-line leadership to limit erosion of institutional knowledge
8. Working smarter, not harder: using existing processes, structures, committees, best practice models, etc. to leverage resources effectively.

**Activity 3***:*Imagine that you are a full-time tenured faculty member, and your department chair has just left for a one-year sabbatical. The Dean has asked you to step in as interim chair during your colleague’s absence, and as part of your interim chair responsibilities, the Dean has asked you to develop a sustainable assessment plan for the department.  The regular chair hasn’t put in the effort to do this work, and as the institution is up for its reaccreditation site visit in three years, the Dean sees your interim role as a timely opportunity to create a sustainable plan that won’t “embarrass” the department during the reaccreditation process. Write an email to the Dean, giving your top suggestions for how the two of you could best collaborate to create a plan that will be sustained when the current chair returns from leave.

**Response:**

Dear Dean,

I am thrilled to begin our collaborative work to establish a sustainable culture of assessment for the Department of Social Work, and appreciate your confidence in my ability to co-facilitate this effort with you. I agree that the interim Department Chair role provides a unique “window of opportunity” to create notable changes in the Department’s assessment practices, which is further aided by the momentum inherent in the re-accreditation process. I’m eager to explore possibilities for collaboration in this effort, and agree that we should move quickly in taking the first steps in this process.

To that end, I am hoping that we can meet tomorrow to engage in a comprehensive assessment of the project’s scope, using our process to model the behaviors that we are looking to encourage across the Department. As our major goal includes a shift in the Department’s culture, I look forward to implementing current best practices in assessment, which include centering the voices of faculty, and framing assessment as a continuous tool for professional development and growth. However, in order to sustain these practices, it is vital to ensure that we have a clear understanding of the resources available to support our efforts. My hope is to develop a broad map of these resources in our meeting tomorrow.

As we engage in resource mapping, we can also begin to shift our explicit messaging around assessment. I’ve been able to share some of my thoughts about the importance of continuous learning and feedback and data-driven practices in my initial Department meeting, and recommend establishing Communities of Practice model to provide infrastructure to our ongoing assessment needs. I’m hoping to learn from the recent success of the Simmons PLAN to provide a model for our work going forward, and believe that it would be most helpful for you and I to meet with the leaders of the PLAN process and using their expertise to plan next steps.

I’d welcome your thoughts and am eager to move forward on this project. I look forward to meeting with you in the morning.

Best,

Christina

**Final Reflection:**

After completing the activities, answer the following questions. You can do this exercise through either individual reflective writing or discussion with a partner.

Review your recommendations in the last activity. In what ways do they fit into or reflect the different frameworks for sustainability described in this module?

**Response**: My recommendations were guided by the frameworks for sustainability described in this module, with an emphasis in the beginning stages of the process on the symbolic and political frames with the hopes of identifying and developing aspects of the structural and human resources frames in the immediate next steps. Recommendations around changing the culture and messaging draws on the symbolic frame, while understanding the scope of the project and learning from key allies in the process draws on the political frame. Beginning to identify infrastructure (the next steps) and recommending a specific model pulls from the structural frame and identifies needs that can be addressed via the human resources framework.

What did you find most revealing about the current sustainability (or lack of sustainability) of assessment practices on your campus?

**Response:** In the course of this module, I was surprised to learn about the emphasis on current sustainability of assessment practices on my campus. I was particularly impressed to learn that many of the practices that I find supportive as an adjunct instructor are or may be modeled after aspects of the Simmons PLAN, which have been implemented with fidelity and care by our Program Director. The module helped me to understand more about my role in the assessment process and likely may shift some of my pedagogical practices.

How would your answers to the first activity be different if you had $200,000 to spend? If there was no funding available?

**Response:** My answers in the first activity would shift if the funding was increased to bring in expert knowledge (assessment experts to facilitate faculty retreats and training) and pilot student involvement in development of assessment practices (i.e.-including a small group of students at each stage in the process to provide input), and perhaps to provide more specific recommendations about fiscal resources for faculty members and/or to address gaps in the Human Resources frame. If there was no funding available, I believe that my recommendations would remain the same, though the scope of change may need to be narrowed to focus on a specific component of the program as an example, versus a Department-wide initiative.

What are the top 2-3 practices or changes that you think might have a positive impact on sustainability at your institution? How might those be enacted?

Response: The top practices or changes that would have a positive impact on sustainability at my institution would be to increase adjunct faculty awareness and training around assessment practices. I believe that these might be enacted by inquiring about current planning in this area with our Program Director, expressing interest in learning more about assessment generally (perhaps in the context of my role as a mentee), and using more of the technology available through the SW@Simmons program to increase access to resources (CET workshops, etc. ) for faculty in the online program.