

Evaluation of Master's Programs

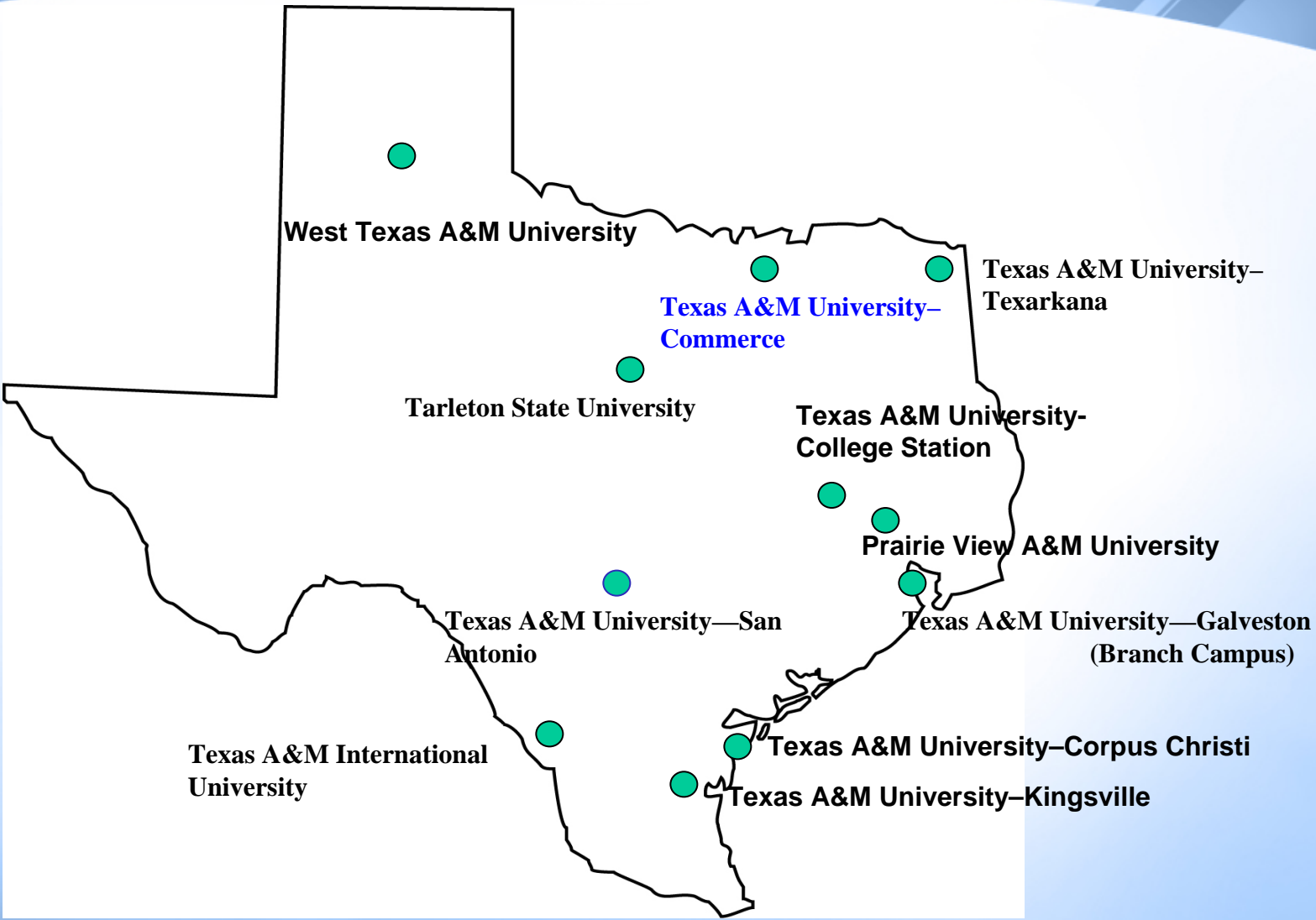
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Outline of topics covered

- About Texas A&M University-Commerce
- Purpose of program assessment
- The values of program assessments
- The process of program assessment
- Student learning assessments
- Expected outcomes
- Program enhancement through program assessment

Texas A&M University System



Texas A&M University-Commerce

- Established in 1889 and is the fifth oldest institution in the State of Texas
- Enrollment: 10,200 with 43% graduate students
- Maintains campuses at 4 sites throughout the Dallas Metroplex
- Joined the Texas A&M University System in 1996
- Graduates the most high school principals, superintendents, and school counselors than any other university in the state

Doctoral Programs

PROGRAM	DEGREE	FALL ENROLLMENT 2009	GRADUATES 2009-10
Counseling	PhD	62	11
Educational Administration	EdD	77	5
English	PhD	34	5
Educational Psychology	PhD	38	5
Supervision, Curriculum & Instruction - Elementary Education	EdD	65	8
Supervision, Curriculum & Instruction - Higher Education	EdD	81	24

Master's Programs (College of Arts & Sciences)

PROGRAM	DEGREE	FALL ENROLLMENT 2009	GRADUATES 2009-10
Agricultural Education	MEd	5	4
Agricultural Sciences	MS	16	3
Art	MA/MS/MFA	26	4
Biological Sciences	MEd/MS	26	15
Chemistry	MS	14	8
Computer Science	MS	225	77
History	MA/MS	25	2
English	MA	40	13
Spanish	MA/MS	10	2
Mathematics	MS/MS	12	1
Music	MM	16	1
Physics	MS	10	1
Sociology	MS	14	2
Theatre	MA/MS	14	4

Master's Programs (College of Education & Human Services)

PROGRAM	DEGREE	FALL ENROLLMENT 2009	GRADUATES 2009-10
Counseling	MS/MEd	220	66
Early Childhood Education	MS/MEd	65	82
Educational Administration	MS/MEd	187	90
Educational Technology	MS/MEd	61	28
Elementary Education	Med/MS	227	82
Health, Kinesiology & Sports Studies	MS/MEd	38	7
Higher Education	MS	26	6
Psychology	MA/MS	51	7
Reading	MA/MS/MEd	52	19
Secondary Education	MS/MEd	110	2
Social Work	MSW	138	69
Special Education	MA/MS/MEd	61	29
Training and Development	MS	25	20

Master's Programs (College of Business & Technology)

PROGRAMS	DEGREE	FALL ENROLLMENT 2009	GRADUATES 2009-10
Accounting	MS	N/A	N/A
Business Administration	MBA	885	217
Economics	MS	5	0
Finance	MSF	38	16
Management	MS	19	77
Marketing	MS	61	8
Technology Management	MS	93	23

Why Evaluate Graduate Programs?

- Provides valuable information about the quality of each academic program
- Provides information about the program's effectiveness in supporting the University's mission
- Provides information about the appropriateness of the programs to meet the needs of external stakeholders
- Provides reliable information for assessing areas of strengths and weaknesses of the program
- Assists in the development of strategies to continuously improve the program

Why Evaluate Graduate Programs?

- Provides measurable criteria to assess the progress of programs in meeting established goals
- Provides meaningful comparisons with discipline-specific standards, peer institutions, and related departments within the university
- Provides baseline data for the department and University to make well-informed decisions for program improvement and budget considerations

The Review Process

- Program review guidelines
 - Clear guidelines and instructions with appropriate deadlines
 - Published schedule of periodic review of all programs
 - Development of format for self-study review document
 - Relevant documents about the review process should be readily available to departments
 - Get buy-in from university administrators
- Self-study document
 - Departmental and peer institution data gathered by Institutional research, grad school, and department
 - Self-study document written by department and approved by graduate school

The Review Process

- Reviewer committee (two external & one internal)
 - Department recommends potential reviewers
 - Recommendations are discussed with college dean and provost
 - Decision on the makeup of review team made by graduate dean
 - Review team receives self-study document prior to site visit
- Site visit
 - Typically two-day visit
 - Discussions with provost, college dean, graduate dean, department head, faculty members, graduate students and others as needed
 - Review team prepares report

The Review Process (Cont'd)

- Findings and recommendations
 - Review team reports to provost, graduate dean, college dean, department head on the outcome of review
- Action plan
 - Department prepares a plan to address recommendations and findings of program review
- A one-year follow up
 - Follow up carried out with provost, dean, and graduate dean
 - Closing-the-loop assessment plan is discussed
- 5-year program review cycle
 - Includes program enhancements based on previous review process
 - Must demonstrate the integration of previous information into program enhancement

The Self-study Document

- Mission Statement
 - Each program should have a clear purpose statement that is linked to mission of the institution

- Purpose of Program
 - A clear purpose and benefit of the program to the discipline and field

- Changes since the last review
 - Changes that have occurred from a previous program review
 - Program enhancements that have resulted as a result of previous program reviews

The Self-study Document (Cont'd)

- Curriculum & Program Profile
 - Enrollment data and trends
 - Semester credit hour production
 - Courses offered and enrollment in each course
- Degrees awarded
 - Number of degrees awarded per year
- Graduation rates
 - Measured as a six-year cohort

The Self-study Document (Cont'd)

- Average time to Degree
 - Typically averages around 2.5 years with the completion of 30 or 36 SCH depending on program
- Admission Criteria
 - Admission standards and acceptance/matriculation rate
- Financial support of students
 - Support for students (GAR, GAT, GANT), scholarships, etc.
 - Major scholarships and awards

The Self-study Document (Cont'd)

- Core faculty
 - Number of core faculty
 - Rank and distribution of faculty
 - Student-to-core faculty ratio
 - Diversity of faculty
 - Teaching load
 - Method of core faculty evaluation
- Research and Creative Activities
 - Number of discipline-related peer-reviewed publications, juried creative/performance accomplishments, books, book chapters, patents, etc.
 - Source and amount of external funding for scholarly activities

The Self-study Document (Cont'd)

- Graduate Students
 - Percentage of full-time students in program
 - Diversity of student population in program (ethnicity & gender)
 - Number of discipline-related refereed papers/publications, juried creative/performance accomplishments, book chapters, books, and external presentations by graduate students
 - Placement of graduates (first major job after graduation)

Student Learning Outcome

- Students should demonstrate professional and attitudinal skills in the discipline.
 - Oral and written communication skills
 - Knowledge of discipline
 - Critical and reflective thinking skills
 - Ability to apply theoretical training to practice
 - Ability to conduct research
 - Ability to teach

Assessment of Learning Outcome

- Aspects to consider in an assessment plan:
 - It should be a meaningful process
 - It takes time to carry out a complete assessment plan
 - It should contain measurable and observable assessments
 - It should not necessarily be designed to address all issues, but to improve the program
 - It should first address issues where there are modest expectations

Enhancement of Program

- Enhancement Plan
 - Demonstrate how learning outcome assessments have been used to enhance student learning in the program, i.e., change structure and timeframe for qualifying exams.
 - Demonstrate how the results of faculty evaluation are used to improve teaching effectiveness.

Action Plan

- Important aspects of a good action plan
 - Should address areas of concern and/or emerging new directions for the program identified through this program review
 - Should be written in the form of objectives to be achieved with clear timelines for their achievements, as well as responsible parties
 - May extend over several years
 - Should be evaluated at least yearly

Examples of Program Reviews Outcomes

- English Department restructured to more effectively maximize from existing resources
- Biological Sciences received added faculty lines
- Department of Physics was combined with Astronomy to form a new department, Department of Physics & Astronomy
- Chemistry decided on different recruiting strategies to increase its graduate enrollment
- Agricultural Sciences program was forced to be more focused

Conclusions

- Program review can assist in the departmental planning and evaluation process, i.e., curriculum, student learning, instruction, fiscal resources and mission/purpose.
- Program review should demonstrate how previous evaluations have lead to greater effectiveness within the program
- Areas of strengths and concerns/weaknesses of the program that impact its effectiveness are identified through program review

Conclusions

- Through program review, recommendations for the improvement of the program are gained
- For the process to be meaningful, must build into the review process an accountability mechanism
- The process must include a closing-the-loop assessment plan to indicate what performance measures were not met and what corrective actions are being taken
- The process is manageable, but must work collaboratively with various units of the university