

Cornell College
Departmental / Program Assessment Project
Year Three Progress Report

Department / Program:	Career Engagement Center
Person Submitting this Form:	RJ Holmes-Leopold
Date:	May 23, 2013

Brief Overview of the Assessment Project: (refer to original Assessment Project Outline)

- *Outcomes you assessed.*
- *Questions your project attempted to answer.*
- *Methods used to gather and analyze evidence.*

We focused our Assessment Project on the CEC's Goal 2, Outcome C: "Students will articulate the ways in which the experience has or has not advanced their knowledge about their field of interest." We originally had four assessment questions with the intention that we would do a cross-program analysis of activities (e.g., Cornell Fellows, Road Trips, Career Toolkit workshops) to better understand what programs offered by the CEC contributed to the outcome best and how they did so. The four questions were: 1) Which experiential learning activities offered by the CEC successfully contribute most to the achieving the outcome?; 2) What, specifically, about experiential learning activities help a student gather the information needed to advance their knowledge, or lack thereof, about a field of interest?; 3) How and using what methods do students use to articulate knowledge gained from participating in an experiential learning activity?; and 4) Following the experience, what, if anything, are students doing with knowledge gained from an experiential learning activity as it relates to their career development?

After reviewing the data we had collected for the aforementioned programs through post-experience reports or evaluations, we decided to narrow the scope of our project. We had a very small number of responses to our post-event evaluation forms for the Road Trips and Career Toolkit workshops which we felt wasn't sufficient enough to identify patterns for the assessment project so we chose to focus our efforts on solely the Cornell Fellows Program. As part of the Cornell Fellows process, each student is responsible for drafting a three to five page reflection summarizing where their Cornell Fellowship was, what they did as part of the experience, what they learned from the experience, and how the Cornell Fellowship experience has influenced their academic and professional plans. In the 2011-2012 year, we had 34 students complete Cornell Fellowships and the reports were used to look at the CEC outcome with a particular focus on assessment question two.

Involvement:

- *Who has been involved in this project?*
- *How well informed and involved are members of the department/office?*

All three CEC team members were involved in some part of the data collection and review process. Megan Hicks was responsible for collecting the Cornell Fellows post-fellowship reports following the conclusion of the fellowship. Each staff member was assigned a group of reports to review and identify selected quotations from the reports that could help us develop answers to the assessment question. After reviewing the reports, we had 304 individual pieces of data that were then sorted into themes and categories by the group.

Results:

Please outline in detail what you learned through your data analysis / interpretation.

See separate document summarizing main categories (interpersonal interactions, influential surroundings, and active learning) with supporting themes.

Decisions:

Please detail the decisions made as a result of the interpretations / conclusions drawn from the assessment project.

We will review how we structure several documents used during and after the Cornell Fellowship experience. Doing so will allow us to ask more intentional questions about how a Cornell Fellow's interactions with people and their environments influence their perceptions of what they are learning as part of the fellowship experience.

Documentation:

Please explain how your assessment work is being documented. Please be sure to address where the raw data is stored, what reports (including meeting minutes) exist, and where all relevant documents are located.

The data is stored in an Excel spreadsheet in the CEC Assessment folder. Each data point has associated with it the name and page number of the Cornell Fellows report where quotation came from, the staff member who pulled the quotation, as well as the theme area, and the focus area associated with the assessment project.

Year Four – Implementation of Change:

The goal of the fourth year of the assessment cycle is to implement decisions made as a result of the interpretations/conclusions drawn from the assessment project. What are your plans for the coming year? Please be sure to address:

- Plans for sharing results and decisions as well as for celebrating noteworthy results.
- Plans for implementing change(s).
- Plans for evaluating implementation progress and impact of the changes.

Sharing Information:

- Updating Cornell Fellows website to publicly document the outcomes of the assessment project and how the Fellows experience contributes to the career development process for students
- Referring to the documented outcomes as part of the Cornell Fellows recruitment process to inform students and faculty about benefits of participating in Cornell Fellows
- Summarizing information on the value of the Cornell Fellows experience to assist in fundraising efforts for the program
- Discussing outcomes as part of the Cornell Fellows Showcase to reinforce what Cornell Fellows offers to students

Plans for implementation:

- Review and revised Cornell Fellows documents (summer 2013)
- Synthesize findings for marketing purposes (summer 2013)

Evaluation of the Assessment Project:

Please provide an overview of the quality of the assessment project. What worked well? What changes would you recommend for the future?

The project gave us an opportunity to look more closely at what, specifically, contributed to a student's career development during a Cornell Fellowship experience. Identifying patterns across the 34 Fellows was something that we had not done before and the assessment project allowed us the chance to dig deeper into the experience for students.

Looking back at our original assessment project, we had an ambitious agenda that wasn't realistic for what the CEC had time and resources to do. Narrowing our focus down to one specific program made the project much more do-able.

Challenges:

What challenges has your department/office encountered to date with your assessment project?

We had the assessment project on the schedule for a couple of our team retreats earlier in the academic year, but never got to that item because other things seemed more important to cover at the time. Ultimately, we ended up setting up a different time after our end of year retreat to talk about what the project entailed and then allotted some focused time for us to sort through all the data to come up with the focus areas and themes.

Additional Information:

Feel free to add additional comments or supporting documents to this report.

I wish our whole assessment group B would have met once or twice during the year to share how things were going. Maybe hearing that other people were moving forward with their projects during the year would have spurred us to get started sooner.

Upon completion, please submit the report to Becki Elkins, Box 2628.



June 7, 2013

Your Signature

Date

Department Chair Signature

Date