Student Life Studies
Client Focus Groups
Summer 2016

Background

According to its website (http://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/about), Student Life Studies "provides leadership in assessment and planning to the Division of Student Affairs and to student organizations, maximizing program effectiveness and emphasizing student learning." Furthermore, the vision of the department is to "create a Student Affairs culture that values meaningful assessment, uses results to guide improvement, and articulates contributions to student success." One goal for Student Life Studies is to provide quality assessment services to facilitate client planning and decision-making. To measure this goal and associated outcomes, the department conducted focus groups with clients to understand the effectiveness and quality of the services offered. Focus groups are conducted approximately every three years, with the first focus groups being completed in summer 2009.

Student Life Studies coordinated focus groups with department clients in July 2016 to learn about clients' experiences working with the department. Data collected will be used by Student Life Studies staff to improve services offered by the department and education provided for staff in the Division of Student Affairs.

Method and Sample

The focus group protocol and questions were designed by Student Life Studies staff; however, all four focus groups were facilitated by staff outside of the department. Two focus groups were scheduled on July 14, 2016 and were facilitated by Cynthia Olvera, from Student Activities, and Stefanie Baker, from the Offices of the Dean of Student Life. The remaining two focus groups were on July 19 and were conducted by Krista Bailey, from the Offices of the Dean of Student Life, and Meredith Simpson, from the Corps of Cadets. All facilitators were trained in group facilitation through the Technology of Participation (ToPs) Facilitator training. Additionally, all focus groups were digitally recorded and then transcribed by student assistants.

Forty-six staff members were solicited to participate in one of the focus groups through email calendar invitations. Those invited were identified as staff members who had used the department's services in the past one or two years. Twenty-seven staff members accepted their invitation, and 25 actually attended.

Data was analyzed in a formal content analysis conducted by all five full-time, permanent Student Life Studies staff members. This report presents the qualitative themes developed from the analysis. The complete interview transcripts can be found in separate documents.

Results

Results will be reported as themes and the number of responses for each question asked in the protocol. Additionally, participant comments are included for some themes. Some comments were edited to clarify, shorten, or remove identifiable information. Questions during the focus groups concentrated on services provided by Student Life Studies, experience working with the department, climate of sharing and using assessment results for departments/units, and assessment challenges Student Life Studies could address.

Service Utilization
The first question asked participants how they had utilized the services of Student Life Studies. Most talked about different aspects of their assessments. One participant expressed appreciation that the staff in Student Life Studies is visible in the division and volunteers regularly.

- Assistance with my assessment needs:
    - Student learning outcomes assessments (12 responses)
    - Program evaluations (9 responses)
    - Satisfaction surveys (8 responses)
    - General surveys (6 responses)
    - Focus groups (5 responses)
    - Analyzing data (3 responses)
    - Organizational assessments (2 responses)
    - Reports (2 responses)
- Consulting on topics such as assessment methods or assessment plans/strategic planning (7 responses)
- Sharing assessment results from the Student Engagement in the Research University (SERU) (2 responses)
- Training (1 response)

Beneficial Services
Participants were asked about the services from Student Life Studies that were most beneficial. The staff's knowledge, assistance with different aspects of assessment projects, and the staff's attitude were considered most beneficial.

- Expertise with consulting and simplifying the process (11 responses)
    - *"I would say for us, definitely the consulting piece and the advice, of just that conversation of saying, okay we are thinking about this, how do we want to do that, or is it even worth it, or do we think we are going to use it. So it is a little of the brainstorming processing that has been most helpful for us."*
- Assessment preparation, such as wording, asking questions, and understanding programs (9 responses)
    - *"So being challenged in what you really want from this data, but also the challenging piece of what do you really want to know and what do you really not need to know that's not important to your program at this moment."*
- Reports (8 responses)
    - *"…the depth I feel like of their reporting. It's always very, very thorough, and so I feel like I appreciate that and just like the formatting. …very appreciative to have those results so clearly laid out and all the information is really helpful."*
- Staff attitude such as staff energy and enthusiasm, being a partner, the structure the department and having a contact person, and creating an environment to build a culture of assessment (8 responses)
    - *"The door is always open. There's no obstacle in that place, and that is the environment that they set."*
    - *"They're always very willing to step in and participate and partner with you, it's not like they want to remain detached. I mean the cooperation and the sense that they're in it with you is phenomenal."*
- Training for WEAVEonline, assessment series, supervisors, and Assessment Boot Camp (6 responses)
- Analysis (5 responses)

- Division/campus knowledge including understanding priorities and communicating outward (5 responses)
  - *"But on a larger scale I think this office helps the rest of the university in understanding the importance of student affairs and demonstrated with numbers. I feel sometimes that we are under attack because in streamlining resources, finances, and personalities, there is a sense that only academic matters without realizing how important being able to demonstrate to people who only think in numbers and in figures how we are vital to the institution, and we contribute to everything, to retention, to better citizenship, to more effective professional practices, etc. So in that sense I think it's so important."*
- Using results (2 responses)
  - *"I can use those to improve the program or improve the tool we are using or the way I am asking the questions, so that's also helpful."*
- Methods such as surveys and focus groups (2 responses)
- Implementation (1 response)

Satisfaction with Services
When asked about their level of satisfaction with the services from Student Life Studies, participants were generally very positive. Some reported being satisfied in general and others talked about specific aspects with which they were satisfied. One participant reported being satisfied with the department; however, also discussed that he/she views a project as ongoing, but that Student Life Studies considers it as an individual project each semester, and that she needs to remember to complete the return form each semester.

- Satisfied, many expressed appreciation and were grateful for the services (15 responses)
- Value for the department and services offered (5 responses)
  - *"[If] assessments were something personally from our office that we had to do totally on our own from start to finish, [I] don't know how much of that would get done. It's important but when it comes down to what we do, it would be kind of the last thing on the list of things to get done so it's certainly a great help and it helps us improve our program."*
  - *"I think that it's really great to be able to have an area that are the experts and …it's good to have that resource that they provide. I don't know what we would do without them to have some of that support, and the analysis, and reports, and all those different things to be able to improve our programs, but then to be able to have the evidence to be advocates for resources for things that we need."*
- Responsive or timeliness (4 responses)
  - *"They're also very aware of their timeline… because I know there was a time that they couldn't meet their expected [time]. I didn't notice it was gone very long at all. …[T]hey were very good about anticipating that and communicating 'I don't think I'm going to get that in time.'"*
- Communication (4 responses)
  - *"They were great about communicating that, but I think even like you were talking about they're also great when 'hey these results aren't gonna be good.'"*
- Relationship/partnership (4 responses)
  - *"[They] do it really effectively to be able to support you so that you realize it's a partnership the whole way, and because it's fueled by trust and you trust that … they'll be able to find some direction for you to go, there's almost no bad outcome. Knowing that you have that as a foundation, before you even set foot into their office."*
- Trainings (3 responses)
  - *"… I thought that the boot camp was the best thing on God's green earth, finally it started to click in terms of actually doing some developmental stuff with our students and especially our tutors and not treating them like student workers and you just go out and do your job and come back."*

- Customer Service (2 responses)
  - *"Whatever it is and that was above it like above and beyond what you're expecting in customer service. I think they just have really, really high standards for themselves, and they hold themselves accountable to that."*
- Unaware of the scope of services (1 response)

Frustrations or Challenges

Alternatively, participants were asked about what was frustrating or challenging when working with Student Life Studies. There were several responses about being over surveyed and wanting Student Life Studies to manage the number of surveys that are happening. Additionally, there was frustration in working with WEAVEonline, and specifically how the feedback to departments from Student Life Studies is packaged.

- Over assessment including having too many surveys and getting email reminders (21 responses)
  - *"Maybe whenever somebody is coming to ask them for support to provide a survey, have they ever said no? Because they answer always yes, which I get the arguments to both sides, but seemingly as a third party, it seems like the answer is no, they've not ever said no."*
  - *"Not everything needs to be assessed. I think if we focused and assessed better on fewer things, we'd be better off."*
- WEAVEonline, such as understanding the purpose, getting feedback that feels like a grade, offering training or big picture for new staff, academic vs. practical language (15 responses)
  - *"In order to put it in the right vernacular or language it becomes less useful for what we want or need in our particular department, so again, there's got to be a better way to do this where all of us aren't expending hundreds of man hours every year on something that were not getting anything [from]."*
  - *"WEAVE continues to be a frustration. Sometimes I feel like it's my homework getting graded, and they're neck deep in it, they understand it, they work with it, they're very good at it. I don't have the time and the resources to go to the level they would like us to go to so we don't always meet in the middle. I think the design of WEAVE is a tail waggin' a dog, just the process its painful and what we get out of it is not worth the time we spend on it."*
- Communication (5 responses)
  - *"I think for us it's just so much data, and I feel like a broken record but it's just so much. We wrap up the assessment in September and we don't get it until November. Trying to take that and put it in a briefing and paring it down so [others] are willing to read it is a challenge that we have. So really trying to sort data and try to provide that to specific people just takes a really long time. So that is a challenge. I think kind of what you were talking about is that getting the assessment set up actually takes longer than I expect it to and I've done it for five years in a row so maybe that's partially my fault and I need to start earlier but it always takes a little longer than I expect it to. So I think maybe that can be helpful is if we were told its going to take us six weeks from the point that you get it started until you get it, you know being able to work backwards."*
  - *"I'd say while the in person consulting is good I think, you know there are a lot of times when we're busy and we're working through email communication. I think that is where a lot of times things will get lost in terms of keeping the assessment process moving to create the assessment or even the follow-up from it or even when to get results and getting them when we needed them by. So I think while the in person has been very helpful, I think that I would want to same thing on the flip side. The email game is not always the best method sometimes, but I think that is kind of the hand we're dealt, especially when we have to make the best and be the most efficient with the resources we have."*
- Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) being such a large task (5 responses)
- No frustrations with Student Life Studies (3 responses)
- Frustration with the reporting system including WEAVEonline, annual reports, CPR, etc. (2 responses)

- Being too directive with students or not as developmental (1 response)
- Sense Student Life Studies frustration with not filling a vacant position (1 response)
- Not being directive or telling staff what they should do (1 response)
  - *"I think the only challenge, and I wouldn't describe it as frustrating or challenging, we were trying to decide if we were going to do a survey of a certain kind this year and it's a survey that we do every other year, but because of certain circumstances we kind of said 'are we really going to gain anything in doing it at the present time' and so I think we were looking for a direct answer of them to say 'hey yes or no'... I don't necessarily blame them for saying 'hey, no, you're the customer it's really up to you.' But we kind of wanted ...someone to push us one way or another. We ended up not doing it because we didn't feel like we were really gonna get anything out of it, which is hopefully why you're doing it, and we put it off another year so I'm not really sure what my recommendations would be like as far as how it could have been done differently."*

Satisfaction with Timeliness

Participants were asked about their satisfaction level specifically with the timeliness when working with Student Life Studies. Generally, participants felt that Student Life Studies set reasonable time frames, communicated time frames with clients, and prioritized projects. There were some suggestions for increasing the communication with department staff and when a project would be completed.

- Reasonable time frames are developed (7 responses)
  - *"I will say it may be helpful to actually maybe know, so I recognize you're very busy right now, does that mean two months? Like maybe but some type of an actual time to wait, because there are some times when I just know it'll be awhile, I don't know what awhile means."*
  - *"And to add to that I'm never, even with them being a little slow on some things, they've never not known where it was at in the process, it's never been like 'well I don't know let me go check and see.' It's always like 'this is where we're at, this is what we have left, and this is when you can expect to have it.'"*
- Communication or quick response time (5 responses)
  - *"They're very fast at responding to emails, whether it's your initial email, the initial contact of 'hey I'm needing to asses x, y, or z, what's the best way of doing that' or whether it's a question as you're going through the process. I mean they always get ... right back to you ...."*
- Prioritizing with reports and other deadlines (4 responses)
  - *"I think they do a good job of prioritizing that as needed with that large volume that they get."*
- Satisfied (4 responses)
- WEAVEonline such as things not being lined up, tracking, and providing feedback (3 responses)
- Deadlines such as meeting clients' deadlines or being able to do a last minute turnaround time (3 responses)
  - *"I've never had a problem with a deadline, ... if I were to say..., 'I have this report that I need to turn this information in to someone and this is when I need to turn it in, can I have a report by this date,' then they say 'sure,' and I get it."*
- Use of results and that Student Life Studies asks how information will be used (2 responses)
- Methods (2 responses)
- Forms can be time consuming (2 responses)
- Improved (1 response)
  - *"I think it has improved since I got here. I know when I first got here it took them some months to get through the data and it was like well now it's kind of late because we've already started the process for the next year. But I have seen that that is something that they have actively been trying to improve on. But I think just with the number of people in the office compare to the number of programs in offices to be assessed, I get it but they have gotten better."*

- Guidance and meeting with people (1 response)
- Challenge (1 response)

Sharing Assessment Results

The next question shifted direction and asked participants about the process for sharing assessment results within their department. Many talked about who they share information with, as well as methods used for sharing information. One facilitator noted that it seemed the smaller departments represented at the focus group shared information more widely with one another; however, the larger departments represented at that focus group shared it more widely externally, rather than internally.

- Limited sharing to specific target audience, supervisor, Board of Directors, etc. or increased sharing and trying to do more (11 responses)
    - *"We don't really share within the department, maybe staff meeting and just in general it was a great program, but not in terms of the actual value or learning outcomes and all that stuff. I think if anything that's with the supervisor, and one-on-one meetings."*
- Stakeholders and students (10 responses)
    - *"I would say our department may not be the best at internally educating others about the outcomes of their results. It may also be because many of our surveys are student organization focused, and because each student organization is kind of its own little microcosm, so information will typically just be generated right back to the our students, so our student leaders, or the student audience that they provide for or they work together with."*
- Staff meeting (10 responses)
    - *"We do or have been presenting at department meetings to give assessment updates, to kind of highlight one of our programs or areas or things that we were working on."*
- WEAVEonline or annual reports (8 responses)
    - *"Our department has two people that are over assessment for the department, and so they will tell us what we are focusing on for the year and individual units know that, and make sure you're doing it. Then we will make sure that we do it and submit our results and reports, and things as a part of our unit to them and then they'll do what they need to do and put it into WEAVE."*
- Electronic methods such as websites, email messages, and on shared drives (5 responses)
    - *"And more so, the commentary on what participants got from that experience and then recently, like [program name], put some of that commentary on their website to help in recruitment of delegates."*
- Using results (5 responses)
    - *"I will say one thing that my students are pretty consistent about taking that survey results from the previous year's conference, reading that, and then doing their goal setting that is more information driven in that process, and that's been incredibly valuable."*
- Sharing depends on the project or who is asking for it (4 responses)
- Do not share with others, especially if it seems the project does not apply to others (3 responses)
    - *"I would say 9/10 that information won't get generated back to the general department. Often times their organization functions almost like its own little department."*
- Presentations including conferences and budget funding requests (2 responses)
    - *"The other piece where we share the assessment data again not really like broadly is in some of our annual budget presentations. In making and utilizing that information in order to request more funding or maintain the funding that we have. We're showing that these are programs and this is the assessment or the data that we have on it and it's great. We need more money, here's why…."*
- I don't know (1 response)

Using Assessment Results

Participants were then asked about how they used assessment results for planning and decision making. It seemed that assessment results were used to make programmatic changes, to inform planning practices for future programs, trainings, and experiences, to build relationships, such as with donors, to tell the story or why a program is important, and to share data with others.

- Planning, such as retreats, efficiencies, speakers, facilities, services, trends/growth, and strategic planning (16 responses)
    - *"We just finished a two-day retreat that our office took and so we looked at all of our assessment data and really tried to create more of a strategic plan, but I think that that's overall for our office. We do the same thing with each of our student organizations, that when they get their feedback, let's already institute what it is that we need to do differently next year, or do the same, and really help them walk through that to create more of a strategic intentionality."*
    - *"I think the data provides some nice... ideas like the comments that people put in....We talk about it during a planning retreat and try it out [on a smaller scale] and if it works, then we will do it [on a larger scale]. I think with the guidance from Student Life Studies they have helped us ask questions and do things so that we have enough information to have an informed decision making as opposed to blindly roaming off into no-man's land."*
- Communication including marketing, policies, signage, recruitment, justification or validation of contributions (15 responses)
    - *"I think it paints, this office gives you the lines and the stories give you the colors of the who story, so the stories are difficult to capture."*
    - *"That's the value that Student Life Studies, too. If you want to call it justify our existence but we have to do it at the strategic level with the data, and think at that level rather than all little surveys at the tactical level, some of what you were talking about thinking at the macro, so I think that would help us do what you're, what we need to do, you're exactly right, maybe come at it from a different angle though. Why this is the smart thing to do."*
- Learning outcomes, especially related to student employees (13 responses)
    - *"But I think it's all in the question of the language, you, I think you can help them see how working in your office has given the meta skills that they may not be thinking about. You're thinking all they need to do is to do a website, or to collect data, or answer the phone, but there is the meta skills they're getting, responsibility, punctuality, customer service, but I know an opportunity to practice it and to get paid. And to demonstrate them you have experience in the real world, you're working."*
- Process changing such as operational changes, hours, training, committee structure, or changes for programs and services (10 responses)
    - *"Maybe it's a change to operations and how we do something.... [You] sort through what are the people who are just complaining about stuff or they don't like this, but realistically there's nothing we can do about that, or is it something that you really need to take in and you know change operations or policy or the way that you do things."*
    - *"We can also use it from the aspect of [organization name], potential or particular issues with officers of how we can use training as well as increased supervision to make those adjustments."*
    - *"And I will echo that for us, we use the qualitative data a lot and when I first started I used that information to make several changes within the structure of the organization so it was very, very helpful."*
- Changing an assessment including additional assessments or a follow-up, method for assessing, or questions not to ask in the future (5 responses)
    - *"... with the assistance of Student Life Studies, [we] really focus on if we aren't going to do anything with the data and we aren't going to make changes with it, then don't ask the question."*

- Internal validation or self affirmation of all that one does (3 responses)
  - *"Self-confirmation, because sometimes it feels like you do things all day long and what really, what have I accomplished, and when you put all the people that you have interacted with together, when you put all programs you have and you see it in the thousands, then you say, yes I do something. And so that self-affirmation that I think is very important. It gives meaning to our jobs, and our offices."*
- Professional judgment is used rather than assessment (1 response)

Assessment Challenges

The final structured question of the focus group asked participants about their primary assessment challenges that they faced and that Student Life Studies could address. There were several themes discussed in the focus group. Some comments were about clients' frustration with assessment, such as getting low response rates or keeping assessment manageable. There were discussions about how Student Life Studies might assist in addressing these and other concerns.

- Increase response rate by educating the population about taking surveys and provide feedback to clients (10 responses)
  - *"I do like that they'll check on it. You know after they send out something, it they're gonna send it out, they'll say we've gotten this many responses so far, that's this percentage. We can send out another reminder, we can keep it open. They kind of talk to you about what your options are at that point so you can decide like how to move forward from that. Or it's like we should go ahead and just close it because it seems like nobody's really gonna participate in whatever, or whatever."*
- Directive such as what they could do, priority from top down, and involving directors (9 responses)
  - *"I think the process has been bottom up for assessment, we are all from different departments we get the email from Student Life Studies that says, tell us what you want to assess in the next year, and it goes up that way. As we think more strategically, and do some other things, I want to be careful I don't [come] off the wrong way, but maybe Dr. Pugh and the AVP's, what is their priority for assessment, and how does that get driven or fed top down to complement what we are doing, or help direct what we're doing."*
  - *"So it sounds like there is some thoughts here that due to Student Life Studies' responsibility in managing the assessment for the division, they may be in a position where they could help the Vice President's Office understand that departments would really appreciate some additional direction on where things are headed, priorities, those types of things, and then facilitate that down through their support of assessments that are happening throughout the different departments." (summary from the facilitator)*
  - *"So some assistance in helping to ensure assessment efforts are strategic and are aligned with a bigger picture, but they don't do that at the expense of not providing services, just thinking about how are you providing those services, are you also helping units to be strategic about their efforts." (summary from the facilitator)*
- Manageable assessment and connecting assessment plans (9 responses)
  - *"… we have to be more efficient with this. We're always gonna be short staffed, that's a given and there's other things that are gonna continue as more gets put on our collective plates, something has to come off somewhere. I mean get more staff at it or if that's not gonna happen you have to be more efficient and do more with less. And I think there's room to do more with less in the assessment world tied to annual plans, strategic plans, WEAVE, CPR's etc. That's gotta be packaged more efficiently. Summary from the facilitator: "And as I hear you say that through our conversation, I interpret that as we'd like to see Student Life Studies take an active role in being a leader and streamlining that for the division." Follow-up comment from participant: "I call it blocking and tackling."*

- Methods or share new ways to assess programs, especially free-flowing events (7 responses)
  - *"So I think one of the things that I struggle with lot of us do surveys because that is what we're comfortable with and what we understand. And Student Life Studies does have education pieces in those workshops and that sort of thing ...there are all these resources online that they direct us to and show us how to use a rubric and that stuff in classes. But I think some of use need more hands on. I can go and look at the resources online and I got what you told me in this class but I still can't quite make the connection between this and my program that I want to use something other than a survey but I'm not quite sure how to tailor surveys and do some of that."*
- Documentation (4 responses)
  - *"They happen to have the record, the knowledge, the stories that many of us wouldn't end up having just because of turnover."*
- Assessment for assessment's sake (3 responses)
  - *"I don't know how to get our staff as a whole in our division out of that idea of okay well this is required so we have to do this so just do a yes or no survey quick thing. No ask the real question if you're going to prioritize it in some way. I think that is what I am getting at. Well you're a HIP [High Impact Practice] so you have to do this assessment, well I'm not going to become HIP in anything else if I have to do this because I know what that means. We need to change the mindset."*
- Customized training with departments and student organizations (3 responses)
- Meeting to discuss results (2 responses)
  - *"Maybe a follow-up after the reports are given to you maybe a follow-up conversation where they could ask those questions and you could ask those questions back and say well what I'd really like to know based on your comments are x. Just a follow-up, it could just be five minutes or an actual meeting."*
- Tracking retention and persistence rates and inclusion data (2 responses)
- Student learning (1 response)
- Presentation of results beyond reports (1 response)
- WEAVEonline (1 response)

Other Comments
Each focus group ended by offering participants the opportunity to ask any questions or provide any final comments. Many expressed satisfaction with aspects of the department. Additionally, there were a couple suggestions provided for Student Life Studies to consider.

- Satisfied with resources, office energy, and making it easy (6 responses)
- Suggestions related to the website, repository, marketing, and Qualtrics training (2 responses)
  - *"And something else that wasn't asked is I actually use a lot of resources that are online that they have. And I think they are trying to improve their website but a lot of division websites are older and outdated. But if that is a means of improvement maybe to make it a little more accessible. Because I will take the time, I'm like I know this resource is on the website, now where is it, and I have to literally search through every page to find it again. So a way to make it repository of all those documents would be easier."*
- More staff to fill all positions (1 response)
- Change process or services (1 response)
- Division orientation to tell the division story or the big picture (1 response)
- Keep current services and not cut off departments (3 responses)

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Action Plans

Generally, focus group participants were positive about their experience with Student Life Studies. Most staff utilized Student Life Studies for assessment expertise and consultation. Additionally, several participants expressed appreciation for what Student Life Studies contributes to their programs or services.

From the Division Needs Assessment that was administered in summer 2015, Student Life Studies staff focused effort over the last year on helping departments share assessment results and use their assessment results to make changes or improvements. In the focus groups participants were asked about how their departments share and use their results to see if there were more positive comments or indication that this was happening throughout the division. Participants could list several ways either they personally or their department use results in their planning, communication, working with students, and various changes being made. Additionally, participants reported many ways information is shared in their department, with specific audiences, with students, and various electronic methods.

Several participants expressed appreciation for the assessment training workshops and Assessment Boot Camp that Student Life Studies hosted over the year. Student Life Studies is encouraged to continue offering training workshops for division staff. Additionally, the department is encouraged to consider planning workshops on different assessment methods, besides surveys, that staff could do and still measure student learning or other intended outcomes. Furthermore, some participants reported going to the Student Life Studies website for resources and information. The department is also encouraged to update the website to make it easier to find information, add more online resources, and look at options for the search feature on assessment reports.

Student Life Studies might reiterate with clients that we are available to schedule a meeting after assessment projects are completed to share the results and cover some of the highlights. Through this discussion, staff could provide ideas for different stakeholders and ways to share information with each type of stakeholder. Student Life Studies could also talk with clients about options to use the assessment results.

Many focus group participants saw Student Life Studies as knowledgeable about the division and campus assessment efforts. However, participants also discussed the department's role in communicating more about the vision for the Division of Student Affairs assessment priorities. Student Life Studies should continue working with the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs to understand their assessment priorities and then communicate those to departments through the Assessment Team and as it relates to topics for the assessment training series.

One frustration that was mentioned a couple of times was related to clients not always knowing how long it will take to complete a certain aspect of the assessment project. Student Life Studies should look at options to communicate with clients more specifically about the timeline of their project or consider creating a form to set the timeline or deadlines with the client.

Furthermore, there were a few comments about participants being unaware of services offered by Student Life Studies. The department may want to create a marketing plan for communicating with division staff what is offered and how Student Life Studies can help departments. This could include enhancing information on the website, sharing information on the department's Facebook account, offering recommendations in reports for completed assessment projects, and sharing resources or services with clients in one-on-one meetings.

Student Life Studies is encouraged to share the results from the focus group with various stakeholders including the participants and facilitators for the four focus groups, the Assessment Team, all Student Life Studies staff (including student assistants and Graduate Assistants), and the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

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Report prepared on: September 12, 2016