

Evaluation, Assessment, & Performance Reviews

You have probably heard the words sprinkled across campus—"assessment," "evaluation," and "performance review." And, you might hear a slight *groan* after any of these terms are uttered. Why the bad reputation for these invaluable tools? Some people fear them, some are frustrated by them, and some just don't want to go there! But this sheet is sure to take the fear, frustration, and avoidance out and help you understand and value what is gleaned from intentional feedback.

What's the Difference?

For many, the difference between assessment and evaluation is blurry. However, a difference does exist.

Evaluation is truly about exploring the strengths and weaknesses of something—a program, service, presentation, etc. Once you know what is working and not working you can make a decision on how to proceed.

Assessment is an ongoing process that is broader in nature in that it appraises what is known and understood following an experience.

Quick and Simple Feedback

Assessment and evaluation need not be formal. You can get some quick and simple feedback with these two exercises:

- **Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down**—To get a quick pulse of the group, ask participants to go around and just share where they are at with a topic by providing a thumb up for GREAT, thumb down for NOT SO GREAT, and a thumb to the side for MEDIOCRE.



- **"Quality" Questions**—Ask participants to answer prepared questions that focus on a topic where you are seeking feedback.

Take some time
to keep in Mind ...

...student needs and wants. Instead of just sponsoring events that sound good to you, assess

what's important to students. Take an informal poll when talking with them. Put together a brief online survey at www.surveymonkey.com. Ask students to fill out a list of topics at a table set up outside the dining hall or during another event. Then you'll know how to focus your efforts.

MUSTS in Creating a Program Evaluation

- Name of Program
- Date
- Participant information—year in school, gender, major, etc.
- No more than 10 brief questions—preferably in the form of "yes or no" or ranking
- Space for additional comments

Types of Assessments

- **Needs Assessment**—What are the needs of your audience, members, etc.?
- **Outcomes Assessment**—What did participants learn, gain, take away, etc.?
- **Financial Assessment**—What is the cost effectiveness of your programs, activities, and services?
- **Satisfaction Assessment**—Are participants satisfied with their experience or service? Why or why not?
- **Organizational Assessment**—What are the traditions, mission, vision, and roles within the organization? How are they currently functioning?