**Assessment Plan for Advising**

**Fall 2012**

Eight FTS sections were selected for advising assessment. Four are part of a pilot program partnering FTS classes with a Gustie Greeter for the semester. The other four were selected to provide a control group; compared to the four sections with Gustie Greeters, they cover similar topics, meet at similar times, and have similar faculty.

What follows is the text of an email sent to faculty teaching these eight sections at the beginning of the fall semester, with additional comments added in italics:

This assessment plan for this year includes three parts:   
  
Part 1: A pretest survey completed by students at the beginning of the semester and a post test survey completed by students at the end of the semester.  The goal of these surveys is to measure actual student learning outcomes (rather than just students' perceptions of what they learned) as they relate to the advising components laid out in the Faculty Handbook.  These surveys are both relatively short and will take less than 10 minutes of class time to complete. I will be putting the information for the pretest in your campus mailbox today.  I will put the information for the post test survey in your campus mailbox later in the semester.  As you will see, the survey wording is a little...well, clunky.  Or, maybe "crude" is a better word.  Measuring student learning outcomes regarding advising is challenging.  So you know, I have vetted the survey with Carolyn Dobler, JoNes VanHecke (who, if you don't know, loves assessment!), the director of the Student Activities Office, and several FTS faculty. *Pre-test and post-test data was collected from six of the eight sections.*  
Part 2: A rubric designed by the FTS Advisory Committee that you will fill out for each of your students at the end of the semester. The rubric focuses on six components of advising, and asks you to rate your students as "accomplished" "developing" or "emerging". You might also consider having your students fill one out for themselves and then using their assessment (and your assessment of them) as a starting point for conversation.  For the FTS program purposes, however, we only need the data from you (with no names attached).  I will include one copy of the rubric in the packet I put in your mailbox today.  I will provide you with multiple copies of this form and more detailed information later in the semester. *A copy of the rubric was provided to faculty, but faculty were not required to use it for assessment.*  
Part 3: We are hoping to conduct some focus group sessions this fall, focused on assessing the advising component of FTS.  I will be in touch with more details as that part of the plan takes shape. *With the help of students from Professor Kathi Tunheim’s Human Resource Management class, focus groups were conducted with students from both sets of sections as well as with Gustie Greeters. These students also conducted a content analysis of syllabi from the eight sections and researched partnerships between first-term seminar and orientation programs at comparable colleges.*  
  
The purpose of all of this is not to create more busywork for you, but to determine if we are meeting our goals of providing developmental advising, introducing students to the college, and creating a mentoring community.  And, as you have heard over and over again, assessment is crucial for accreditation.  It is very important that you know that this is not an assessment of you personally as an instructor.  All of the data will be aggregated. The only breakdown of information we have is whether your section is one of the four FTS sections participating in the pilot program with paired Gustie Greeters or not.    You will have access to all of the final data, although I will not be able to tell you which responses came from your section, in particular (because I won't know).   
  
This assessment should not in any way affect the content of your course or your approach to teaching the course.  I am not asking you to add or remove any component of your course, aside for allowing time for students to complete the pre- and post-test surveys in class.   
  
Because of the research design of this assessment plan, your participation is critical.  If, for any reason, you are unable to participate in this assessment plan, please contact me as soon as possible.  You are also welcome to contact me if you have any questions about this.  Thank you very much for your help.  I know it adds to your already busy schedule, but it is important to do and I am very appreciative of your help with it.