



**Division of Student Affairs:
Training Needs Assessment**

Prepared for:

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Executive Summary

For many years, developing annual reports using word processing software has been a daunting task required by all departments within the Division of Student Affairs, at UNC-Wilmington. These reports are important because they are used to assess departmental goals and accomplishments, and to guide the allocation of funding. In the past, the reports have typically been inconsistent between departments and lacking sufficient information from which to base decisions. In addition, employee attitude and motivation has also suffered because of a failure to recognize the value and efficacy of the process.

In an effort to alleviate these problems, the Division is currently in the process of revising and updating the current system to one that is database-driven. Prior to the launch of this program, the Office of Student Life Assessment conducted a study to assess annual reporting procedures in terms of the current and ideal situation, attitude, and motivation of employees. A variety of data collection techniques were used including interviews, document analysis, and an online survey. Sources of data included administrative personnel, staff, and documents pertaining to annual reporting systems.

At this time, the majority of employees within Student Affairs have very limited experience using Microsoft Access. However, most are interested in learning how to use the new system for annual reporting. Staff members also indicated their preferences for receiving training (ranked first to last choice): 1) in small groups by department, 2) individual (one on one with instructor), and 3) large group with all employees.

Based on the results of the study, the recommended solution is to design and implement a training program with job aids. The goal of the program is to enable all individuals involved in the annual reporting process to proficiently utilize the new annual reporting system. The training should be implemented in two phases: 1) an initial session with all staff members to introduce the new system; 2) sessions with each individual department. If further instruction is needed for individual staff members, one-on-one training should also be provided.

Introduction

Every year in June, annual reports from each department within Student Affairs are submitted to the Vice Chancellor via e-mail, in an attached Microsoft Word document. Each report includes information pertaining to program highlights, human relations/diversity efforts, human resources, gifts and donations (pursued or received), and advisory boards. In general, these reports provide an overall sense of departmental initiatives and accomplishments, from which decisions are made regarding budget allocations for the next fiscal year. Unfortunately, these decisions are typically based on limited information, which is also inconsistent between departments. In addition, employees have expressed dissatisfaction with using the word processed templates because they contain irrelevant components and lack a sense of connectedness to the overall goals of the division.

In an effort to alleviate these issues, and make the process of annual reporting more meaningful to both administration and staff, the Office of Student Life Assessment obtained a new database-driven reporting tool. This program was adapted from a system developed by Dr. Theodore Elling, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at UNC-Charlotte. This program enables each department to easily tie their program objectives and evaluations to institution and division goals, in one standardized framework that can be accessed year-round. Currently, very few employees have the prerequisite skills and knowledge to proficiently utilize this new program. The pages that follow describe the study that was conducted by the Office of Student Life Assessment prior to launching training for this new annual reporting system.

Methods

Data pertaining to the Division of Student Affairs' annual reporting needs was obtained from three sources:

1. Members of administration
2. Staff members
3. Documents pertaining to annual reporting systems

Information was collected from members of administration through semi-structured interviews with the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and the Director of Student Life Assessment. An informal interview was conducted with a staff member who served as a Subject Matter Expert on the use of Microsoft Access. Staff members also participated in a web-based survey, which was administered via e-mail. Documents containing information about the current annual reporting procedure and the new database-driven system were also examined.

Results

Student Affairs currently employs approximately 105 individuals of varying expertise and technological experience. The results of the web-based survey (N=59) give an indication of the current Access usage, and the feelings of potential learners surrounding this topic.

Entry Behaviors (see questions 2-5 and 9 in Appendix A)

The majority of learners have limited or no experience with editing or inputting information into an Access form (67.8%), generating or printing reports in Access (57.6%), and accessing the network from their desk or workstation (59.3%). Just over half of respondents (54.2%) have no knowledge or experience with creating a database in Access.

Prior Knowledge (see question 6 in Appendix A)

57.6% of respondents have not received any prior training in Microsoft Access or other database software.

Attitudes (see questions 8-11 in Appendix A)

The majority of respondents have a positive attitude toward learning how to use Access for annual reporting. They see this as a needed change which will bring consistency and a sense of connectedness to the required information. Most

respondents have a favorable attitude toward receiving training in small groups by department, individually, and in a large group.

Motivation (see questions 8 and 9 in Appendix A)

The vast majority of respondents (69.5%) are very motivated to learn about the new annual reporting system. However, 28.8% responded that they were only somewhat interested and would learn it if it were required. Only one person was not interested in learning about this technology.

Education and Level of Ability (see question 7 in Appendix A)

Of those respondents who had previous training in Microsoft Access or another database software (N=25), the majority (64%) achieved only a beginner's level of expertise.

Learning Preferences (see question 11 in Appendix A)

Most respondents indicated that they would prefer to receive training on using Access for annual reporting within small groups by department, with their second choice being individual instruction at their desk or workstation. Respondents' third choice was to receive training in a large group with everyone and the least-preferred method of training was computer-based instruction with a handout.

The results of the document analysis, and interviews with members of Student Affairs administration, give an indication of the current annual report usage and optimal or desired annual report uses. The interview with the Vice Chancellor also provided information pertaining to training delivery system preferences and a timeline for implementation of the new reporting system.

Current Uses

Annual reporting for all departments has been accomplished using a standardized Microsoft Word template. The structure of this document is difficult to utilize because it contains irrelevant fields; there is no way connect strategic goals and

learning outcomes to programs, or to track the progress of specific programs. As a result, many departments develop reports which are inconsistent and cannot be easily compared to one another. The final report, which is submitted to the Vice Chancellor, only provides a general sense of each department's initiatives and accomplishments, which are typically supported by incomplete data.

Ideal Uses

In order to be optimally useful, annual reports should be in a standardized format with relevant fields, which is easily edited and accessed year-round, and enables the user to link specific programs to institution and division strategic goals and learning outcomes. The report should also clearly indicate departmental strategic goals, related programming, goal/program assessment strategies, budgeting allocation, and recommendations based on evaluations. Feedback provided to departments about their assessment strategies, and other evaluative comments, should also easily accessible.

Training Preferences and Timeline

The Vice Chancellor's preference for the delivery of training is to first have a preliminary training session during one of the monthly Division meeting, which are mandatory for all staff members. After the initial overview, each department would schedule a time for the instructor to deliver training within the department or a designated space. All departments should have completed training and be utilizing the new annual reporting system by May 2006.

Proposed Solutions

Based on the needs assessment and learner analysis, the following solutions are proposed to aid in the implementation of the new annual reporting technology:

1. Develop and implement an instructor-led training program with job aids.
2. Develop and implement a self-instructional computer-based training program with job aids.
3. Distribute job aids to all employees.

Recommended Solution

The recommended solution, to aid in the implementation of the new annual reporting technology, is to develop and implement an instructor-led training program with job aids. Based on data collected from the survey and interviews, this delivery method will be the most motivating for learners and effective for facilitating learning. The training program should also be implemented in two phases: 1) to the entire group of employees, preferably during a monthly division meeting so attendance will not be a significant issue, and 2) to each individual department, preferably during a regularly scheduled meeting time so productivity will not be greatly affected. Individual instruction should also be available to individuals who are not able to attend other sessions or need additional training.

Learning Environment

The training will take place in the University Union room 100, for the initial large-group session, and in each respective department on campus for the 21 individual small-group sessions. The learning environments must be equipped with at least one computer with Microsoft Access, which is connected to the intranet via a hard-wired data port or wireless connection.

The only foreseeable constraints include: 1) not being able to reserve the large room, which can be avoided if the reservation is made well in advance; and 2) not enough room in the individual departments to conduct training, which can also be avoided by planning for the number of trainees and available space, and reserving an appropriate space on campus, if needed.

Training Goals

Goal statements have been formulated for annual reporting at the division level and for the instructional training materials. The purpose of stating the goals of the division, in terms of annual reporting, is to ensure that the instructional goals and objectives directly reflect those of the division.

The annual reporting goals for the Division of Student Affairs are to:

1. Align departmental programming with the established learning outcomes of the Division and strategic goals of the University.
2. Provide each department with an efficient way to review and change their goals, related programs, assessment plan, budget and recommendations in a consistent format that is easily accessed year-round.

The instructional goals for the annual reporting system training program are:

1. All staff members within the UNCW Division of Student Affairs will demonstrate navigating the intranet from their workstation to gain access to the Microsoft Access-based annual reporting system.
2. All staff members within the UNCW Division of Student Affairs will demonstrate using the Microsoft Access-based annual reporting system to edit information.
3. All staff members within the UNCW Division of Student Affairs will demonstrate using the Microsoft Access-based annual reporting system to input information.
4. All staff members within the UNCW Division of Student Affairs will demonstrate using the Microsoft Access-based annual reporting system to print reports.

The instructional objectives for the annual reporting system training program are:

1. Given a computer with Microsoft Access, which is connected to the UNCW intranet, successfully navigate from desktop to the Student Affairs server. Find and access the correct folder containing the Annual Reporting database, launch the program.
2. Given a computer with Microsoft Access, which is connected to the UNCW intranet, launch the Annual Reporting database. Select the button to edit department objectives, enter the correct department code, change information in each field, and close the form.
3. Given a computer with Microsoft Access, which is connected to the UNCW

intranet, launch the Annual Reporting database. Select the button to add department objectives, enter the correct department code, select the button to add an objective, input information into each field, and close the form.

4. Given a computer with Microsoft Access, which is connected to the UNCW intranet, launch the Annual Reporting database. Select the button to print department objectives, enter the correct department code, and close the report.

Appendix A

Staff Skills Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this short survey. The purpose of this inquiry is to gather information about your skill level using Microsoft Access and training preferences. The survey is anonymous and your responses will be kept completely confidential. If you have any questions or comments please contact Melissa Ennis at 962.7226 or ennism@uncw.edu

Please rate the following skills at your level of proficiency:

- 1 – No knowledge or experience.
- 2 – Basic knowledge, have limited experience.
- 3 – Intermediate, have some experience but not an expert.
- 4 – Advanced, have extensive experience and can perform most functions.

- 1) Edit/input information into a form
- 2) Generate/ print reports
- 3) Create a database
- 4) Access the network from desk or workstation

- 5) Have you ever had any Microsoft Access (or other database software) training?
Yes/No
- 6) What is the highest level of database training that you have received?
(Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced)

- 7) How interested are you in learning how to use Access for annual reporting?

Very Interested: I want to learn about this technology.
Somewhat Interested: I'll do it if I have to.
Not Interested: I do not want to learn about this technology.

- 8) Are you aware that the procedure for annual reporting is changing? Yes/No

- 9) What do you think needs to be improved with the current annual reporting procedure
(i.e. Microsoft Word templates, template components, wording, consistency, etc.)?

- 10) How do you prefer to receive training on how to use Access for annual reporting?

Workshop: Everyone is there
Small group: By department
Individual: One on one at your desk
Alone: Computer-Based Instruction with a handout

- 11) Which department are you currently working in?

- 12) If you have any additional comments, questions or suggestions please use the following space provided.