

Student Affairs Strategic Planning Assessment Basic Courses Training Series Fall 2022 – Spring 2023

Purpose of Assessment

One goal for Student Affairs Strategic Planning was to educate and develop staff within the Division of Student Affairs about assessment. To accomplish this goal, the department coordinated an Assessment Basic Courses (ABCs) training series throughout the 2022-2023 academic year. Five workshops were presented for the 2022-2023 academic year over the following topics:

- Assessment Planning
- Collecting Quantitative Data
- Analyzing Quantitative Data
- Collecting and Analyzing Qualitative Data
- Using and Share Results

Student Affairs Strategic Planning wanted to assess the participants' learning at each workshop to understand if the intended learning outcomes for each one was met. This is the fourth time Student Affairs Strategic Planning assessed sessions of a year-long training series.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Student Affairs Strategic Planning identified some key findings and developed actionable recommendations the department may take based on the results.

- In general, the training workshops had a positive impact on division staff learning and Student Affairs Strategic Planning should continue providing training options since there continues to be opportunity to grow competencies for staff members.
 - The department staff may want to consider providing more activities during the training to allow participants to practice the concepts being taught.
 - Student Affairs Strategic Planning staff also may want to explore sending information on the training topic to participants in advance of the workshop as well as sharing resources related to the topic after the workshop.
- There were some mixed results for the individual workshops with some having participants who did not accurately answer questions related to the learning outcomes.
 - Department staff should continue to explore changes for individual workshops and how to cover information for all participants to learn and understand. As well as providing activities during the workshops or questions on a survey for participants to demonstrate their learning on the specific topic.

Method and Sample

Each of the five workshops were assessed individually at the end of the training session. Table 1, on the following page, displays the date, attendance, and response rate for each of the workshops. All workshops used paper surveys that were developed using PaperSurvey.io®, a software program that creates paper-based surveys and databases. The data were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®.

Topic	Date	Received the Assessment	Response Rate
Assessment Planning	October 4	17	100%
Collecting Quantitative Data	November 1	12	100%
Analyzing Quantitative Data	February 7	12	100%
Collecting and Analyzing Qualitative Data	March 28	9	78%
Using and Sharing Results	June 6	13	77%

Table 1: Workshop Assessments and Response Rates

Results

Results are reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. The data within the tables are listed in descending mean order. Summary themes for the qualitative comments are contained in this report; the full qualitative responses can be found in separate documents. Comparisons are not made to previous years since workshop topics and assessment methods changed. This report is divided into five sections, one for each workshop topic. A description and the identified learning outcomes for each workshop are included in each section.

Getting Started: Assessment Planning

This workshop covered determining your desired outcomes, deciding on the best assessment method, and ensuring appropriate alignment. The learning outcomes for the workshop included:

- Identify appropriate assessment methods based on the desired outcomes
- Distinguish measures appropriately aligned with the outcomes

The paper survey used to assess this workshop consisted of four questions, two questions were quantitative, and two questions were qualitative.

Respondents were first asked what assessment method(s) they would use if their program outcome was “for students to feel prepared for their first year at Texas A&M.” Over three-fourths of the 17 responses (82%) indicated using a survey as one of their methods. Interviews, focus groups, and reflection were other methods selected by multiple people. A few indicated using a one-minute paper, rubric, or existing data as a possible method. All participants listed at least one appropriate assessment method that could be used based on the desired outcome.

The attendees were asked what elements needed to be included in the assessment method they selected in the previous question (such as questions being asked, criteria for a rubric, existing data you could use, etc.). There were a wide range of responses from the 17 comments. Almost half of the responses (47%) provided specific questions such as “Do you feel more prepared to begin your first year?” using a Likert scale or “I feel confident in my ability to navigate my first year at Texas A&M.” also with a Likert scale. The other half (52%) did not answer the question directly by not giving a specific question to ask on a survey or specific data to look at; however, they provided general comments such as asking student to explain how they feel prepared, or that questions needed to be clear and align to the outcome. Almost all the general comments provided (89%) were accurate; however, one comment (11%) was incorrect.

Attendees were asked to respond to two questions about their understanding of aligning assessment measures with outcomes. As seen in Figure 1, on the following page, all attendees agreed with both statements; however, they felt stronger about understanding why assessment methods and measures need to align with outcomes.

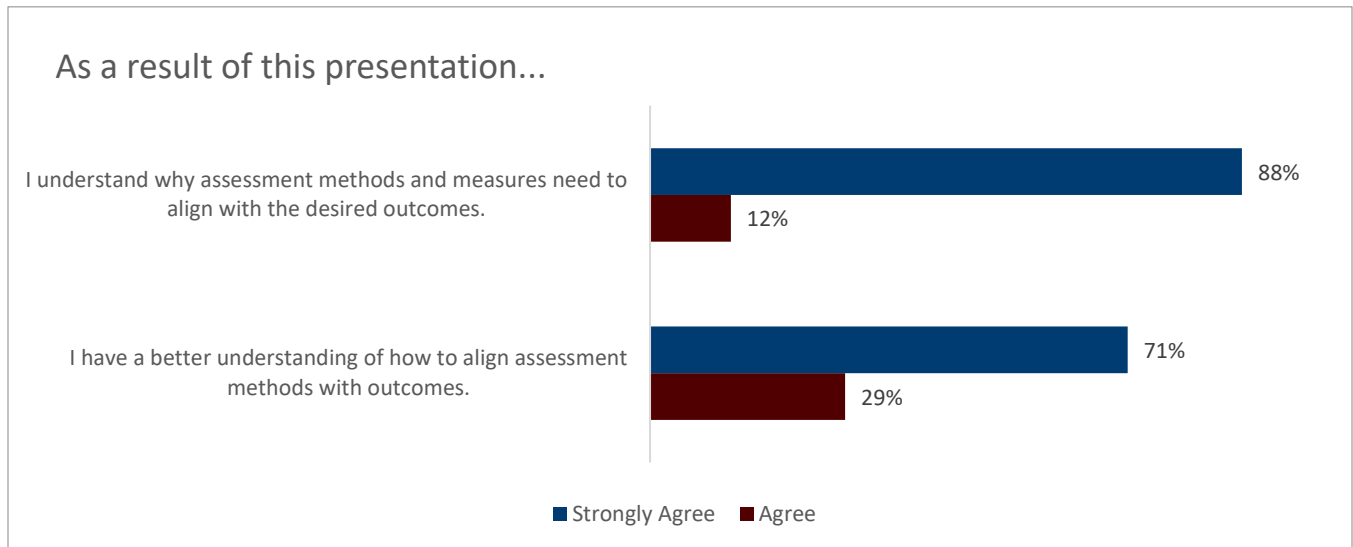


Figure 1: Getting Started Workshop

Looking at the results as they relate to the two learning outcomes for this workshop, all participants identified at least one assessment method which could be appropriate for their desired outcome. During the presentation, participants were given five different examples of an outcome and the assessment method being used to measure it. Then they were given the specific question with response options and asked if that would measure their desired outcomes. While most of the participants seemed to be able to determine if the measure was appropriate aligned to the outcome and if it was not aligned, could provide options to align it, this was not formally assessed to know if the learning outcome was met.

Show Me the Numbers: Collecting Quantitative Data

This workshop covered developing a plan for an assessment instrument, understanding different quantitative question types, writing good quantitative questions, and avoiding common mistakes when writing quantitative questions. The learning outcomes for the workshop included:

- Identify the basics of writing a good quantitative (survey) question
- Identify the components of poorly written questions

Four questions were on the paper survey used to assess this workshop. Three questions were quantitative, and one question was qualitative.

Using a select all that apply, attendees were asked to identify the problem(s) with the question stems and/or the response choices. The question stem for the first example was "New professionals in our department are prepared for their jobs" and had response option options of "Not at all a problem," "Minor problem," "Moderate problem," and "Serious problem." All participants selected at least one of the two correct answers, which were "The scale of the question response choices does not align with the question stem" and "Question stem is broad; could be more specific." Furthermore, 83% of participants selected both correct answers. However, 17% selected one of the wrong answers, in addition to selecting at least one of the correct ones.

For the second example, the question stem was "The TQM and CQI staff was friendly and informative" and had a five-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree for response options. All attendees selected at least one of the two correct answers, which were "double barreled question stem – need to separate into two questions or more" and "question stem and/or response choices contain jargon/acronyms." Almost all staff (92%) selected both correct answers; however, one-quarter (25%) of attendees also selected one or more incorrect answer.

Staff members were asked to take one of the previous two examples and rewrite the question stem and/or response options to make it clearer for the survey taker. Five of the 12 (42%) correctly rewrote the question stem and/or response options. Four respondents did not rewrite something; however, they explained what they would change, and two of those four answers were correct. The other two did not provide enough to determine if it was correct or not. Three rewrote either the question stem or response options incorrectly.

The last question asked if as a result of this presentation, they could identify the basics of writing a good qualitative survey question. All workshop attendees agreed with this statement (42% strongly agreed and 58% agreed).

Back to the Basics: Analyzing Quantitative Data

This workshop covered the value of quantitative data, what descriptive statistics are, picking the right analysis for the data, and analyzing quantitative data. The learning outcomes for the workshop included:

- Define terms such as mean and standard deviation
- Identify which types of statistics are appropriate given various question types
- Calculate mean, standard deviation, and frequencies for quantitative data

The paper survey used to assess this workshop consisted of five questions, four questions were quantitative, and one questions was qualitative.

After watching the steps to analyze the quantitative data while following along on their own computer, program attendees were given a data set and asked to determine the correct option for four questions. Four participants did not answer any of these questions. Figure 2 shows how many the remaining eight participants answered correctly.

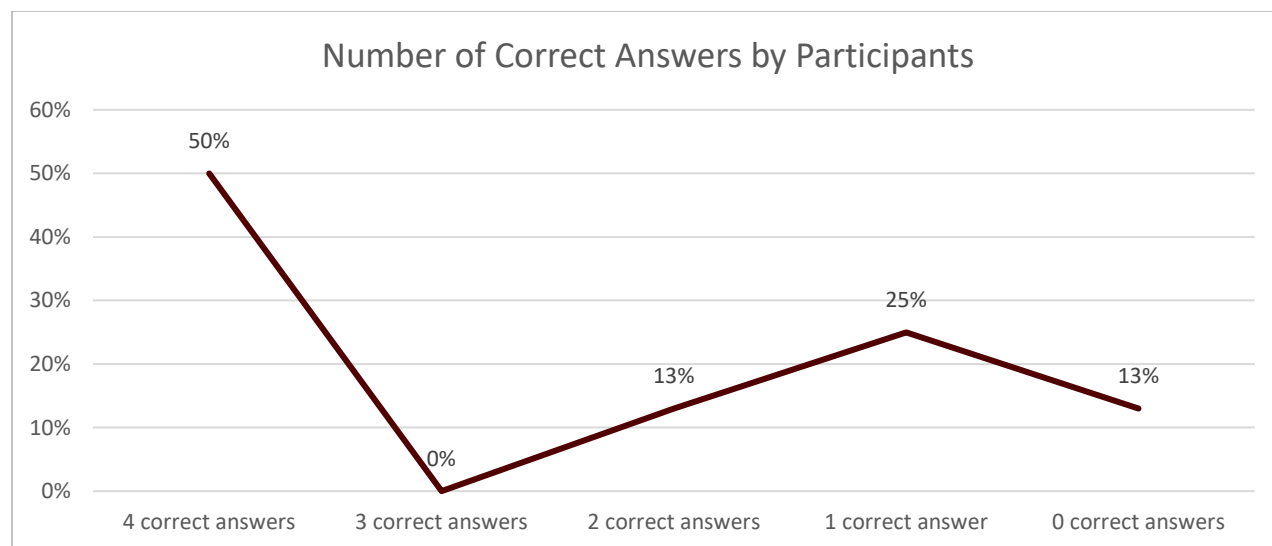


Figure 2: Back to the Basics Workshop

Figure 3, on the next page, displays the percentage of participants selecting the correct answer. In looking at specific questions, the first question asked for the frequency of a question in the data set. The second question asked for the overall mean of a question in the data set. The overall standard deviation was requested on the third question. The final question asked for the mean for a subset of the data for one question in the data set.

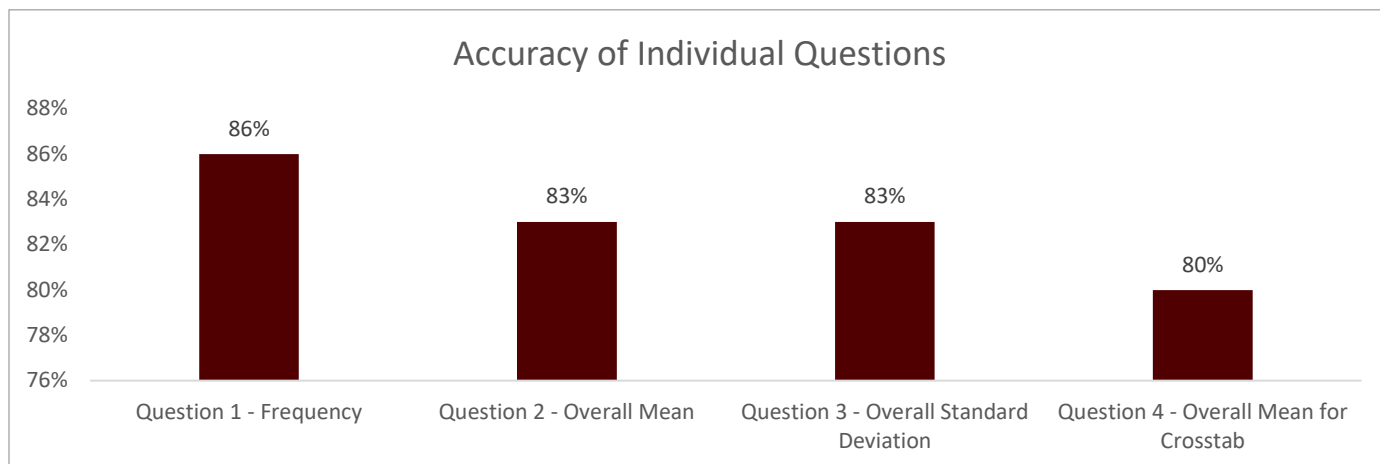


Figure 3: Back to the Basics Individual Questions

The last question asked attendees what they would change about this workshop to improve it and 11 provided comments. Half of the comments were that it was excellent, helpful, and easy to follow. One person said that they learned more real world uses from this one-hour workshop than they did in a semester-long stats class. A couple of people specifically mentioned appreciation learning about Power Pivot. A few participants felt it was a little fast-paced and wished they had been told to bring a Windows device rather than an Apple.

Looking at the results as they relate to the three learning outcomes for this workshop, 80% or higher were able to accurately calculate mean, standard deviation, and frequency. While covered in the presentation, participants were not formally assessed to define terms or identify appropriate statistics based on the question type to know if these learning outcomes were met.

Talk with Me: Collecting and Analyzing Qualitative Data

This workshop covered the basics of collecting and analyzing qualitative data. The learning outcomes for the workshop included:

- Identify qualitative methods that meet needs of their programs' assessment plan
- Understand the processes to analyze and document qualitative data

The paper survey used to assess this workshop consisted of four questions, two questions were quantitative, and two questions were qualitative.

Participants were initially asked what qualitative assessment methods that they learned today that they were most likely to include in any of their current or upcoming projects and why. Three of the seven responses did not answer the question; however, they expressed appreciation and enjoyed the reflection and sorting exercise. The remaining four comments provided various assessment methods including interviews, reflection, focus groups, rubric with interview, and narrative from students through conversations.

Using a select all that apply question, attendees were asked to select the approach(es) that would most likely guide their collection and analysis of qualitative data for the assessment project listed in the previous question. Almost three-fourths (71%) of the seven respondents selected narrative. Additionally, 43% each indicated grounded theory and case studies, and 29% reported phenomenology. Nobody selected ethnographic.

Respondents were asked to respond to two questions about their understanding of aligning qualitative analysis with an outcome, and their confidence in analyzing qualitative data. As seen in Figure 4 everyone agreed with both statements.

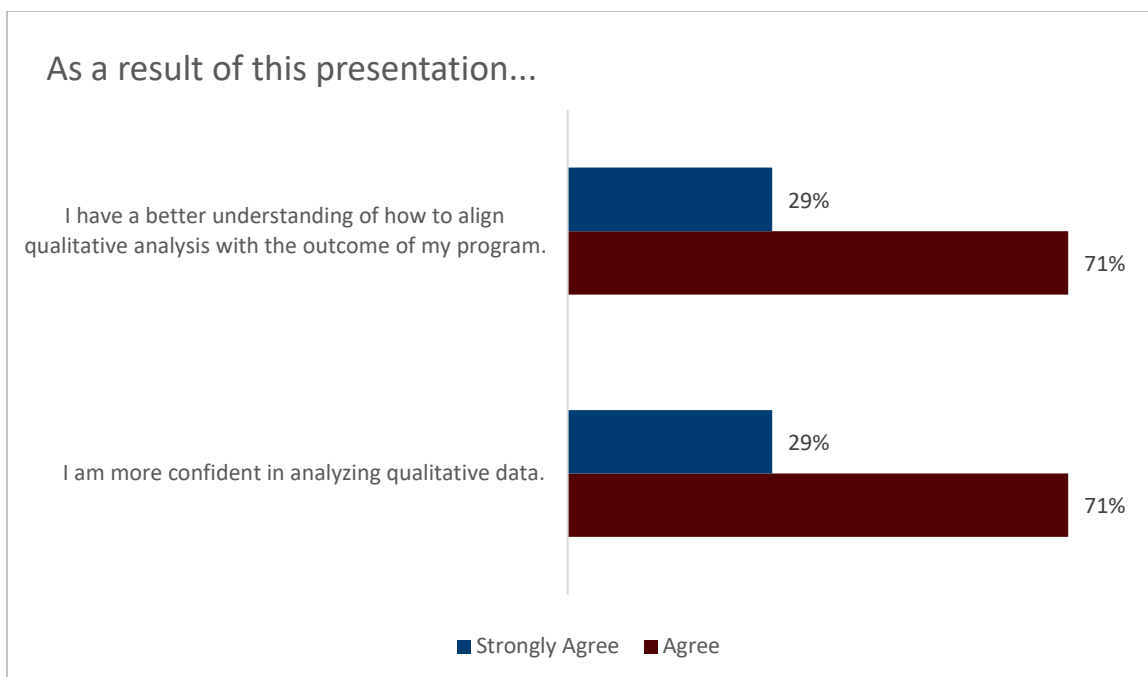


Figure 4: Collecting and Analyzing Qualitative Data

Telling Your Story: Using and Sharing Results

The final workshop in the series covered the basics for using and sharing assessment results. The learning outcomes for the workshop included:

- List key points to consider when using assessment results
- Identify what data/assessment results to share based on different stakeholders
- Understand the importance of implementing changes and re-assessing

Six questions were on the paper survey used to assess this workshop. Three questions were quantitative, and three questions were qualitative.

Participants were given a fictitious report and then asked to respond to three questions about how they would use and share the results. The report included results of a seven-question survey that was given to those who attended the Aggie Leadership Conference to assess if the learning outcomes were reached and the experiences of those who attended the conference. Workshop attendees were first asked to identify who the stakeholders were based on this report. They identified several stakeholders, those mentioned the most included students attending the conference, the conference planning committee, advisors, speakers, and department/division leadership.

When asked what information they would share with the stakeholders they identified, nine of the ten respondents provided general ideas such as information about the roundtables and keynote, demographics, key takeaways, and the positives and negatives of conference attendees; however, they did not provide a specific data point or what stakeholders they would share the information with. One person indicated they would share the attendees' thoughts and reactions to the speakers and materials with the conference planners, speakers, and employers, and would share a summary of opinions and possible changes for the future with students.

The last question about the fictitious report asked the workshop attendees what recommendations they have for changes with the conference based on the feedback. The two most common changes recommended from the ten responses were about the speakers and facilitators. For the speakers specifically, vetting speakers better, getting outlines from speakers in advance, and providing the speakers with information about the audience, conference theme, and desired outcomes. When commenting about the facilitators, respondents would look at the education and training for the facilitators and find ways to know the facilitators are prepared.

Participants were asked their level of agreement or disagreement for three questions related to the three learning outcomes. As seen in Figure 5 the majority (90%) agreed with all three statements.

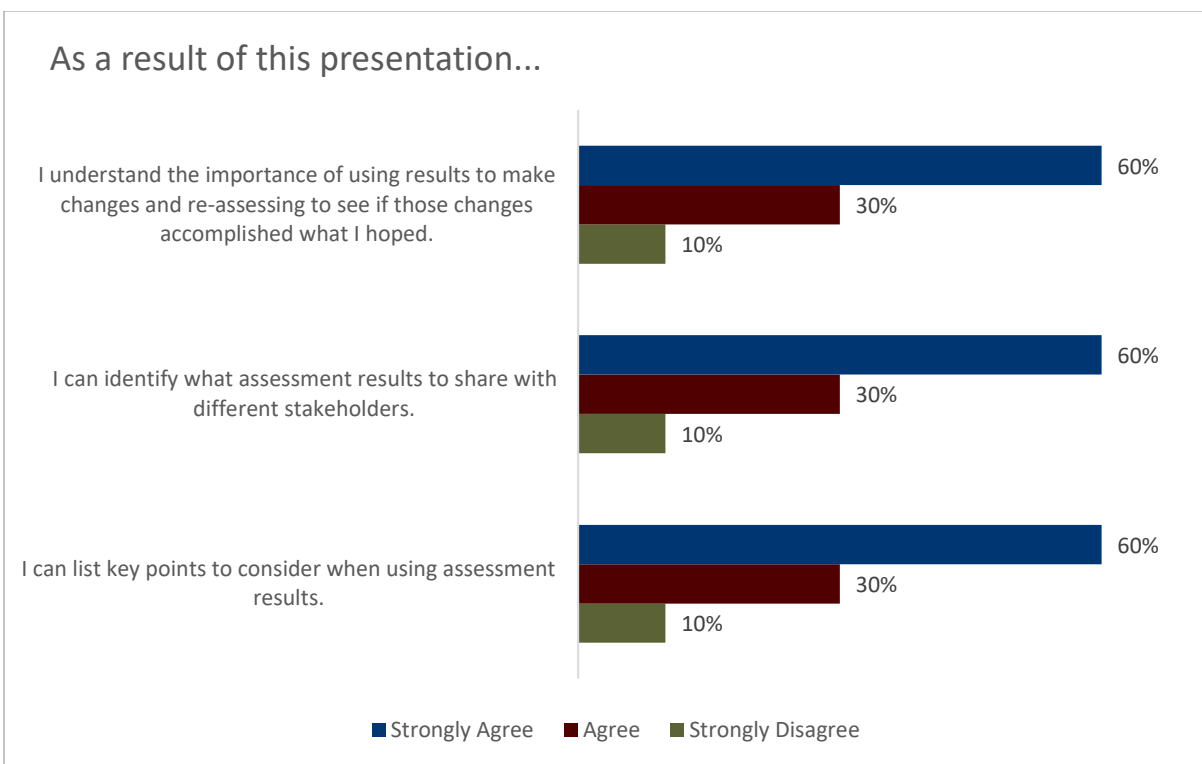


Figure 5: Using and Sharing Results

Looking at the results as they relate to the three learning outcomes for this workshop, all participants identified at least one appropriate stakeholder and general information to share with that stakeholder based on the fictitious report used for practice. Eight of the ten respondents also provided a reasonable change to make based on the results of the report. One person indicated that no changes were needed, and the other person did not provide enough to determine what change they are recommending. While covered in the presentation, there was not a direct measure to formally assess if the other two learning outcomes were met: listing key points to consider when using assessment results and understanding the importance of implementing changes and re-assessing.

Student Affairs Strategic Planning Department Background

According to its website (<http://dsasp.tamu.edu/about>), Student Affairs Strategic Planning “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 culture in the Division of Student Affairs that values meaningful assessment, uses results to guide improvement, and articulates contributions to student success.”

Student Affairs Strategic Planning provides quality assessment services, resources, and assessment training for departments of the Texas A&M University Division of Student Affairs and student organizations. Services by Student Affairs Strategic Planning are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee.

Results of this project and other assessment projects done through the department can be found at <https://dsasp.tamu.edu/results/>. Additionally, anyone can follow Student Affairs Strategic Planning on Facebook.

To work with Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at <https://dsasp.tamu.edu/aqform/>.

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