



Overview

Institution:

West Virginia Wesleyan College

Profile:

West Virginia Wesleyan is a liberal arts college located in Buckhannon, West Virginia.

Challenge:

Find a way to get assessment processes out of the meeting rooms and into practice.

Solution:

West Virginia Wesleyan selected TracDat software to implement and manage the planning and assessment process for successful accreditation and program outcomes.

Benefits:

- ✓ Systematic approach establishes a common assessment process understanding and language
- ✓ Define and align goals among all levels of the institution
- ✓ Develop, document, review and revise assessment plan from any Web browser
- ✓ Robust reporting – real-time visibility and documentation
- ✓ Easy access to supporting documents and evidence

TracDat Simplifies Preparation for Accreditation Reviews at West Virginia Wesleyan College

“Even the most skeptical faculty members eventually responded to the ease with which TracDat allowed assessment plans to be documented and revised. TracDat also provided faculty with the common understanding of the assessment process that we needed for successful implementation.”

Michael Choban, Ph.D.

Like many schools, West Virginia Wesleyan College (WVWC) first began considering a student-outcomes assessment process due to concern with an approaching accreditation visit. Michael Choban, Ph.D. was a member of the college’s newly formed assessment committee and was also given specific responsibility for the assessment planning in his department (psychology). As Dr. Choban tells it, after more than a year of effort, the committee had accomplished little more than getting most departments to document some objectives. However, even that was met with considerable resistance and produced mixed results at best. It became clear to the assessment committee that unless they could discover a process for efficiently managing assessment activities and somehow reach a better common understanding of what that process was, West Virginia Wesleyan had little chance of successfully implementing meaningful assessment.

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“...TracDat conveniently provided us with the bulk of the information we needed to make a convincing case for the effectiveness of our program.”

MICHAEL CHOBAN, PH.D.

TracDat Benefits reported by WVWC

- ✓ Assessment plans documented and revised with minimal effort and faculty time
- ✓ Completion of feedback loop facilitated
- ✓ Assessment data used for program improvement
- ✓ Impact of assessment activity on educational programs documented efficiently
- ✓ Key reports produced quickly allowed the reporting process to keep up with the fast pace of institutional information needs

Ease of Use Leads to Institutional Buy-in

“TracDat was no doubt instrumental in helping us successfully get through the accreditation process,” Dr. Choban said. “Although the quality of the assessments varied from department to department, TracDat helped all departments do enough to get us accreditation approval.”

Dr. Choban described how TracDat helps keep “objectives at all levels of the institution — from courses to institutional mission — systematically related to each other with minimal effort. Dynamically generated reports allow these relationships to be easily examined for consistency. A wide variety of assessment data from all institutional levels — from classroom to institutional mission — can be stored and reliably accessed with TracDat. This is immensely helpful.” Choban continued, “Each department periodically has to undergo a comprehensive review. TracDat conveniently provided my department with the bulk of the information we needed to make a convincing case for the effectiveness of our program.”

Importance of People

Dr. Choban is also candid about the importance of people to the process of planning and assessments and to the successful implementation of TracDat. “When software becomes part of the process,” he said, “some individuals may expect it to magically do everything and relieve them from any responsibility for the assessment process. TracDat greatly reduces clerical demands on faculty, but faculty involvement remains essential. While TracDat’s interface is user-friendly and intuitive, it is also a comprehensive application with many valuable features. Because of this, initial consultation and implementation services are recommended to help achieve optimal initial structuring of the database and complete user training.”

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