Due to the need to transition to remote teaching in the spring 2020 semester, several decisions have been made regarding the university’s yearly institutional effectiveness processes. These decisions were made in consultation with the Faculty Senate and take into account the university’s commitment to continuous improvement in addition to supporting the faculty during this difficult time. To facilitate this support, Virginia Tech’s accreditor, SACSCOC, and the commonwealth’s coordinating body for higher education, SCHEV, are allowing some flexibility in documenting institutional effectiveness outcomes.

Regarding the Pathways assessment data collection process, the university has decided to suspend the collection of data for the spring 2020 semester. However, if faculty have already collected or are in the process of collecting assessment data, they are encouraged to submit this information to the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) unit. Collection of this information for all courses will begin again in fall 2020.

The university will conduct the Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) survey for the spring 2020 term. However, the university is in support of the Faculty Senate’s recommended principles approved during its April 3rd meeting. These principles include the following:

- University-wide questions referencing the “physical environment” should be dropped or altered to acknowledge the virtual nature of the student experience.
- Those who have added custom questions should consider eliminating questions for which the data could be misinterpreted due to the unusual circumstances of the semester.
- Data collected from this semester should be excluded from administrative decision-making, including all performance evaluations and decisions about future online course offerings.
- Faculty may retain use of their SPOT data and share it, as desired (e.g., a promotion dossier).

These principles are in alignment with Provost Clarke’s previous request that these data be annotated to identify that they were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For annual assessment processes, we encourage programs and units to submit their 2019-2020 assessment reports by June 30th for academic programs and by August 1st for administrative units. Communications regarding these processes will be sent to individual departments and administrative units during the next few weeks by the IE unit. This information is important for our SACSCOC reaffirmation report due in September. While it is understood that normal assessment processes may necessarily be altered, SACSCOC has encouraged programs and units to do the best that they can. Where measures still provide legitimate results, programs and units should use and learn from this information to make improvements. For measures that were derailed by the transition, please document this information in your annual report.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Bethany Bodo (bodo@vt.edu).