



University of Houston | Benchworks *featured client*



Lin Crowson,
Assistant Director for
Learning & Assessment

University of Houston

“It has been invaluable for us to look at the data collected in the Benchworks assessment. Our response rates have increased steadily with each launch.”

A Skyfactor Benchworks user for the past 7 years, Lin Crowson at the University of Houston details the benefits of regular assessment to students, staff, and the campus at large. Says Crowson, “The most beneficial thing about using Benchworks for us is the ability to find out how students perceive our efforts and the ability to analyze the data provided – make changes and then assess those changes.”

Q: How long have you been using Benchworks assessments?

A: We have been using Benchworks assessments consistently since 2009.

Q: Which specific assessments are being used at your institution?

A: We use Skyfactor Benchworks and also Mapworks.

Q: How do you administer Benchworks assessments to your students?

A: We launch the survey in November of the fall semester. Each student gets the email invitation to participate, but we also do survey

launch parties in all the residence halls. Each hall is in charge of encouraging their students to take the survey so there are a variety of programs and events that go on during the time the survey is open that give students an opportunity to take the instrument. While the survey is open we update our hall staff on a weekly basis regarding their response numbers so they know where they stand.

Q: Describe your successes with Benchworks.

A: It has been invaluable for us to look at the data collected in the Benchworks assessment. Our response rates have increased steadily with each launch. One thing that really helped us was to move our survey to the fall semester so that we could analyze the data in the spring and be prepared to implement some changes in the coming fall if necessary.

Q: How did you come to pair Benchworks with Roomsyc?

A: Through the use of Benchworks we found that our satisfaction with "Roommates" had increased. The only intervening component was the introduction and utilization of RoomSync. We knew that by using RoomSync our satisfaction with "Roommates" had increased.

Q: How do you plan to use Benchworks alongside Roomsyc in the future?

A: In the future we would like to more strategically align roommate satisfaction with RoomSync by utilizing RoomSync specific questions and cross tabulating the data against graduation and overall satisfaction scores.

Q: What do you find the most beneficial about using Benchworks assessments in general?

A: The most beneficial thing about using Benchworks for us is the ability to find out how students perceive our efforts and the ability to analyze the data provided – make changes and then assess those changes. At the end of the day, regardless of what we think about our program and how we think we are doing, it matters most what our students think and perceive. To have a comprehensive way to look at that is critical for us. This year we had a department retreat in December to look at our results and were able to create goals for changes we needed to make and hope to implement in fall 2016.

Q: Have you received any responses/feedback from your students about using Benchworks?

A: Our students, like many students on college campuses are heavily surveyed. We also launched Skyfactor Mapworks in the fall, so we have to make sure that we communicate with our students often about why we are surveying them and how it will help them. We stress to them that the Benchworks survey is their opportunity to let us know what they think about the totality of their on-campus experience. Once students realize that you are seeking to improve their experience their willingness to participate increases.

Q: How was the implementation process for you?

A: Our implementation process has gotten better every year. Our response rates are better this year than they were last year, and we've made some real strides with looking at our data critically and making changes to our program based on what we've learned. Since we launch both Mapworks and Benchworks in the same semester we had some challenges with response rates and were worried about survey fatigue. But, we are hitting our stride with our staff and student staff and both instruments are fully ingrained in our department.