

University Assessment Committee
Meeting Minutes for Friday, April 27, 2012
11:30AM – 12:30PM in the Eide Bailly Board Room in Barry Hall

Members of the University Assessment Committee Present:

John Bitzan, Kevin Brooks, Ed Deckard, Laura Oster-Aaland for Bunnie Johnson-Messelt, Debb Pankow, Larry Peterson, Bruce Rafert, Elizabeth Skoy, Bill Slanger, David Wittrock. **Faculty Senate Liaison:** Gary Totten. **Recorder:** Linda Dahlsad.

Focal point for this meeting: Continuity of current assessment activities, with refinement for the future.
John Bitzan chaired the meeting.

- 1) **Minutes:**
 - a) Minutes of the November 30, 2011 meeting were approved as distributed.
- 2) **Additions to the proposed agenda and announcements:**
 - a) There were no corrections or updates to the proposed agenda.
 - b) There were no announcements from members of this committee.
 - c) Announcements from related committees or activities (Gen Ed., Senate, Others).
 - i) Faculty Senate requires a written annual report; John Bitza will write it and email a copy to the University Assessment Committee members prior to sending it to the Faculty Senate.
 - d) No points of interest presented by members of this committee.
- 3) **Unfinished Business:**
 - a) Status of current reviews – timeline. The twelve UAC reports that were distributed to committee members last fall should be completed by the end of the spring 2012 semester. Bob Harrold's records show that he received reviews for three (HDFS, Modern Languages, and Wellness) of the twelve before he retired.
- 4) **New Business:**
 - a) Catching up on UAC reviews.
We have 48 assessment reports that have not been distributed to UAC members. We need to catch up on these outstanding reviews.
 - i) Discussion: Larry Peterson has assembled the reports to be reviewed into ten groups, reports from similar units are grouped together and each group has about the same approximate number of pages. The list of the groups was distributed to committee members at the meeting. There are ten committee members not counting ex officio members; each member will select a group of assessments to review by the end of summer. The assessment reports will be distributed electronically (PDF files) so there will be no paper copies. Although some people will be leaving the University Assessment Committee after this year, John and Larry requested prior to ending their terms members complete the review of the assessment reports this summer so there will be no outstanding reports next fall. Members should let Larry know which group of assessments they want to review and he will email the copies.
 - b) Provost J. Bruce Rafert –
 - i) New Director of Assessment, Accreditation, and Academic Advising named
 - (1) Provost Rafert noted that Larry Peterson has been named the new Director. This is a critical position in the University to maintain business continuity with academic assessments and common business principles across the University. There are program assessments, unit assessments, annual reports, program reviews, institutional accreditation, and many program accreditation agencies. Many of these ask for the same information. We are looking at an assessment portfolio, where data is placed in a convenient location, a compendium for looking up data. The Deans have formed a group to streamline the annual department and college reports. Members of the group are Larry Peterson, Charles Peterson, and David Wittrock. Those annual reports should be useful

downstream. We do not want to duplicate the compendium. If we can align how our reports function with the HLC, this should reduce our workload when HLC comes for our accreditation review.

- ii) Discussion of solicitation of assessment reports sent to academic units (continuing the present model)

- (1) Possible inclusion of two new questions (aimed at streamlining the process)
 - (a) What could be eliminated from (or added to) the current assessment report request from UAC?
 - (b) What are the most important things to maintain in the current assessment report request from UAC?

Provost Rafert noted that assessment is a big issue; the assessment reports are a giant workload and have a small amount of analysis. There is not enough summary and analysis in the reports. We should be looking at streamlining the process and making it more useful. We need to balance the effort and the analysis so the committee can begin to analyze macro-level themes in the reports.

The committee discussed a second reading of the reports by others to promote more consistent standards. The committee decided to slim down the assessment reports to a limit of five pages with no more than 25 pages of supporting materials in the appendix. The assessment report would have a common format and be submitted electronically as a PDF file. Programs will report on one learning outcome and follow up on last year's outcomes. They will indicate what changes they made based on last year's assessment and what outcomes they have seen from these changes. The three basic elements of the assessment report will continue. They are "What did you do?", "What did you learn?" and "What will you do differently as a result of what you learned?"

There was a short discussion of assessment software and whether it would help in the collection of the data for assessment. Provost Rafert observed that there are many vendors offering assessment products, but few who have products for research universities. Is the software going to help us? He is skeptical of it until the software is proven usable for a campus like NDSU.

Dean Wittrock pointed out that there are at least three committees on campus that have responsibilities for assessing curricula: Academic Affairs, University Assessment, and Program Review. The problem is they don't go back to review changes made or to look at how it is all integrated. We need to step back and look at how to link it all together.

- iii) The committee did not discuss including an incentive mechanism (for promptness and threshold acceptability) in soliciting assessment report from academic units.

- iv) Refinement and distillation of the present process.

Committee members agreed we need to increase the value of assessment activities and make assessment reports consistent with other activities. That means creating an intentional framework and investigating how the UAC can align its work with professional accrediting bodies (e.g. AACSB, ABET, etc.). We might also investigate to what extent we could use the *Degree Qualification Profile* as a framework for assessment. We need to think about frameworks and systems, about a holistic vision across campus.

Larry noted that he is meeting with programs that are way behind (2 or 3 years) in submitting their assessment reports.

- 5) No other pertinent items were presented by members of the University Assessment Committee.

- 6) Adjourn.

- a) Meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM.