

University Assessment Committee
Meeting Minutes for Friday, September 28, 2012
11:00-11:50 a.m., Peace Garden Room, Memorial Union

Present: Margaret (Peggy) Andersen, Jeffrey Boyer, Kevin Brooks, Ann Clapper, Brenda Hall, Bunnie Johnson-Messelt, Larry Peterson, Scott Pryor, Bill Slanger, Chad Ulven. Recorder: Linda Dahlsad.

Unable to Attend: Julie Garden-Robinson, Cassie Hillen, Bruce Rafert, Elizabeth Skoy, David Wittrock, and Mary Wright

1. We welcomed the new committee members who were able to attend: Margaret Andersen, Jeffrey Boyer, Ann Clapper, Brenda Hall, and Scott Pryor.
2. Larry Peterson expressed his special thanks to the outgoing UAC members who completed reviews over the summer: John Bitzan, Edward Deckard, Debra Pankow, and Donna Terbisan.
3. The minutes from April 27, 2012 meeting were approved as distributed. Motion (Peggy Andersen/Bill Slanger). Motion carried with unanimous consent.
4. Members reviewed the following materials and guidelines for our work (UAC Responsibilities from Faculty Senate Bylaws; 2011-12 Annual Report; 2012-13 Annual Memo to Chairs and Heads; 2012-12 Guidelines for Reporting Assessment Activities; Assessment of Student Learning: Self-Reporting of Levels of Implementation; Direct, Indirect, and Non-Measures of Student Learning; and Guide for Reviewers).
 - Committee members began by discussing the revision to the guidelines.
 - Kevin Brooks reported the Department Heads/Chairs are giddy over the new format.
 - Chad Ulven said the streamlined process makes it easy to report for his department.
 - Larry Peterson had a discussion with Natural Resource Sciences and the new format of only one outcome for one major is difficult for departments with multiple majors. ADHM is another department that may find the format difficult.
 - Scott Pryor indicated his department has 11 learning outcomes and has combined the outcomes into three categories. Scott volunteered to share their combined categories with the UAC and the other departments in Engineering.
 - Larry Peterson will send a quick survey to Department Heads/Chairs in February or March to find out how the new format has worked for their departments.
 - Kevin Brooks and Larry Peterson will investigate creating an electronic template for the Guide for Reviewers that would allow us to easily aggregate some types of information about the reports. Committee members will use that template on a trial basis this fall.
5. Larry Peterson adopted a new format for the cover letters to units. They are shorter, with just a summary and bulleted recommendations/concerns, and with no numerical score for the report. Excerpts from the primary reviewer's comments are included in the letter. The committee thought the new cover letter format was helpful. Currently Larry is not sending copies of the cover letters to committee members/primary reviewers. After some discussion, members agreed that Larry should send an electronic copy of the letter to the primary reviewer. Posting the letters on the Accreditation homepage was discussed. It would provide transparency, but the committee agreed not to post the letters on the homepage. All assessment materials are available upon request.

6. Kevin Brooks advocated creating a searchable database of reports. It would be helpful to colleges and departments to look at reports from other colleges and departments. Kevin and Larry will discuss this database idea to see if they can come up with a useful tool. Please let Larry know if you would like to participate in this discussion. Bill Slanger has been looking at text analysis software. He also said NDSU is a member of the Voluntary System of Accountability website and this is another place we could use to publicize our accomplishment.
7. The Committee discussed procedural questions about what should be on the website <http://www.ndsu.edu/accreditation/>.
 - The first question was about posting assessment reports from departments. Jeff Boyer said a department should have some input about posting its report. Larry indicated some departments were really candid with their reports, but they may not be so candid if the reports were posted on the website. The committee agreed it should be up to the department to decide if it wants to post its assessment report on its own website.
 - The second question was about posting progress reports on assessment. The committee agreed the chart of our progress on assessment reports should be kept in house and not on the website. The committee concluded that making the chart easily available could have a negative result because departments may see others are not doing reports and they may wonder why they are working hard each year to complete their reports. Currently there are no consequences for not submitting reports. An assessment report should be meaningful to the departments, not something they submit to satisfy the Assessment Committee. There has been talk about rewards for good department reports.
8. When NDSU has its re-accreditation visit from the Higher Learning Commission in 2015-2016, we will need to show how we use assessment to improve learning, and use it as part of planning and budgeting. Ann Clapper reported that the School of Education uses the curriculum mapping software, Atlas, to link their standards, assessment, feedback, learning outcomes, and measuring outcomes. She talked about how it is all looped together to improve what they are doing. PNAS has a similar process.
9. The committee also discussed the issue of departments that are quite late in their reports. Members decided they do not need copies of the list of quite late reports and the activity log. Kevin Brooks wondered about the departments who have not reported since 2008. Do they have to report about previous years? Larry Peterson is working with the departments, telling them to start small with their assessment report and make it meaningful. It is a good place to start to drive further assessment later on to make changes.

10. Larry Peterson provided an overview of the status of assessment reports.

1. Previous reports with primary reviews, but needing secondary review and cover letter	14
2. Reports distributed in Spring 2012 to UAC members for primary reviews	43
3. Reports still being reviewed by primary reviewers	18
4. Secondary reviews and cover letters completed (includes item #1 reports)	39
5. Backlogged and undistributed reports	7
6. Newly received and undistributed reports	10
7. Units with no reports from either 2010-11 or 2011-12	24
8. Units with no reports from 2008-09 or earlier (subset of item #7 total of 24)	14

11. Larry Peterson will divide up the undone reports into packages and send them out to the committee. There are seven backlogged reports (218 pages) and ten new reports (188 pages). We have 10 primary reviewers for 17 reports totaling 406 pages.
12. Larry Peterson will request updated student learning outcomes for each major on campus. Scott Pryor suggested also asking for a copy of the assessment schedule for each major.
13. Members concluded with by discussing how can we improve the assessment process. We want to create a review process that leads to meaningful results for individual departments and for the campus as a whole.
- We discussed how departments structure their work for both accreditation and assessment. What groups/committees do they use?
 - Peggy Andersen noted that Accounting, Finance and Information Systems uses a learning assurance (curriculum) committee and a strategic planning committee.
 - Chad Ulven said that Mechanical Engineering uses an assessment committee and an accreditation committee.
 - Scott Pryor reported that AES Ag & Biosystems Engineering had different department heads over the last 3 years and they do not have two separate committees.
 - Larry Peterson said from what he has seen in assessment reports that it depends on the department's size and their culture.
 - Kevin Brooks announced that the English Department will have their assessment of the upper division writing course portfolios on Friday, October 12 from Noon until 4:00. There will be a free lunch. He asked for participants to help with the assessment because outside opinions are very helpful. Please contact Kevin or Andrew Mara if you plan to attend so they can get a lunch count.
14. Larry Peterson thanked committee members for attending the meeting and for sharing their ideas and the meeting adjourned 11:50 a.m.

Next meeting: Friday, October 19, 2012, 11:00 – 11:50 a.m. in Room of Nations, Memorial Union.