

University Assessment Committee
Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, November 12, 2014
3:00-4:00 p.m., Mandan Room, Memorial Union

Present: Margaret (Peggy) Andersen, Jeffrey Boyer, Kevin Brooks, Julie Garden-Robinson, Chris McEwen, Shelby Moen, Jeremy Penn, Larry Peterson, Scott Pryor, Elizabeth Skoy, and Amy Rupiper Taggart

Recorder: Kelly Hoyt

Unable to Attend: Ann Clapper, Brenda Hall, Beth Ingram, Brandy Randall, Bill Slinger, and Chad Ulven

1. The minutes from the 10/08/14 meeting as distributed by email on 10/24/14 were approved.
2. Updates – Larry thanked the people who have gotten reviews done and those that volunteered for additional reviews (Ann, Brenda, Scott, Peggy and Julie volunteered for ones that didn't have an assigned reviewer).
 - a) Updated Mini Progress Report Chart – Larry reviewed the number of reports, etc. with the committee. The department that hadn't submitted a report since 2008-09 submitted their report! Making good progress.
 - b) Updated Trends in 2012-13 Reviews of Assessment Reports – This one is now complete and shows areas where we could think about professional development. Larry thought bringing Qualtrics reports about the trends to the Deans would be beneficial. It would show them what committee members are seeing in the reports we receive. Larry will see if he can get on their agenda.
 - c) Updated Trends in 2013-14 Reviews on Reflection of Student Learning – Because both Peggy and Jeremy had trouble with the Qualtrics software on their recent reviews, some of the percentages may not be correct. The percentages look better overall than on the 2012-13 reports. Departments are doing what we have asked them to do. They are aligned with university outcomes.
 - Jeff is curious about the 56% on “The report clearly notes what type of student activities the dept. uses to evaluate if students are achieving the learning or skills the program expects.”
 - Larry explained that he thinks it is partly that departments just forget to include this information. They aren't indicating that students do papers, internships or experiments. They think they only need to provide a matrix.
 - Larry said that since Jeff pointed this out, he should be more consistent and he should include this information in the letters to the dept. head because it would be helpful to the departments to consider what kind of things students are doing. They should not always do the same thing in every class. They are building different skill sets for the students that are appropriate to the major.
 - Jeremy asked about examples of support services that departments would offer.
 - Larry believed one department that indicated using ACE tutoring and how they tried to coordinate that with their courses.
 - d) Improving the Quality of Academic Operations Committee (IQAOC – aka Committee on Committees)
 - The assessment subcommittee of that group consists of Marinus Otte, Carrie Anne Platt, and Larry. Each subcommittee was charged to do a SWOT analysis of one of the

committees (Program Review, Academic Affairs, General Education, and Assessment) and make recommendations on the core responsibilities of each committee and the overlapping tasks and redundancies. They discussed the overlapping tasks and how to streamline them.

- One of the things discussed was if we need to do reviews every year or should assessment be on a multiple year cycle so they are looking at more longitudinal information from students. They also wondered if assessment should be tied into program review. It would be more of a mid-cycle check with program review.
 - Jeremy said some campuses do a two year cycle. The alternate year is focused on using results and discussing them. There is a year of data collection and a year of reflection, discussion and action. It's mixed on how well it works, based on how conscientious the people running the programs are.
 - Larry said if there was a non-annual cycle, there would still be something in the department's annual report. It would summarize what they did this year for assessment, but it wouldn't include results, just the assessment activities so there was some kind of accountability.
- Another question was, should there be a common electronic platform for all these committees? There would be a place for departments to enter information that could be appropriated out to the various committees. The platform would keep track so that instead of multiple committee chairs keeping track of things on various spreadsheets, there would be an electronic reminder.
- Another question was, if a program is accredited, should they just get a check and not have to do a separate assessment report every year?
 - Larry said this is something worth looking into. He said it might depend on who the accreditor is because there are some accredited programs that don't do a very good job on assessment. Some accreditors are in "what are your facilities" mode and ask very little about the evidence of student learning.
 - If this advances, this would be a huge burden off this committee and off the departments to say that they are already demonstrating this, you don't need to demonstrate it again.
- Another question was should the make-up of the Accreditation Committee change. Should it be made up entirely of people who have responsibilities in their unit who are responsible for assessment? These would be people who are not only disciplinary experts, but have training in assessment.
- One last thing this subcommittee discussed was about the areas in Student Affairs (SA) that are primarily administrative units (such as the Bookstore, Admissions, Registration and Records). Their connection to student learning is slim and does it make sense for them to report on this.
 - Jeremy said there is a task force in SA that is trying to determine if this is the route to go for departments in SA. They are trying to sort out the issue of services vs. programs.
- Scott asked if these changes could potentially take place in the next year.
 - Larry said since the by-laws would have to change, probably not.

- Amy explained some things are processes, and would not cause a change to the by-laws so some things could start to be implemented. But some of the more structural things would have to go through the Senate.
3. Review second version of revised University Assessment Plan (Clapper, Hall, Garden-Robinson, Penn, and Peterson) (10/16/14 and 06/26/14 revision attached)
- Larry reviewed the main area that a change was made from our last meeting.
 - Amy said this document doesn't have the word syllabus in it at all. In the Gateways to Completion project, some faculty weren't putting outcomes on their syllabi, or if they were, they weren't communicating it across the program. She thinks if this is a strategic plan it might be worth having it in there to remind people about the role the syllabus plays in identifying those outcomes.
 - Larry explained that the subcommittee that worked on this document discussed separating procedures from the plan and having a separate document.
 - Amy said the 2nd paragraph under Academic Affairs seems like procedure if that's the case.
 - Larry isn't opposed to having syllabus in the document and if Amy would like to suggest a place for syllabus to be talked about it, and everyone agrees, that would be fine.
 - Amy said that depending on who the audience is for this document, would determine what information should be included.
 - Larry said that they thought of this as a goal-oriented, long term document. It would be a plan that we wouldn't be revising on a regular basis. That is why they took out what seemed like implementation pieces that might change quite frequently.
 - Jeff suggested that syllabus could be included in the guidelines (first sentence of the second paragraph).
 - Kevin suggested that it could easily be included in the 2nd paragraph, within the sentence "Instructional faculty identify student learning outcomes (the unstated thing is that outcomes show up on the syllabus). Or it could be added in the next sentence "Program assessment plans identify where student learning occurs in the curriculum **and are recorded on syllabi**, how often it is assessed, and how the program uses those results to improve student learning.
 - Larry pointed out that the HLC removed the word syllabi from the criteria this year. Under assumed practices it used to say "Instructors communicate course requirements to students through syllabi." They deleted "through syllabi" and changed it to "in writing and in a timely manner." The important point is do we communicate the requirements and expectations to students in writing and in a timely fashion. Most of the campus still does it via syllabi, but it might be in another way.
 - Amy suggested rewording the sentences above to say ". . . identify and communicate student learning outcomes to their students. . ."
 - Scott moved to accept proposed changes. Elizabeth seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
4. Planning committee for spring workshop/luncheon on Qualtrics trends

- Larry reminded members that Ann volunteered to form a committee to help organize this at a previous meeting. He asked if anybody else would like to volunteer to help Ann work on this.
 - Jeff and Elizabeth said it depended on when the workshop would take place. If it isn't going to take place until later in spring (April), they will conditionally volunteer to coordinate.

*******Next meeting is Wednesday, December 10th at 3 pm in Mandan*******