

Annual Report to the University Senate from the members of the University Assessment Committee

Submitted: May 19, 2008

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) is a standing committee of the University Senate of North Dakota State University and has responsibilities defined in the Constitution and By-Laws of the Senate. Committee members during the 2007 - 2008 academic year included:

Bakr Aly Ahmed (*Engineering and Architecture*),
Val Anderson (*Graduate Students*),
Russell Danielson (*Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources*),
Pamela Hansen (*Human Development and Education*),
Andrea Hanson (*Student Government*),
Bob Harrold (*Accreditation and Assessment*),
Abram Jackson (*Student Government*),
Bonnie Klamm (*Business*),
Allyn Kostecki (*Student Affairs*),
Harriet Light (*Graduate School*),
Kenneth Magel (*Science and Mathematics*),
Chris McEwen (*Student Government*),
Charles Okigbo (*Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences*),
Larry Peterson (*General Education*),
J. W. Schroeder (*NDSU Extension Service*),
David Scott (*Pharmacy, Nursing, and Allied Sciences*),
William Slanger (*Institutional Research and Analysis*), and
Donna Terbizan (*Senate Executive Committee*).

The UAC held eight meetings during the 2007 - 2008 academic year and has received 37 annual assessment reports from academic departments and programs. Two major subcommittees, the Education and Training Subcommittee, and the University-Wide Assessment Plan Subcommittee, made significant progress toward their initial objectives. These subcommittees will, in part, have new membership during the 2008 - 2009 academic year to continue the activities that have been developed.

The assessment guidelines to be distributed to academic units in August 2008 will receive editorial updates. As a point of interest, the basic content of the guidelines has remained stable for eight years.

Major accomplishments of the UAC during the 2007 - 2008 academic year have included:

1. The development of a draft instrument to learn of how the members of the UAC might best serve the needs of the campus.
2. The development of an advanced draft of an inclusive university-wide assessment plan.
3. Renewal of the annual assessment guidelines sent to departments and programs each August. As noted previously, the guidelines remain essentially unchanged.
4. The development of a "short form" for feedback to departments and programs. The abbreviated format will serve as a one-sheet summary that identifies up to five strengths of the report, no more than three suggestions for enhancement, and a line graph. The figure permits the program to compare their recent progress on assessment reports, over a given time-frame, to the university average and to the average of the top 25% of the departments.

As a point of reference, the average score for assessment reports has improved to 6.25 from an average score of 5.98 during the previous year.

The evaluation scale ranges from 0 (for not submitted) to 10 (for exceptional).

5. Permission has been received to distribute the assessment report from the Interior Design program as an example of an exceptional report.
6. The Division of Student Affairs has included a section on assessment in the annual report submitted by units in that division. As a result, a draft of a proposed "toolkit" was distributed to a limited number of programs. Initial comments were favorable and recipients of the draft initiated additional distribution of the item.

The UAC continues to benefit from having the President of the University Senate serve as the liaison from the Executive Committee of the University Senate. Dr. Terbizan was an active participant during committee meetings and, while her guidance will be missed, the members will look forward to contributions from the incoming President of the University Senate, Dr. Comez.

The committee also continues to benefit from representation from the Chair of the General Education Committee and the Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis. These members provided the committee with information about assessment activities at selected other institutions (for example: Wagner College, James Madison University, San Jose State University), provided background about the Collegiate Learning Assessment, and the informed members about NDSU's progress with development of the Voluntary System of Accountability.

An unusually large number of committee members are rotating off the UAC. Their involvement, leadership, and multiple contributions will be missed!

The number of new members for the 2008 - 2009 academic year underscores the value of the information packet distributed to new members each year to facilitate their full involvement in committee activities as quickly as possible.

Goals for the 2008 - 2009 academic year include:

- A) Completion of the work of the Education and Training Subcommittee to develop a survey of the needs of administrators and faculty in academic units,
- B) Completion of an updated university-wide assessment plan and presentation for approvals external to the committee, and
- C) Facilitate appreciation by the campus community for distinctions between programmatic *goals*, departmental *objectives*, and *student learning outcomes* that are measurable and based at the level of individual courses.

Copy: Dr. R. Craig Schnell, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr. Donna Terbizan, President of the University Senate for the 2007 - 2008 academic year
Dr. Dogan Comez, President of the University Senate for the 2008 - 2009 academic year.
Dr. Kristi Wold-McCormick, Registrar
Dr. Larry Peterson, Chair of the General Education Committee
Dr. William Slanger, Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis
Members of the University Assessment Committee
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