University Assessment Committee
Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, February 16, 2016
2:00-3:00 p.m., Peace Garden Room, Memorial Union


Recorder: Kathy Hoovestol

Unable to Attend: Jeffrey Boyer, Julie Garden-Robinson, Beth Ingram, Mila Krjevskaia, Scott Pryor, and Elizabeth Skoy.

1. The minutes from the 01/19/16 meeting were approved.

2. Regular Updates:
   - Overdue Assessment Reports Log
     - On 02/02/16 Larry reminded John Miller in the Music Department – asked for a firm due date. Larry has not heard anything yet, so he may have to contact Kent Sandstrom and go from there.
   - Mini-Progress Report
     - A report from 02/09/16 was reviewed. We have received one more report since then.
     - There are 30 Academic Affairs reports still being reviewed by UAC members. To quote a line from T. S. Eliot’s “The Wasteland,” “April is the cruellest month”, and as we get to the end of the academic year it is hard to get things done. The other line Larry quoted was, “Hurry up please, it’s time.” It will be good to get some of those reports done.
   - Qualtrics Report
     - Everyone is working hard, but so far not even 2/3 of the department reviews have been completed. Melissa asked if there were review forms that we could send out so they know what they are going to be asked. Larry stated that we did send out review forms last year and they do know how they will be reviewed. Shafiqur asked about changes in the reviewer’s form. He asked if there could be a statement if they have made changes since the 13-14 fiscal year. Larry stated that the instructions say that if you have made changes, please let us know, but some might be so minor that it is not noticed. He relies on the departments to let him know if they made changes. Shafiqur also stated that with Qualtrics, there are 3 or 4 fixed points that can be used. It does not give an option to write something else. He choose the closest one, but it does not directly reflect what he wants to write or choose from – it does not match. Instead of just yes or no, there should be another option for them to write a comment. It does not represent the departments well. It would also give more meaningful data. Larry will look into adding “partially met” to the review form next year.
3. Update: Undergraduate Majors That Have Fallen Through the Cracks:

- Larry contacted the following majors and asked them to begin their assessment journey by crafting program learning outcomes by September 15, 2016. He sent them Elizabeth Skoy’s handout about program learning outcomes and also asked them (as we did all other departments for 2013-14 reports) to note how their program learning outcomes aligned with the new Undergraduate Learning Outcomes.
  - Biotechnology – Eugene Berry
  - Family and Consumer Sciences Education – Mari Borr
  - Food Safety – Paul Schwarz
  - General Agriculture – David Buchanan
  - Public History – Angela Smith
  - Social Science – John Cox

- Larry also contacted these two majors which will not be reporting:
  - Comprehensive Science Education – Lisa Montplaisier (moving to “inactive” status)
  - Social Work – Amy Phillips & Joel Hektner (students do not earn an NDSU degree and program is assessed by MiSU)

- This happened because the Higher Learning Commission’s review of NDSU said not all departments have learning outcomes. We have six or eight undergrad programs that we have not asked for assessment reports because they fall outside the reporting structure because they do not have department heads or chairs. We have begun contacting the undergraduate programs. That is where the focus is so we will start there. The first six are responding. These are programs where they have faculty in a number of different departments. Two of the majors made a case that they do not need to report. Comprehensive Science is being inactivated and Social Work does not get a degree from NDSU but they have to do an assessment for Minot State. We will be getting short reports from those departments next fall. We will next start working with the graduate programs, Nano Technology, etc. Certificate programs and programs that are only dual majors like International Studies are generally exempt. Those are not a concern at this moment.

4. Planning for Workshops – Monday, March 7, Prairie Room, MU

- Larry sent individual invitations on 2/3/16 to department chairs/heads that asked for 1:1 meetings on the UAC Survey and “Save the Date” notices to all department chairs and heads through faculty list/serve listing time and topics. Brenda helped with key words and phrases to use in our advertising. Elizabeth has had her baby, but might be able to help. Jeff and Mila were going to send some things but have not yet. Connie Jadnry would like some things for campus wide advertising.

- Brenda said one of the things we thought about was targeting those programs that are struggling with the evidence across the courses. If anyone knows of a department having an issue, please let Larry or Brenda know and a special invitation will be sent out to them so they would consider coming and talking about that. Others can benefit from that too. This would be an opportunity for them to come and work on that particular issue. Four to five departments are working really hard
on changes on their core curriculum, focusing on class courses, etc. Assessment reports from some programs have 10 courses just stapled together and a report that does not bring them all together to get a theme across the curriculum. This is no longer what we are looking for. We are asking departments to assess student learning across courses.

- If any of the committee members have the time and can make the workshops, it would be helpful for you to be there. Paul Kelter is very committed to working with assessment and they have been focusing on STEM, Gateways Tech courses, active learning, etc. and doing assessments there. These workshops are open for anyone. So far we have only targeted heads and chairs. Invitation is campus wide.

5. Initiatives Emerging from Assessment/OTL:

- Larry is no longer doing accreditation. His focus is assessment. The assessment committee started in 1991 and has not been significantly revised. He and Paul Kelter have batted around some ideas about how assessment might move forward on the campus. Paul talked to the Provost about a forming a special committee and she gave her approval. Larry formed a six person working group to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for assessment. The goal is to design an improved process for assessment by starting with a clean slate on the process and the products of assessment at NDSU. In addition to Larry, the members are Emily Berg, Paul Kelter, Jeremy Penn, Jane Schuh, and Chris Ray. They will begin meeting at the end of February. Larry gave them a list of questions to start with, like if we do assessment differently, what would it look like, what are the advantages and disadvantages, how can it be done? The devil is in the details. There will be many questions as this unfolds and we need to be careful.

- Emily gave a brief summary about the NDUS software called Strategic Planning Online. At the moment, there are a limited number of users across the system. There are many features that people may find useful. We could track progress towards state strategic plan goals. It also has an assessment component where you can set up program objectives. There is a documentation component, a document repository, and it can provide information on how they are or are not meeting their objectives or outcomes. Whoever is reviewing can type notes and you can create reports. The company is a pretty young company and is open to feedback. We could have a central repository where all of the curriculum maps, learning objectives, assessment plans, and other items are held. The committee can go in and look at them. It has the assessment piece, budget piece, and the accreditation piece to name a few. You can do multiple levels of accreditation. You can probably transfer between the portals. Emily can bring the software to the next meeting. She will be the point person and Cynthia Rott has access too. Perhaps we can have a goal of finding ways to use it and how we can get organized with it. We need to see how we can tailor it so we can have templates for assessment which would bring more continuity across the campus and it could make reviewing simpler because we would be looking at similar things. Ann expressed a concern in assessment reports in that there is a dis-connect between how some departments
teach and how they are assessing. The content of the teaching and the content of assessing do not match. It would be interesting to find out how this program would work as there is a big piece of alignment that is not working. What assessments are being used? Larry said if we had a fixed menu of assessment tools that we could build into this program that would be nice. At this point, we don’t know what we can do with this software.

- Paul and Larry are working on planning a series of assessment workshops in the Fall (dates and room reservations are completed) and have not decided if they should target certain groups. They have not yet decided who we need to start with and what will the topics be. We could make the argument that we should start with heads/chairs and assessment coordinators or you can make an argument that we need to start with brand new faculty. Another possibility is to start with departments that have the greatest need.

- IQAOC (Improving the Quality of Academic Operations Committee) –Larry is not sure how soon anything will happen or how fast the recommendations will go from this committee. IQAOC are thinking of Academic Affairs and General Education possibly being the first done and then they will think about Program Review and Assessment. No matter what results from the recommendations of IQAOC, Larry believes the UAC will continue for at least another academic year and would like the committee to think of ways we can change our review processes. We’ve had three different ways that reviews have been done by this committee:
  - (1) Pat Murphy was our first Director of Assessment. She assigned the work and told people when they would get it done. If you didn’t get it done, you heard about it.
  - (2) Bob Harold asked for volunteers and when people didn’t volunteer, he ended up doing 80 to 90 percent of the reviews. It had some virtue of being consistent but it was just how Bob looked at things.
  - (3) What we have done now is divide up the reports with the primary review coming from committee members. You do your review form and notify Larry and he reads the report and your review to prepare the review and for the departments. They can make corrections and after they approve the reviews, then Larry writes a final cover letter for the department, dean, and provost. This works as far as quality and quality feedback is received from the departments. We are all very busy but he would like to get the information to the departments a little more quickly. Maybe we should change the order of how things are done. Would it expedite things if Larry gives the first review and sends it to one or more committee members with a deadline of 30 days? One advantage for Larry is that his time is flexible as he does not teach, but he also does not want to read and write 30 or more reviews all at once in March. This would give him more control and he could be the initiator. Larry is open to any suggestions as to how we might do this differently. When David Wittrock was on the committee he wanted to have pairs of people reviewing, but this seemed to have
the potential for things to get bogged down even more. However, we did not try it. Jeremy suggested that we do live reviewing by meeting as a committee. We could print enough copies and go through all of them as a committee. It would be like what they do for grants. We could all learn from each other too. Larry thought perhaps we could do two half days. Jeremy stated that a professional could review some aspect and then this group could provide whatever that needed missing component is – like peer coaching. The central office could review certain aspects and leave certain things for this committee to wrap up so we could shorten up the amount of time for this group. If the real value we add is the peer to peer coaching then maybe Larry can review other more black and white aspects and the committee could be of help with have you tried this, this worked for us, etc. Larry would still play the central role. The other option is do fewer reviews. Don’t do everyone in one year – have a review cycle. Another option down the road (not this budget year) is to hire extra help like graduate students. Larry said we could certainly try the live reviewing without changing the assessment cycle and subdivide it where Larry could take care of many things that have been just yes/no. Let’s continue that conversation – the ways we can make our work more productive and fun too. Joe Mike said we can learn from each other if we do them together. Ann said she would prefer to do them all on the same day rather than do one and wait until the next date to continue – you get in the mindset of doing them and there is a groove going. It would be a lot easier with the group to pick one day as everyone is really busy. This made sense to everyone.

6. New Business
   • None

The meeting was adjourned.

***** Next Meeting is Tuesday, March 22, 2016 at 2 pm in Peace Garden*****