University Assessment Committee
Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, April 12, 2016
2:00-3:00 p.m., Peace Garden Room, Memorial Union


Recorder: Kathy Hoovestol

Unable to Attend: Ann Clapper, Rosalinda Connelley (graduate student representative), Mila Kryjevskaia, Beth Ingram, Jeremy Penn, Scott Pryor, and Elizabeth Skoy.

1. The minutes from the 03/22/16 meeting were approved.

2. Regular Updates:
   - Overdue Assessment Reports Log
     - On 04/07/16 Larry reminded John Miller in the Music Department and copied Dean Sandstrom again. John Miller said he would respond by Monday, April 11th, 2016, and we have not heard from him yet.
   - Mini-Progress Report
     - There are six reports sitting out there that Larry has not gotten to yet. We are getting close to being done. One student affairs report (dining services) still needs a reviewer and Larry will do it himself.
   - Qualtrics Report
     - An updated qualtrics report is attached. Larry did include the Student Affairs Report – there is no new information there. Larry did go through and subtract Plant Pathology, Architecture, and Coatings and Polymeric Materials. He may do a trend analysis in the fall so we can compare year after year, because there are some things we have asked consistently. He wants to see if we are making any progress.

3. Drop-in-Session for Reports
   - Kathy has scheduled a room for September 1, 2016 in the Lark room from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm. Volunteers are needed to stop in for an hour. Larry will ask the chairs to send their reports a week ahead of time so that the volunteers can get a chance to look at the reports before they meet and can give them feedback when they come in. The volunteers could line up their scheduling upon time availability with the chairs whose reports they reviewed.

4. Assessment and the Library
   - Starting May 9, 2016, Larry will be the Interim Dean of the Library. It will be half time in the summer. Larry hopes he will be able to do most of his assessment work during the summer. The bad news is if they don’t have someone hired by the middle of August, it could get complicated. They cannot have a half-time Dean in the fall – it may have to be Larry full time or someone else. It will be the Provost’s decision at that point. That could make things complicated for assessment. Larry is close to retirement, so this could be the ideal time to transition and to figure out what is going
to happen to UAC. It could be a transition year with someone new to take over assessment while Larry is around.

5. Update on Strategic Plan for Assessment Group
   - They have met twice, decided on three recommendations, and forwarded them to the Provost. The Faculty Senate will have the final say on any bylaw changes.
   - Their three recommendations are:
     - They recommended that the University Assessment Committee no longer review student affairs reports because they have a student affairs assessment committee.
     - They recommended that the UAC no longer review the extension service.
     - Finally, they recommended that there be some way to have an ongoing 360 degree view of the co-curricular-curricular student learning. There should be some way we have some periodic shared meetings of the committees or something through the Office of Teaching and Learning.
     - They have also agreed on four general principles that are consistent with what we talked about. These are things that are key to assessment in the future.
       - NDSU should revise the organization structure of assessment in order to make it more likely that its operational processes will
         - Minimize the reporting and reviewing function, without trivializing it;
         - Ensure that assessment at the course and department level provides meaningful results that faculty can use to improve student learning;
         - Provide timely feedback to departments about their assessment activities; and
         - Provide ongoing and systematic professional development for department leaders and faculty to nurture a culture that values assessment.
     - They have also talked about who should be on the UAC in the future – whether or not it should be assessment professionals from the colleges that make up the committee so it would not be a Faculty Senate committee anymore. It would not be an elected group – it would be an appointed group.
     - They have also discussed extending the review cycle. Charlene Wolf-Hall and Larry will be meeting with the Provost and will put their heads together to decide if that would make the most sense given the fact that we have an assurance report due in 2019. NDSU will be required to have an embedded assessment report in our 2019 Assurance Argument. We have to think about how we make sure we have a really good evidence that assessment is happening everywhere. That will mean General Education and all of the interdisciplinary grad programs that we have not yet contacted.
     - The Strategic Planning Group is going to try to get something ready by the fall. Joseph Jones asked if IQAOC will suggest merging UAC with program review. Larry says it seems unlikely. These are two of the busiest committees on campus and it would be hard to put them together and think this would streamline their work. We can make our recommendation and see what happens.
Brenda Hall is wondering about how to facilitate greater consistency. She knows that we are not required to have assessment committees or groups doing assessment, but it seems to her that there should be a possible way of moving toward consistency with that in some way, shape, or form – like with departmental committees or interdisciplinary committees or a few people in each area that really are focused and committed to assessment within the areas. If it is seen as a mandate, that would be trouble. She is wondering what the format might be so we can continue with some of the on-going assessment discussions to make it more likely that assessment is meaningful and that it is used.

- Larry said Paul Kelter is very supportive of that. Some campuses (University of Northern Colorado, Miami University of Ohio) have assessment fellows in each college who have release time and have more responsibility for coaching professional development at each college. Larry is not sure how that model works and how effective it is. If we had an assessment council that was made up of people that are appointed, one would hope this is part of their job responsibility and helping professional development in their college would be part of that and they would be recognized. This would be on top of everything else they do.

6. Update on Possible Assessment Workshops for 2015-2016:

- There are two sets for next fall and rooms have been reserved. Larry talked with several people that had a good sense of what we need on this campus for assessment and what we need for good practice nationally. We definitely need to have training for heads, chairs, and assessment committee leaders, but we also need to provide something for the faculty. We will try to do both of them and alternate how it is scheduled.
- For the heads and chairs, we would like them to bring their departmental learning outcomes and their curriculum maps to work on. If you have good ideas on what might be appropriate or helpful, please send them to Larry. We also have the survey to see what they want to work on.
- The classroom assessment would be a structured process; they would work on a basic section on writing learning outcomes, bring a syllabi, and then really having the “a” and “b” sessions. A couple of people using classroom assessment techniques would present to the group and then the attendees would actually draft a CAT at that time and come back in November and tell everyone how they used it. Give everyone the opportunity to actually do something and give them the incentive to try it and report back to us about how it worked. People could go to all five of the workshops or just three of them. Larry will look at the calendar for this spring and see if there are possible dates open for the same sort of format for an on-going series. The chairs may not have to do this year after year, but the classroom assessment techniques are something we could do regularly for years. When the OTL website gets up and running, we should start archiving all the various things UAC members have prepared for workshops so that it is there for people as a resource to consult. These are possible topics. If you have suggestions for heads and chairs or for classroom assessment techniques, let Larry know. Brenda does signature assignments.
- Jeff felt the first session on September 7th should be called learning objectives and not outcomes. Jeff met with Jessica Jensen to talk about program learning objectives for
Emergency Management. He had their review a week ahead of time so he was able to review it independently and then they met and could actually talk about that. If you want time as a facilitator, you want that information in advance. His entire hour was about the objectives and what they mean and how we measure.

- Larry said that the September 7th meeting was to bring what you already have. This is food for thought.
- Jeff said we could say this is our rubric or this is our checklist for effective objectives, so now take your existing ones and evaluate each one on these particular characteristics, which could be a good exercise for individuals. There is potential that way too.

- Brenda asked if we could have a general idea of what is a good learning objective. People will be at different levels with their learning objectives so can we have breakouts? There are some that are new faculty; some will have learning objectives and say these don’t really mean anything on the checklist; and others have learning objectives and are ready to make changes because they have done assessment and they have learned some things.

- Shafiqur said it will also depend if it is 200 level, 300 level or 400 level course, etc. – the learning objectives will be different. A small breakout session would help also to talk about those with others.

- Larry said at one point they talked about differentiating by course level or course size. Clearly in Gen Ed courses we have hundreds of students – you are very limited to what you can effectively do. Only the dates for the workshops are set. We will learn from doing these activities. Larry will try to come back with revisions to the sessions and how we might improve that. He will consult some people over the summer.

7. Revised Report Guidelines for 2016-2017:
   - Larry changed the date on the report guidelines otherwise they are the same. They are now due September 15, 2017.
   - Because of the Higher Learning Commission report we will need to gather additional information, but we probably want to figure out some way to make it as painless as possible for people to deposit their learning outcomes, curriculum maps, and assessment plans. The Higher Learning Commission was very positive about what we were doing. Their concerns were is everyone participating and is it sustainable. We have to make sure people are doing this on an annual basis. We need to be able to document this. In 2019, they are not coming to campus, so everything in terms of how it all works has to be crystal clear and documented with things they can just click on and say – here is where I can see all the assessment plans and reports, I can see feedback, etc. We really need to be able to document how we track things. This is going to change how we want to organize things for the campus.

8. New Business
   - None

The meeting was adjourned.

***** Next Meeting is Tuesday, May 3, 2016 at 2 pm in Peace Garden*****