University Assessment Committee
Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, September 7, 2016
10:00-11:00 am, Room of Nations, Memorial Union

Present: Emily Berg, Michael Christoffers, Stacy Duffield, Lynette Flage, Joseph Jones, Mason Magle (Pharmacy student), Lisa Montpilair, Jeremy Penn, Larry Peterson, Candace Philbrick, Shafiqur Rahman, Elizabeth Skoy, Melissa Vosen Callens, and Anuj Teotia, representing undergraduate students.

Recorder: Kathy Hoovestol

Unable to Attend: Beth Ingram. No representatives from the Graduate School and the graduate students were present.

1. Larry Peterson welcomed everyone. Committee introductions were made as there were many new members.

2. The minutes from the 5/3/2016 meeting were approved.

3. Planning for the year

   • The search for a new Dean/Director of the Library has been extended. Larry will be continuing as Interim Dean of the Library (60%) and Director of Assessment (40%). Larry is going to do his best at both positions, but asked everyone that if they see something that should be done with assessment to please let him know.

   • Larry has taken the voluntary separation agreement with NDSU. He will be retired December 31st, but will be gone by the middle of December.
     ○ There is not a firm plan for what is going to happen with assessment and the timeline for having a new assessment person in OTL is unclear. Paul Kelter and Larry have drawn up a position description for an assessment specialist with graduate training in assessment.
       ▪ Because of the hiring freeze, it is not clear when a search committee will be approved and how soon a person would actually be in the position.
     ○ Consequently, the UAC should elect a chair by the December 7, 2016 meeting so that the committee can continue its activities in the spring with the support of OTL. There needs to be someone with responsibility to coordinate meetings and other responsibilities that need to be done.
       ▪ Members need to discuss what type of support they’d like from OTL in the transition. Paul Kelter is willing to try to help organize an advisory group of people with assessment expertise to meet with or assist the UAC. If UAC feels that they need some help to advise them, OTL will help them.
     ○ Lisa asked if the new person would have a faculty appointment. Larry said the position description as it was written says a PhD is preferred but not required. Larry thinks it would be good if the person had a faculty position previously.
     ○ Jeremy said that it varies across the country where those positions are located and how they are staffed and organized. Some are housed in the Office of Teaching and Learning and some are not. It all depends on what you can afford and what you think you need. There is really no standard.
Lisa said that since many of the items are about academic assessment, if that person has never been in an academic line, then that is a hard beast to understand if you have never been in that realm.

Emily suggested to Larry that because this is a transition year, we talk about our expectations and responsibilities of this committee this year and in the future. Larry attached a collection of readings about assessment. Larry would like to start our next meeting with a discussion about the nature of assessment at NDSU and the nature of our responsibilities.

4. Report on Drop-in Assessment Session on September 1

- We had no drop-ins. Three departments sent their reports in advance for early feedback. Jeremy, Elizabeth, and Larry met individually with representatives from those departments. It was very helpful. Larry suggested that next fall we should offer early reading again and disband the drop-in session. Elizabeth agreed.

5. Action Item: Re-thinking academic assessment report process

- For several years, we have been doing the following process, which seems to work fairly well. Larry will only be here until December. Who is going to write these letters? We don’t always get reports back to the departments as quickly as possible because people on this committee are busy.

- Present assessment report procedure
  - If possible, primary reviewers evaluate reports from the same departments they reviewed previously.
    - We need volunteers for those reports where no current UAC member has previously reviewed the department.
  - Larry sends previous reports and reviews to primary reviewers.
  - Primary reviewers use report checklist in Qualtrics.
  - Larry writes a draft cover letter summarizing report and combining his analysis of report with primary reviewers.
  - Larry sends the draft cover letter and anonymous Qualtrics review report to the department chair.
    - The chair has 10 working days to respond and suggest corrections.
  - The dean and the Provost (or VPSA) get a copy of the cover letter, but not the Qualtrics review.

- Last February, UAC members discussed doing “live reviewing” as a group. Possible scenario:
  - Similar to grant, proposal, or portfolio reviewing
  - Schedule two half-days when everyone can be there.
  - Pair up ahead of time.
  - Before the review days, each pair gets a batch of similar current reports (along with the accompanying previous reports and reviews) to read in advance.
  - On the review days, each pair reviews the current reports and completes the Qualtrics survey on each one.
Larry writes a draft cover letter with same process as at present.

- Generally we do not meet with the departments unless they want advice, which did happen last year with two departments.
- We don’t necessarily get the same number of reviews each year. There are about 45 academic departments at NDSU and we have been getting 50-60 reviews. We don’t know how many reviews we will get until the target due date, September 15th. Some of them will be fairly short and some will be 30 packed pages with charts, graphs, etc.
- The committee felt that the live review process of paired readers would be better.
- Elizabeth asked Larry if he felt that our current process with the Qualtrics and the letters he sends is meeting the objectives we want to obtain. Are the departments moving forward in a positive direction with the results?
  - He does feel that they are. When we had our accreditation visit last year, the team said that they thought we were doing a great job in terms of process. They wanted to make sure that all the units were reporting, and that is where we ran into a snag with them. They were actually quite complimentary with the process and the kind of questions we are asking the departments. There are some changes coming, but he felt that the basic process we are engaged in is good.
  - Lisa asked about how many reports we are getting a year. Before the Accreditation Team came last year, we had actually talked about stretching out the assessment cycle and maybe having departments report every three years, especially if they were doing well. We have some departments that just do a great job year after year. Because we have another accreditation report due in 2019, and they said they want to especially focus on assessment and is everybody reporting, the Provost felt we cannot spread out the assessment cycle at this point. Assuming things go really well in 2019, we could stretch it out and say this department does assessing every year but don’t do reporting every year. Things may change in 2019 or 2020.

- We will do live reviewing. Kathy will try to set up a dual scheduling of meetings when everyone is available in early October. This could be exciting.

6. The Strategic Plan for Assessment Group (Chris Ray, Emily Berg, Jane Schuh, Jeremy Penn, Larry Peterson, and Paul Kelter) continued to meet over the summer. They wanted to look at assessment with a clean slate. Is there a better way? Assessment has been done this way since the early 1990’s. The following is a list of recommendations they provided last spring.

- They recommended that the University Assessment Committee no longer review Student Affairs reports because there is now a Student Affairs Assessment committee.
- They recommended that the UAC no longer review the Extension Service. They do extensive reports for the federal government.
- Finally, they recommended that there be some way to have an ongoing 360 degree view of co-curricular-curricular student learning. There should be some way we have...
periodic shared meetings of the two committees or something through the Office of Teaching and Learning.

- They also agreed on four general principles 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 operation 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. Should it be assessment professionals from the colleges that make up the committee so it would not be a Faculty Senate committee anymore? Should it be an appointed, not be an elected group?

- Those recommendations have now been solidified as:
  - Proposed Curriculum Map Template (attached)
    - The Curriculum Map Template is a more standardized update of information we asked departments for in 2013-2014. This would only be collected once and thereafter as departments revised outcomes or courses.
  - Proposed Assessment Tracker for Deans (attached)
    - The Assessment Tracker for Deans is brand new. This was created in response to the HLC team’s concerns about assessment. The Provost thought that perhaps they believed the Deans were “out of the loop.” The Deans would get this form periodically, perhaps just once or twice a year.
  - Proposed UAC revisions (attached)
    - The revisions to the University Assessment Committee focus its functions on coordinating professional development and coordinating the assessment process. We recommend shifting the actual review of assessment reports to people with expertise and paying them a small stipend.
  - Proposed Assessment Plan Template (attached)
    - The Assessment Plan Template is relatively new. Pat Murphy, our first Director of Assessment and Institutional Research, asked all
departments to complete one in the early 1990s, but we have not done so systematically since then.

- Using SharePoint for tracing and/or templates
  - Jason Blosser (Assistant VP ITS) is interested in working together on a pilot project to use SharePoint for tracking assessment reports and/or creating templates for them. This will most likely be done in cooperation with technical staff in OTL and it should make assessment simpler and more efficient.

Larry noted that the three forms are really designed for accreditation purposes. We will have a file of curriculum maps and assessment plans and the dean’s tracker to indicate accountability.

Larry will meet with the deans on September 22 to get feedback on these. He has also asked for a meeting with the chairs. After those meetings, he will bring them to the UAC for final revisions and approval and then submission of the UAC revisions to the Faculty Senate.
  - Larry will summarize what they came up with, but at this point he thinks that it would be premature for the committee to think about refining those because we really want to get feedback from the deans and the chairs before anything really is done with them. Those are two key audiences.

The proposed big change in the UAC is that reviewing would be done separately. The UAC would really have a more professional development advisory oversight role. A small group of people who have trained in assessment would be appointed and receive a small salary stipend. Reports would be due at the end of May and the reviewers would complete their work in June. Departments would have the feedback by September. It would be a significant change as to how we do assessment and the idea would be that the people that we would call the assessment task force would be people with assessment expertise. They might be people with that role in their colleges and be a more permanent group.

7. Fall Assessment Workshops

- The first of the assessment workshops happens today with the Department Leader Series. This is an on-going series through October. We have about 10-13 people attending. People can continue to register for these workshops. They are focusing on departmental issues, curriculum maps, assessment plans, making assessment a shared responsibility in each department, etc. In each meeting, we are kicking off with someone that is doing a good job and sharing what they are doing and giving examples.

- The other set of workshops are focusing on formative assessment, what are students learning in classes, what are faculty doing to improve to assess students in classes and use that to improve student learning. By setting up two-part or linked sessions, we are trying something new. Attendees will be learning about an assessment technique and then coming back later this semester, after using it in their class, and talking about how it worked. The whole idea was to give them an incentive to do something. Having a two-step process will give people an incentive to try something and come back and discuss how it worked and how they might change it. We are hoping that this will help in implementation.
Fall Assessment Workshops

- **Department Leader Series: Planting, Tending, and Harvesting Your Assessment Garden**
  11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
  Lunch is FREE for workshop participants.
  Register today
  **September 7, 2016** - Program Learning Objectives (Bring yours to review)
  Memorial Union, Hidatsa Room (Jeff Boyer presenter) (10 registered)
  **September 21, 2016** - Curriculum Maps (Bring yours to review)
  Memorial Union, Prairie Room [Begin with sharing of curriculum maps from Wendy Reed (Biological Sciences) and Susan Ray-Degges (Interior Design)] (10 registered)
  **October 12, 2016** - Writing a Useful Assessment Plan
  Memorial Union, Hidatsa Room [Begin with sharing of plans from Polly Olson (Allied Sciences) and Alan Kallmeyer (Mechanical Engineering)] (13 registered)
  **October 26, 2016** - Creating Shared Responsibility for Analyzing Evidence of Student Learning
  Memorial Union, Hidatsa Room [Panelists: Scott Pryor (ABEN), Kevin Brooks (English), and Donald Miller (Pharmacy)] (11 registered)

- **How Do I Know What my Students Are Learning?**
  12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
  Lunch is FREE for workshop participants.
  Register today
  **September 13, 2016** - How to write clear learning outcomes for my course
  Memorial Union, Prairie Room (Paul Kelter, presenter) (28 registered)
  **September 27, 2016** - Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) from NDSU faculty who are using them. (22 registered)
  Memorial Union, Prairie Room
  Attendees will draft either a “RSQC2=Recall, Summarize, Question, Comment, and Connect” exercise or some Clicker questions to use in in a class they are teaching this semester and share their results on November 1.
  Clickers - Presented by Warren Christensen, Physics
  RSQC2=Recall - Presented by Ed Deckard, Plant Sciences
  **October 20, 2016** - Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) from NDSU faculty who are using them. (21 registered)
  Memorial Union, Room of Nations
  Attendees will draft either a “Case Study Jigsaw” or “Concept Mapping Exercise” to use in a class they are teaching this semester and share their results on November 15.
  Case Study Jigsaws - Presented by Peter Bergholz, Veterinary & Microbiological Sciences
  Concept Mapping Exercise - Presented by Jennifer Momsen, Biological Sciences
  **November 1, 2016** - Attendees will share their results from using either “RSQC2=Recall, Summarize, Question, Comment, and Connect” or Clickers in one of their classes.
  Memorial Union, Prairie Room (22 registered)
  **November 15, 2016** - Attendees will share their results from using either “Case Study Jigsaws” or “Concept Mapping” in one of their classes. Memorial Union, Prairie Room (21 registered)
8. Background and Tools for our work (attached)
   a. Does Assessment Make College Better? (Erik Gilbert, CHE, 08.14.15)
   b. Does Assessment Make College Better? Let Me Count the Ways (Joan Hawthorne, CHE, 08.19.15)
   c. AAHE Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning
   d. Direct Assessment Methods: A Close-Up Look (Barbara Wright)
      o Strengths & weaknesses of various methods
   e. Inquiring into Academic Programs (Linda Neavel Dickens, 2014 TAMU Workshop)
      o Options for departments based on what they want from assessment
   f. Student Learning Assessment Guide (Crook, Eubanks, Flateby, IUPUI 2012 Assessment Institute Workshop)
      o Linking outcomes, methods, results & actions in assessment reports
   g. University Assessment Plan (revised 2014)
   h. UAC 2015-16 Guidelines for Assessment Reports from Academic Affairs (due Sept. 15)
   i. UAC 2015-16 Report Checklist for Reviewers
   j. Handouts from UAC Workshops in Spring 2015 & 2016
      o Program Learning Outcomes Checklist (Elizabeth Skoy)
      o What Counts as Evidence of Student Learning (Jeff Boyer)
      o Mapping Outcomes and Evidence (Boyer and Kryjevskaia)

9. New Business
   • None

10. At our next meeting we are going to talk about the readings and where we see ourselves going, where you see yourself going. Kathy will set up a doodle poll to get everyone together in early October.

The meeting was adjourned.