

## **University Assessment Council Minutes**

Friday, August 25, 2006  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m.  
224 Student Union (Regency Room)

Present: P. Bowers, J. Comer, S. Damron, B. Davis, G. Gates, S. Haseley, A. Hyle, T. Kennedy, G. Lage, L. Martin, M. Mowen, S. Ownbey, M. Payton, J. Paustenbaugh, D. Thompson, T. Weir, and G. Wilber

Introductory presentation by Bowers reviewed four elements of the institutional assessment plan for which the Assessment Council provides leadership and oversight. Bowers noted that, overall, the effectiveness of assessment is improving, but more attention to 'closing the loop' of assessment - using results for improvement of student learning – is needed at both the program and institutional levels.

Bowers provided 2006-07 Program Outcomes Assessment Funding Recommendations for Assessment Council approval. Recommendations were based on the proposed use of funds (to conduct assessment or support assessment), balance of direct and indirect assessment methods, number of program graduates, cost of proposed method, prior use of assessment funds, methods available to program, and program's apparent commitment to assessment. Council members supported the recommendations. In addition to program-specific funding recommendations, council members supported using funds in 2006-07 to provide assessment workshops for faculty, including bringing to campus presenters on assessment topics.

In the past, programs have not been provided with funding to pay faculty members to conduct assessments. This year, funds will be approved to encourage faculty involvement in assessment by paying stipends to faculty to conduct program outcomes assessment during the summer. This suggestion to use program faculty to assess student achievement in their own programs was initially met with some concern. Some faculty may feel the need to present positive results if they believe negative results may have negative consequences for their program, or outsiders may perceive the process to be biased regardless of the results. Suggestions for reducing bias, or perception of bias, included using the rubric structure to aid objectivity, removal of identifiers in artifacts, using faculty reviewers from other disciplines, and always emphasizing that the process is not focused on individual faculty members or courses, but instead examines the program as a whole. After discussion, the group agreed that the benefits of engaging faculty in this way are significant, and the practice of faculty involvement in conducting program level assessments should be encouraged.

The provost has approved UAT funding of speakers and workshops (within certain parameters) to support the improvement of assessment in colleges, departments and programs. Colleges, departments, and programs are encouraged to recommend (to UAT) speakers/presenters and workshops that they believe would be helpful in improving assessment.

On November 13, Dr. Gloria Rogers, a nationally recognized assessment speaker, will present a workshop here on program outcomes assessment, and will offer an additional help session on development of rubrics. Faculty in all areas will be invited to participate.

A major task of the Assessment Council in 2006-07 will be to strengthen the interpretation and use of institution level assessment for improvement of student learning. More specifically, it is the role of Assessment Council to take the lead on developing systematic follow-up and reporting for general education assessment and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Bowers will work with council members to identify sub-committees to follow-up on these areas.

Martin suggested that the Assessment Council or an assessment-funded individual should compile and communicate information about assessment resources already available to units, such as results of general education assessment, NSSE, and alumni surveys. It was also expressed that communication of survey results should be improved, extending beyond assessment coordinators and department heads.

The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) was discussed briefly; currently there are no definite plans to participate in the survey. UAT will develop a mechanism for determining the level of faculty support for participation in the survey.

A report of the general education assessment committee's work on assessment of the diversity learning goal was distributed. On October 19, faculty involved in that project will present and discuss the rubric they developed, and will engage other faculty in identifying and developing course assignments to enhance students' achievement of the desired outcome, and to provide samples of student work for assessment of the learning goal. Faculty are invited to attend.

Gates introduced the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges' *Elements of Accountability for Public Universities and Colleges* report and asked that Assessment Council members read the report for discussion at the next meeting. Also, any unit interested in piloting any of the assessment methods mentioned in the report - the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP), or Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) – should indicate this interest to the UAT office. This report focuses attention on national level concerns about the lack of comparability across institutions of current efforts to assess achievement of educational outcomes. The direction of this movement has implications for our own internally-developed assessment processes.

Council members were informed that the Office of University Assessment and Testing (UAT) moved to a new building at 1524 W. Admiral; the Testing Center will also move to that location, probably in mid-October.