



Assessment and Academic Improvement Council

Minutes: Friday, February 3, 2012
1:30 PM, 301 Willard

Present: Brown, Comer, Damron, Hathcoat, Johnson, Neurohn, Penn, Swinney, Wikle
Absent: Devuyst, Edwards, Fry, Gelder, Haseley, Hawkins, Nicholas, Ormsbee, Ownbey, Paustenbaugh, Porter, Van Delinder, Wilber

1. Welcome and introductions

2. A new task force is being developed around assessment of undergraduate student learning. Penn did not know all of the details about the project as the task force is being formed by Dr. Fry. Penn asked the committee to identify issues or topics that the task force can explore in more detail and depth. Several committee members indicated they had been asked to serve on the committee or to identify someone from their unit who could serve.

3. Hathcoat provided an overview on the progress of the surveys being implemented this semester. All three of the major surveys are still in data collection: the National Survey of Student Engagement, the Survey of Alumni from Undergraduate Programs, and the Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey.

Hathcoat summarized some of the efforts to improve the response rate on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). 9000 emails went out in the initial contact with a 4% response rate. More emails will be sent out over the next few months from NSSE. An article was in the O'Colly in today's paper encouraging students to respond to the survey.

For the Survey of Alumni from Undergraduate programs, UAT will be opening a call center within the next two weeks. We have hired a Grad assistant to manage the center. Swinney asked if it will be my phone or email, Penn responded yes, both. We typically receive about half of our responses through email, the other half through phone calls. The response rate for this survey is often around 40%.

The Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey (GSSS) was completely revised this year in collaboration with Dean Tucker. Damron asked if this survey targets current students. Hathcoat replied yes and will be underway by March.

Neurohr provided an update on the success of the LibQual survey sent to faculty and graduate students last fall. As an incentive 5 Grad students received \$100.00 each for taking the survey. She was disappointed by the faculty and grad student's response rate. She thought perhaps it was a bad time to send the survey. 4 emails were sent.

18.8% Grad responses and 16% Faculty responses. However, she hoped good information will still be obtained. There were 500 open ended comments. Penn question; where will results be posted? We would like to at least provide a link from UAT's survey results page. Response Neurohr, the library does not have a place, will send executive summary for posting.

4. Planning for 2012-2013

Penn asked about the timing of the cycle for requests for funding and for submission of Annual Assessment Reports. In the past the first Friday in June has been the deadline for submission of funding requests. Comer response; June is OK for the funding requests, but having the summer to gather more information is better for the Annual Assessment Reports. Committee generally agreed that these current dates work well. Penn asked if the committee wanted to be more involved in approving the requests for funding for program outcomes assessment. Committee was fine with the current review process.

Wikle asked about assistance with compliance in submitting reports. Can you send updates after the update ends and progress report to A&S? Penn noted that there is a database that automatically shows the most recently received assessment plan and report publicly online. Penn mentioned the possibility of setting up a dashboard to provide real-time progress for each college.

Damron mentioned a concern regarding the demands assessment puts on the Assessment Coordinators. In many departments faculty FTE is not tied to this work. Is there some way to better support the work of completing program assessment in the departments? Penn asked if departmental-level funding would help support this work. He was not sure what the regulations are on how departments might be allowed to use assessment funds (if they were to receive some kind of regular payment to support assessment outside of the grant-request process). Wikle asked if serving as an assessment coordinator would come with extra pay. The committee discussed this question. Penn said that we would be willing to try something if there was an approach that the group felt had merit. Penn thought this might be the kind of topic that the new task force might be able to discuss in greater depth and provide some recommendations.

Penn discussed the Annual Assessment Report. There seems to be sections missing from the template that he wants to add. Specifically, a section on "opportunities to learn," or something like a curriculum map, seems to be missing from the current template. This is an important part of the Annual Assessment Report because it can help programs identify areas where there may be issues to address when assessment results are reported.

Penn asked what the committee felt would be appropriate guidelines for the assessment requirements for certificate programs. Historically it did not appear that

certificate programs were expected to participate in assessment in the same way that degree programs participated. However, when Penn arrived in 2009, he visited with Dr. Gates regarding certificate programs and she indicated at that time that certificate programs should be included in the same process as with other degree programs. Penn provided a list of the certificate programs at OSU and asked the group what assessment information from certificate programs would be useful, what should be expected from certificate programs in assessment, and who or how would results be used.

There was some concern that any additional requirements on faculty members in certificate programs would put an overload on faculty members. However, Penn noted the certificate programs may not be meeting policy requirements and that the current AAIC policy on program outcomes assessment is not clear on whether or not, or how, certificate programs should be participating.

The committee discussed current and historical processes for certificate programs. They can be undergraduate or graduate certificates. The Geographic Information Systems certificate asks for feedback from students after they complete the certificate to ask what courses were most beneficial. One of the unusual elements of a certificate program are that many students do not enroll specifically in a certificate program and only enroll after they have completed the requirements for the certificate (these students would be enrolled in a related master's or bachelor's degree).

Damron was not keen on the idea of requiring any additional assessment reporting for certificate programs. Comer second, Swinney third.

The committee discussed whether or not students can earn a certificate without enrolling in another degree program concurrently. Comer suggested assessment should be integrated into the degree program that was related to the certificate program. A committee member pointed out that there are some students who are certificate-only students. Thompson mentioned that some students in the military want the certificate instead of a master's degree. Wikle pointed out that it may be difficult to identify many students who go on to earn certificates because they may not initially be enrolled in the certificate program. Penn volunteered to draft some language for the assessment policy to be considered at the April meeting.

5. Penn gave an update on the progress of the Committee for the Assessment of General Education. The 3-year rotation between learning outcomes is continuing as planned. Critical thinking will be assessed this summer and the group is working on strategies for gathering samples of student work.

Penn asked the committee if there would be interest in a workshop on critical thinking – bringing in a national speaker with expertise in teaching and assessing for critical thinking. The committee was concerned about the cost effectiveness of an event and wondered about how to attract a large group of people to the session. Would it be just 20-25 people who are already reading the speaker's books and teaching for critical

thinking? Penn asked if there were other ways to encourage participation, such as requiring it as a condition for the general education designation, or linking it with pre-semester workshops and retreats in the fall. The committee suggested linking the session with orientation and training of graduate students right before the start of the semester – that way the speaker could present to both graduate students at their training and with faculty members as part of a retreat or campus-wide event. Comer liked this timing as it would allow faculty members time to work what they had learned into their syllabi. Penn planned on working with ITLE to consider how this might work.

6. Penn provided a brief update on the progress of the OSU Math Placement exam and on the progress of planning for the joint meeting on General Education in early March.

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 PM.