Assessment & Academic Improvement Council
Meeting Minutes
Friday, September 9, 2016 • 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. • 204 Whitehurst

Present: J. Comer, L. Cota, B. Davis, C. Edwards, P. Fry, J. Gelder, S. Gordon, K. Hickman, C. Ippoliti, C. Johnson, J. Knecht, J. Nalon, S. Ownbey, R. Seitsinger, J. Swinney, T. Wikle

Absent: C. Campbell, K. Clinkenbeard, S. Haseley, C. Hawkins, D. Hobson, B. Masters, K. Neurohr.

Guests: A. Witham.

1. **Call to Order and Approval of March 4, 2016 Minutes**

   Dr. Ownbey called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. After a short discussion, the minutes from the March 4, 2016 meeting were approved with a minor change in wording in 2(c) to reflect the following: "Dr. Romans informed the committee that assessing graduate certificates is required." With that change agreed upon, the minutes were unanimously approved.

2. **Assessment Updates**

   a) **Update on Undergraduate Alumni Survey:** Lisa Cota informed the committee that the Undergraduate Alumni Survey was completed this past spring, and UAT is working to get all departmental reports uploaded to the Assessment website by Tuesday, September 13, 2016. The University report should be posted the same day or shortly thereafter.

   b) **FY17 Assessment Budget Requests and Award Update:** Lisa Cota stated that Assessment had roughly $130,000 to spend on Assessment Requests. Assessment Budget Requestors utilized the new Formstack application process that was presented by Assessment at the March meeting. The results were incredibly favorable. The new process drastically cut down on incoming requests and automatically calculated benefits, removing many errors seen in prior years. There was no need for an across-the-board reduction in requests. All AAIC-guideline appropriate awards were funded in full. Any cuts were based on guidelines, not funding issues.

   c) **Update on General Education Assessment Process**

   a. **Diversity:** Dr. Sarah Gordon spoke to the committee regarding Diversity assessment, as the summer 2016 assessment cycle examined Diversity. Over the 2015-2016 academic year, a three-pronged plan approved by AAIC and facilitated by CAGE was carried out.

      i. First, there was a review of artifacts completed over the summer by a group of faculty raters, and the data is in the process of being analyzed.

      ii. Second, the Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI)—a quantitative psychometric measure of student attitudes towards global perspectives and attitudes about people who are different than they are—was carried out with the freshmen class during the fall of 2015; however, the second survey, which should have included outgoing seniors in the Spring 2016 semester, was not administered. As a result, the GPI will be administered again in Fall 2016 to both freshmen and seniors, resulting in three cohorts of data to examine.

      iii. The third part of the process was a PhotoVoice qualitative study in which 25 students were asked to take photos representing their concept of and/or experiences with diversity, both inside and outside of the classroom, and discuss their two favorite photos in five focus groups. As a result of this study, OSU now has direct information about what students are learning, what diversity classes mean to them, as well as what co-curricular experiences mean to them.

Additional unprompted information was gathered about the quality of instruction. This effort is a first step in gathering data directly from students regarding their perspectives on diversity. All four faculty members involved in the process feel this process has been successful in terms of gathering data. The report on this part is nearly done.

b. **Written Communication and Critical Thinking:** Lisa Cota reminded the committee that academic year 2016-2017 is the year OSU will assess Written Communication and Critical Thinking. Three years ago, OSU was part of the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), which required the collection of 350 artifacts from freshmen and 350 artifacts from seniors. OSU has withdrawn from the VSA, so this year fewer artifacts will be collected. The numbers will be reduced to 225 from each group. Generally, when an artifact is considered appropriate for Critical Thinking, it can also be used for Written Communication. Due to the reduction in artifacts, emails will be sent out for requests to instructors of courses with general education designators and ENGL 1113 and ENGL 1213 instructors. Artifact collection will begin Fall 2016.

3. **Discussion Items**
   a) **NSSE Major Field Report Posting – Main UAT website or SharePoint?:** This item was discussed at a previous meeting, but Lisa Cota needed clarification as to where to post the University-wide Major Field Report of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data. Currently, [NSSE's conception of] individual college reports are posted on the UAT SharePoint site (which requires OKEY access) as opposed to being posted on the main UAT website (which is accessible to anyone on the internet). Dr. Ownbey raised the question about how much the public needs to know how well OSU did in general in engaging students in an array of activities, and she asked the committee where they felt the report should be stored in the spirit of transparency. Dr. Gordon pointed out that because the report is not a perfect representation of majors or colleges, the Major Field Report may be misleading. After discussion, the consensus of the group was to post this report on the UAT SharePoint site as long as the NSSE summary of the information contained in the Major Field Report is posted on the main UAT website.

   There was further discussion on separating OSU-Tulsa from OSU-Stillwater in future NSSEs to show the differences between the campuses and better reflect actual data from each campus. James Knecht informed the committee that the NSSE and the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BSSE), which is administered before students attend college and measures students' expectations, now can provide links to these surveys from within systems such as Banner or D2L/Brightspace, as opposed to sending the survey links via email as they have in the past. Use of this embedded survey system has greatly improved response rates at other universities.

   b) **Annual review of program assessment plans and reports – subcommittee member recommendations:** Dr. Shiretta Ownbey opened up discussion about AAIC's evaluation of annual assessment plans and reports submitted to UAT. The issue is how exactly is this to be done. Dr. Ownbey suggested that members of AAIC form a subcommittee to complete a more thorough and consistent review of the annual assessment plans and reports. The strategy is to identify programs that will have an academic program review (APR) coming up the following year. Once identified, the AAIC subcommittee would then evaluate those plans and reports to provide feedback to the assessment coordinators prior to their APR. Dr. Brenda Masters will provide the list of programs that the committee would review. Dr. Ownbey asked if committee members preferred to review inside or outside of their areas of expertise. The consensus was that reviewing outside of a reviewer's college, but in close relationship to the reviewer's discipline, tended toward less bias on the part of the reviewer; it also

could lead to new ideas. When the exact number of programs have been determined, members of AAIC will be invited to participate on the subcommittee.   Reviews for the programs that will undergo APRs in 2018 need to be completed during Fall 2016 so that feedback can be provided to the programs in Spring 2017.

c) **Committee for the Assessment of General Education (CAGE) – Committee reformation, written guidelines/position descriptions:** Dr. Pam Fry began this discussion by referencing the 3-year-old General Education Task Force and Assessment Task Force recommendations. Dr. Fry feels strongly that these reports should continue be reviewed, so it makes sense to spell out the structure of CAGE in order to begin analyzing where we are and how OSU approaches general education assessment. She requested a working group be created to meet 1-3 times in the near future and tasked with more fully defining CAGE's mission statement, membership, structure, schedule of meetings, procedures and CAGE's interaction with GEAC, as well as an action plan. Dr. Jon Comer, current CAGE chair, agreed to chair the working group. James Knecht, Dr. John Gelder, and Dr. Carol Johnson, agreed to participate in the working group. Dr. Fry indicated she would also ask for a couple members of the General Education Advisory Council (GEAC) to participate. Dr. Ownbey asked that the group meet within the next month. Dr. Fry also recommended that the working group take into consideration that general education at OSU is more than just the first two years—it should continue through the senior year, with best practices resulting in a capstone experience. Such topics are what CAGE should address—examining the best practices and broader picture of general education, especially now that the 30/10 program is in place and as GEAC can get bogged down in course designation approval and is often not able to set aside time to discuss general education.

d) **Information Literacy as a possible general education assessment (possible replacement for Scientific Reasoning):** James Knecht began this discussion. Recent assessment cycles have not included Scientific Reasoning as it is difficult to measure through artifact rating. Placement in science has become difficult since COMPASS (ACT's placement testing system) was discontinued. GEAC has had artifact generation and collection challenges related to the Scientific Reasoning rubric. Many instructors also fear they may lose their general education course designation due to a lack of artifacts and the use of lab reports and/or group work. Sometimes artifacts are too factoid-based and do not allow opportunities to show reasoning. The OSU Library is investigating the assessment of Information Literacy, which is assessed successfully at other universities. It potentially be a better area to assess for general education at OSU as Information Literacy can cross disciplines in a way Scientific Reasoning does not. Cynthia Ippoliti stated that during the past two years, the library has been developing a first-year general education-approach to teaching students how to use library resources, how to do research, and how to use information critically—especially with courses with strong writing and research components. Ms. Ippoliti said they are looking at how they assess Information Literacy at a programmatic level. They have been looking at in-class evaluations and are now interested in looking at artifacts and applying the Value rubric for Information Literacy (identify, evaluate and utilize information effectively and ethically) to those artifacts. This approach could easily be used as a means for general education assessment in other classes.

Lisa Cota added that this approach of assessing Information Literacy is becoming a national trend, and it has a global reach across OSU's campus. Ms. Cota went on to say that Scientific Reasoning is a discipline-specific form of critical thinking, so OSU could put extra emphasis on getting artifacts from science-related courses when Critical Thinking is being assessed. Dr. Gordon added that is very difficult to assess scientific reasoning because it starts to overlay with knowledge and content. It is also difficult to get science reasoning artifacts from across disciplines, that are long enough to be assessed and that are not group projects or lab work. Dr. Gelder added that he felt that the Scientific Reasoning artifacts collected over the past years could also have

been assessed under the Critical Thinking rubric. Dr. Hickman questioned how faculty in the hard sciences might look at making such a change, and she stated she feels some faculty would respond negatively and might consider it to be, on the surface at least, a politically-related move. Dr. Gelder responded that with the current Scientific Reasoning rubric, reviewers have had to throw out many artifacts because they are too factoid-based and without many opportunities for actual reasoning. The artifacts submitted also tend to focus too much on the individual student. Dr. Comer added that upper level courses become difficult to assess on a scientific basis unless reviewers specialize in the particular discipline. It is much easier to find reviewers who can assess Critical Thinking. Dr. Gelder added any change would not be an effort to get rid of the "L" or "N" designations.

Dr. Fry posed the question, "Is the assessment driving the skill being assessed, or is the skill being assessed driving the assessment?" Dr. Gelder mentioned that similar changes with math assessment were made in the past because, at some level, only math instructors could review the artifacts. Dr. Johnson added that she has spoken to many companies in the market for employees who feel like knowledge is a cheap commodity—they really want people who know how to look for information and solve problems, regardless of the degree. To Dr. Johnson, Informational Literacy is a foundational skill to problem solving. Dr. Ownbey added that, with the easy access to data on the internet, teaching students to sift through that data is necessary. She feels that having more emphasis on Informational Literacy, whether or not another type of assessment is replaced, is definitely a good driver for teaching students that particular skill set. Dr. Wikle asked if the group should be looking at the process of applying for the "N" and "L" designations. He asked, "If one of the major problems is measurement, why aren't we looking at the process of applying for the "L" and the "N" designators as a way to be sure that the things we need on the artifacts are included in the requirements for designation?"

Dr. Gelder expressed his belief that the Scientific Reasoning rubric should be kept as a guide for future course development. Dr. Gordon stated that the Critical Thinking rubric and the Scientific Reasoning rubric actually overlap in many categories. Dr. Fry brought up the concept of common learning goals from the Assessment task force that concluded three years ago. The four categories were content, communication, critical thinking, and citizenship/community. She stated that perhaps these categories should drive changes in assessing key competencies. Dr. Hickman agreed that the general education application for designation should include what the course would be required to submit to the assessment process. Dr. Gordon reiterated that two pages of consecutive, individual writing is required for an assessable artifact. The GEAC requirements are five pages of writing for lower level courses and 10 pages for upper level courses, but these pages can be broken up into multiple one-page papers, disqualifying those assignments for assessment. The group also discussed whether requiring a common assignment for all courses would be appropriate and whether or not instructors of courses with designators are actually meeting the requirements. This issue was not concluded in this meeting.

e) "Orphaned" Minors and Assessment (Judy Nalon) – item not discussed and moved to October meeting.
f) Process for handling data requests to use OSU assessment data for research (Lisa Cota) – item not discussed and moved to October meeting.

4. **General Reminders**
   a) Assessment reports for 2015-2016 due September 15, 2016.
   b) The 2016-17 AAIC Membership list – According to the AAIC structure laid out on the UAT assessment site, AAIC is missing three members: a replacement for Dr. Hobson from CEAT, a representative from SGA and a representative of GSPGA. UAT has contacted SGA and GSPGA requesting representatives to be assigned.

5. **Adjourn –** Dr. Ownbey adjourned the meeting at 2:53 p.m.