



Assessment & Academic Improvement Council

Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 5, 2017 • 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. • 460 Student Union

Present: K. Clinkenbeard, J. Comer, B. Davis, C. Edwards, J. Gelder, K. Hickman, C. Ippoliti, C. Johnson, J. Knecht, J. Nalon, S. Ownbey, J. Swinney.

Absent: C. Campbell, P. Fry, K. Gage, S. Gordon, C. Hawkins, B. Masters, A. Rauner, R. Seitsinger, T. Wikle.

Guests: A. Witham

Call to Order. Dr. Ownbey called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

Approval of Minutes. Dr. Davis moved to approve the minutes from the April 2017 meeting. Dr. Johnson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Assessment Updates.

FY18 Program Outcomes Assessment Budget (James Knecht) Mr. Knecht informed the council that Assessment has approximately \$160,000 for program outcomes assessment, which is more than what was awarded last year. UAT is cautiously optimistic that most, if not all, FY18 Assessment Fund requests will be fully funded assuming the funding guidelines and procedures are followed correctly. Dr. Ownbey mentioned that one of the reasons we have more revenue for outcomes assessment is due to a small student assessment fee increase.

2016-17 Gen Ed Assessment (James Knecht) All of the artifacts needed for Gen Ed Assessment have been collected and are currently being anonymized for reviewers. We have received a good mix across colleges/programs as well as an appropriate number of both freshman- and senior-level artifacts. The Written Communication review group has been assembled and is in the process of going through training. The Critical Thinking review group is still in the recruitment stage.

Discussion Items.

Continued Discussion of 2015-16 General Education Assessment Findings on Diversity. Recommendations from the Photovoice project researchers along with suggestions provided by CAGE members were handed out and reviewed by the council. The group spent several minutes reading the information prior to discussion. The group considered the following recommendations worth consideration regarding diversity and assessment:

- Dr. Comer likes the idea of reviving workshops along the lines of the previous Provost's Initiative and/or the Assessment workshops. He feels this would be a low-cost option and that workshop leaders would be easy to find here on campus. However, these workshops only impact a small group of people. Dr. Ownbey reminded the council that participants in these Gen-Ed-based workshops had to agree to incorporate something learned from the workshop into their course the next time they taught it. The deliverable was an assignment that they tailored to their own course. Historically, the writing and critical thinking workshops filled to capacity at 20 participants, but the diversity workshops tended to level out at 8-10 participants. The workshops could be recorded for online distribution to reach a wider audience with the drawback of passively versus actively participating in the instruction.
- Dr. Comer also suggested that rubrics be provided to instructors who are filling out Gen Ed applications to ensure all instructors really see and are aware of how their assignments will be assessed.
- Dr. Ownbey pointed out multiple references in the committee's list of suggestions to more training for instructors teaching diversity courses. Dr. Comer stated that most of the participants who attended the Provost's Initiative training in diversity attended because they were looking for help in incorporating diversity in their course or were looking for help because they were assigned to teach a "D" course. Dr. Johnson added that although there are requirements for a course to be approved as a "D" course, there are no requirements about a paper assigned in a "D" course be about diversity itself. She offered that the Gen

Ed guidelines for receiving a “D” designation should be firmed up a little as far as what should happen. Teaching a diversity course is a privilege, and there is no reason why renewal training couldn’t be required every so often. It’s required for IRB and online courses in SSB, as examples.

- Dr. Swinney suggested pulling a list of “D” course instructors who have taught “D” courses for several years and inviting a handful of those instructors to share their experiences/difficulties teaching a “D” course in a “highly recommended” or “strongly encouraged” facilitated conversational setting (not training per se) with instructors who will be teaching a diversity course for the first time this fall or spring.
- Dr. Swinney also liked the idea of current U.S. events/news and diversity-related issues (both on- and off-campus) being used as prompts for diversity assignments.
- Dr. Ownbey revisited the recommendations from the Photovoice project researchers insofar as revising the goals of “D” and “I” courses to align them with the university’s diversity statement. Mr. Knecht mentioned that Dr. Bridget Miller had taken that suggestion to GEAC at their last meeting, but was unable to discuss it at length due to time constraints.
- Dr. Johnson then stated her concern about information given at the Photovoice presentation regarding the faculty researchers hearing students reveal offensive classroom experiences in the focus group sessions and not knowing how to respond. She believes some sort of sensitivity/awareness training needs to be done with “D” instructors simply because they are not aware they are acting offensively. At the very least, the “D” instructors should be made aware of the Photovoice project results. Dr. Ownbey agreed and stated that perhaps the best way to share the results is in person rather than simply distributing a written report. Dr. Hickman agrees that steps need to be taken to initiate the dispersion of the Photovoice project results. She feels strongly that there are many Gen Ed instructors who are not aware that they should be participating in assessment. The first step may be to remind/inform these instructors that we need an assessable artifact at the end of the course. She believes there are many ways to be creative in producing an artifact. CAGE recommended uniform directions be given out to all Gen Ed instructors – discussion among council and CAGE members at this meeting clarified that “uniform directions” referred to the length of the papers required for assessment, not as a limitation to instructor creativity. Mr. Knecht stated that GEAC has been tasked with addressing Gen Ed course application requirements, but time is limited in GEAC meetings; perhaps this fall semester is an opportune time for a subcommittee of AAIC and GEAC work together to accomplish this goal.
- Dr. Ownbey brought up that it is possible for an instructor to go through the process of applying for a Gen Ed designation through the GEAC website without their department head even being aware of the application, which can result in mistakes being made that could be avoided with department head approval and feedback. She acknowledged that this is a technology problem, but it needs to be addressed by GEAC. Mr. Knecht added that once the Gen Ed designation has been approved and a course has new sections added to it, often the instructors of those new sections are not aware of the assessment goals/requirements associated with the Gen Ed designation. Discussion followed. A&S has a procedure in place whereby all requests for Gen Ed designation have to go through their college curriculum committee.
- Judy Nalon proposed that the Photovoice research team be asked to create a 5-minute video that explains what Photovoice is and what their research found. The video could in turn be used as a focus of one of the above-proposed “get-togethers” as a way of starting a conversation between the instructors who have been teaching these courses for a while and new “D” course instructors. The video could address the uncomfortable issues students brought up in the focus groups and help make instructors aware of the situation. Furthermore, the video could be used in other venues.
- Dr. Swinney suggested that a letter be sent to all instructors who will be teaching a “D” course in the fall semester: “Dear Dr. Smith, we’re grateful that you will be teaching (COURSE)” along with a rubric and a reminder about what diversity is. Ms. Nalon added that would be especially helpful with adjunct instructors who had never been on campus before. Dr. Johnson agreed that sharing the rubric is important. We don’t want to tell people how to write an assignment, but we do want people to create assignments that can be assessed.
- Dr. Hickman stated that she believes that the Council should act on all four suggestions for Gen Ed courses recommended by the Photovoice researchers:

- Ensure all instructors of ‘D’ or ‘I’ courses have reviewed the rubric used for assessment of ‘D’ and ‘I’ courses in order to help provide guidance on the types of assignments that will be most beneficial for university-level assessment of student learning
- Ensure that instructors of these courses have all undergone training
- Revise the goals/guidelines of ‘D’ and ‘I’ courses to align them with the university diversity statement and to create goals and assignments that encourage a consistent experience (such as guaranteeing experiential learning and purposeful interactions). Creating a common writing product (such as creating a personal statement/definition of diversity, or writing about positionality, self-awareness, or exploration of diversity issues) across ‘D’ courses could be helpful in assuring the effectiveness of these courses and facilitate assessment of what students are learning about diversity issues.
- Provide guidelines for the types of assignments that best facilitate learning of the ‘D’ outcomes so that instructors have clear statements for what students should be able to articulate or answer after taking a “D” course (e.g., After taking a “D” course, students at OSU will be able to....”) is vital for helping instructors and students understand the purpose of the course and the types of assignments to give/expect in these courses.

Additionally, Dr. Hickman stated she feels it’s important to get the rubrics in front of every “D” designated course instructor and to disseminate the student responses/data gathered from the Photovoice project. She’d like to begin moving forward with these items. Dr. Johnson agreed. Judy Nalon asked for a formal motion. Dr. Ownbey stated that we should all agree to move forward.

- Dr. Johnson volunteered to generate and provide a complete list of “D” course instructors for Fall 2017.
- Dr. Ownbey and Dr. Swinney agreed to draft a letter alluded to earlier in these notes and present it to the AAIC prior to it going out. The rubric already exists.
- Dr. Hickman emphasized that this whole process ought to be facilitated from the college level to ensure that the instructors of all “D” courses know that they have a responsibility for general education assessment.
- Dr. Johnson stated that she, as an associate dean of the business college, would like to know when UAT asks for assessment artifacts from business college “D” courses and which instructors are unable to provide appropriate artifacts for assessment; this could perhaps lead even removing the “D” designation from those courses that do not generate assessment artifacts.
- After a short discussion about assessment artifacts, Mr. Knecht clarified to the council that when UAT gathers senior papers on written communication and critical thinking, IRIM generates a list of all senior-level courses, not just Gen Ed courses, and UAT contacts instructors who have graduating seniors in their classes but may not have a Gen Ed-designated course in order to increase the artifact pool.
- Dr. Swinney requested that UAT and Dr. Comer create a list of instructors who have submitted good quality artifacts in a “D” designated courses in the past. The next step would be to facilitate a conversation between those instructors who have submitted good quality artifacts and novices to the “D” Gen Ed designation. All would get a letter. All would get a rubric.
- Dr. Johnson suggested that the Dean’s office in the college of business could send a letter directly to the small number of instructors with “D” designated courses stating that this [generation of assessment artifacts] is important.
- Dr. Gelder suggested that once we’ve identified instructors who are doing well providing assessment artifacts could be asked to give feedback on the diversity statement as it is now.

- Dr. Davis and Dr. Gelder discussed the variety of [rubric] prompts and how they focus on many types of diversity, not just race but gender, etc. as they pertain to written assignments.
- Dr. Swinney feels giving a list of these prompts to new instructors would be very beneficial.
- Dr. Davis feels that a reflective response to a reading assignment as opposed to a research paper within the class might actually give a better indication of learning. Dr. Comer agreed, saying research papers tend to be more textbook summary than a true expression of student beliefs.
- Dr. Swinney asked about diversity in presenters at the fall convocation ceremony. Discussion followed. She also asked if there was a way to piggyback a student presentation onto the actress Viola Davis' scheduled appearance in the spring – or even asking Ms. Davis to give a little presentation on diversity. Dr. Ownbey replied that the Foundation is paying Ms. Davis. It is unknown if the university wants to pay her to give another presentation or if she is even available.
- Dr. Johnson indicated that she really likes the professional development requirements that the College of Human Sciences has in place – having students attend a certain number and type of events.
- Mr. Knecht reiterated that Diversity artifacts won't be collected again until Fall of 2018.
- Ms. Nalon stated that being able to report that some sort of diversity assessment process/data implementation, if not real results, would be helpful when creating the HLC Report coming up in 2020.
- Dr. Ownbey asked the UAT staff to contact the Photovoice research members informally and ask if they would be amenable to participating in some of the ideas that the council has discussed today. Recording could be done at the ITLE studios.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS DISCUSSION:

1. Contact Photovoice researchers to ask them to develop videos that could be shared during a workshop/conversation.
2. Begin the development of a diversity conversation/workshop between experienced and less-experienced faculty, which can cover a variety of topics but would definitely include the Photovoice concept.
3. Contact all diversity instructors and copy their department heads providing them a rubric and guidelines for writing assignments that are necessary for assessment. Drs. Ownbey and Swinney will be drafting the letter and sharing it at the next AAIC meeting so everyone can give feedback. Ask Dr. Fry or Dr. Sandefur to sign the letter – stressing that instructors should do their best to attend.
4. Dr. Johnson will print out a list of all the diversity course instructors and their department heads. The letter from action item #3 could probably be sent to all department heads in general.
5. Dr. Comer and UAT will go through the list of past diversity instructors who have generated effective assessment artifacts.
6. Dr. Ippoliti will contact the library about meeting space for the event/s.

General Reminders.

Mr. Knecht asked the council to remind faculty to submit any assessment funding requests by May 19. He has created a new form detailing the planned use of college outcome assessment monies that he will forward to and/or meet to discuss with associate deans in the near future. A&S is starting a program to award individuals/committees for outstanding general education instructors at the lower level and one for outstanding program assessment.

College Updates. None

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 2:57 p.m.