

**University Assessment Committee**  
**Minutes**  
**November 12, 2003 Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. by Scott Chadwick. **Members Present:** Barbara Braden, Scott Chadwick, Isabelle Cherney, Craig Dallan, Tim Dickel, Janet Graves (representing Joan Norris), Gail Jensen, Fran Klein, Jim Knudsen, Tom Meng, Todd Salzman, and Stephanie Wernig. **Members Absent due to University business:** Bill Jeffries, Mike Kavan, Mike Monaghan.

1. **Minutes** of the October 14 meeting were approved as submitted.
2. **Availability for meetings next semester.**  
Scott asked each member to provide their schedule for the spring semester by November 21, 2003 to [mking@creighton.edu](mailto:mking@creighton.edu) or [chadwick@creighton.edu](mailto:chadwick@creighton.edu).
3. **Report on Unit Assessment Plans levels of Readiness** (Scott)  
Reports have been received from all areas but one. Scott asked the committee for suggestions on how to report this information to the committee. Craig Dallan recommended that the committee decide the report format after all reports have been received.
4. **University-level assessment goals** (Scott and subcommittee members)

**Father Schlegel's comments about university-level assessment goals**

Scott reported that while meeting with Father Schlegel and Christine Wiseman, Father Schlegel listed five goals for students graduating from Creighton University:

- Students will have an ethics/values-centered orientation.
- Students will have a sense of service and community.
- Students will engage in and have a sense of civic responsibility.
- Students will achieve disciplinary competence/proficiency.
- Students will be effective communicators.

Scott informed the committee that the listing of those goals came during a discussion about university-level assessment. It was not Father Schlegel's intent to prescribe university-level assessment goals. Instead, he was providing visibility into areas he believes are of most importance. In the meeting, Father Schlegel noted that he will be willing to engage in discussions about university structures, policies, and practices as necessary to help make university-level assessment workable. An example of such is a discussion about the interaction between assessment and Rank and Tenure policy, decision-making and rewards, particularly as it relates to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

**Report from the subcommittee** (Gail, Scott, Stephanie, Tom, Todd)

Subcommittee members made two recommendations for university-level assessment:

- Create a common language for educating the university about assessment goals.
- Develop assessment goals that reflect the University's strategic plan. The current strategic plan does not include measurable goals.

Scott explained to the committee that the Strategic Plan will be modified over time. A proposal to implement the strategic plan and incorporate an annual cycle of strategic plan implementation, review, and modification is before the President's cabinet. If the proposal is accepted as written, the implementation process will begin in January of 2004.

Discussion followed by the members expressing their concerns about including the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning as part of Rank and Tenure review.

5. **Building a common language and set of practices.** (Scott and subcommittee members)  
In response to the sub-committee's recommendation for building a common language and university assessment practices, Scott introduced two glossaries as examples of how schools are building and using a common set of assessment terms and phrases.

**Handouts distributed:**

University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse:

[http://www.uwlax.edu/provost/assessment/A\\_glossary.htm](http://www.uwlax.edu/provost/assessment/A_glossary.htm)

Christopher Newport University:

<http://www.cnu.edu/admin/assess/about/plans/glossary.htm>

Discussion by the members followed, with members indicating their preference of the two models presented.

**Comments included:**

- Glossary from University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse provides a shorter/simpler set of definitions as a model.
- Definitions should clearly point to student learning evaluation.
- Goals will be effective only if each college uses a shared terminology that filters through the goals of the University.
- Questions arose from the committee regarding the extent of University assessment goals. Discussion followed about the need for the committee to assess all areas of the University (i.e., facilities, Athletics, Public Safety). While some members expressed their preference to not survey units outside academic areas, other members explained that if student learning is affected by any unit on campus that area will need to be assessed.
- Non-academic areas should not be "directly" assessed but if that area affects programming then that area will fall under assessment goals.
- University mission shows a trickle down to all units of the University. Student learning outcomes should reflect the University Mission Statement reflecting back to unit outcomes.
- Learning occurs outside the classroom; UAC would be remiss to focus only on classroom outcomes.
- Members agreed that all areas on campus should be provided a clear set of assessment definitions. Scott asked the committee to provide key terms used by their areas for the glossary by December 2.

6. **Other items for discussion**

Members also asked Scott to request clarification of the Committee's non-academic assessment responsibilities from Administration. **Note:** Clarification distributed via email on November 14, 2003 as shown below.

*The consensus at our last meeting was for me to seek clarification on the purview of the University Assessment Committee (UAC). I spoke with Chris Wiseman about the purview of the UAC. We are in agreement that the UAC's primary focus should be on academic issues of student learning, but other issues, as they affect student learning, fall within the purview of the committee, as well. The UAC operates at the university level, possibly being the one place at which the intersection of initiatives and activities from across the university are considered for their primary and interaction effects on student learning outcomes. The UAC exists to advise and assist, but not to supplant college or school-level efforts.*

*I think that understanding preserves the intent for the committee as presented in the original plans and goals for the committee. If you see a way to modify the committee's purpose and operation with the result of ultimately enhancing student learning, please don't hesitate to bring it up for discussion amongst all of us.*

Members also asked Scott to distribute the six objectives written by the College of Arts and Sciences. **Note:** Distributed the following information November 19, 2003 via email.

*Students who graduate from the Creighton College of Arts and Sciences will learn to integrate their studies into a commitment to the life of the mind, heart, imagination, and spirit. Specifically, Creighton students will learn to:*

- 1. Communicate clearly and effectively in written, spoken, mathematical, and artistic languages.*
- 2. Think critically about information, assumptions, and arguments found in multiple forms of academic and cultural discourse.*
- 3. Integrate broad and diverse learning with an individually chosen discipline or professional field.*
- 4. Know the Christian, Catholic, and Jesuit intellectual traditions in the context of historical, cultural and spiritual concerns which follow from a life committed to learning.*
- 5. Apply a reasoned approach to effective decision-making according to sound and coherent ethical principles.*
- 6. Relate active commitment to learning, truth, and justice to service and development of the global community.*

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

**Next meeting December 9, 7:30-8:30, SC 104**

Respectfully submitted,

Michele King