

University Assessment Committee
Minutes
December 9, 2003

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 a.m. by Scott Chadwick. **Members Present:** Barbara Braden, Scott Chadwick, Isabelle Cherney, Craig Dallan, Janet Graves (representing Joan Norris), Bill Jeffries, Gail Jensen, Mike Kavan, Fran Klein, Jim Knudsen, Tom Meng, Todd Salzman, and Stephanie Wernig. **Members Absent:** Tim Dickel, Mike Monaghan.

1. **Minutes** of the November 12 meeting were approved as submitted.
2. **Availability for meetings next semester.** (everyone)
Scott reported that the collection of schedules for the spring semester showed open times for meetings on Mondays from 4-5 p.m. or Tuesdays from 8-9 a.m. Scott asked the members for feedback on meeting times. Following a brief discussion, the committee chose Tuesdays from 8-9 for the spring meetings.

Spring Semester, 2004 Meeting Schedule

Tuesday, January 20, 8-9 a.m., SC Room 104
Tuesday, February 10, 8-9 a.m., SC Room 104
Tuesday, March 16, 8-9 a.m., SC Room 104
Tuesday, April 13, 8-9 a.m. SC West Ballroom

3. **Discussion of information provided by Scott after last month's meeting.** (everyone)
Scott asked if the committee had comments or questions about the information he forwarded last month (*Purview of UAC and CCAS Learning Goals*). No comments or discussion followed.
4. **Update on the Unit Assessment Reports** (level of readiness) (Scott)
Scott reported that all units (colleges and schools) represented on the UAC have now sent him their level of readiness report. No action will be taken on these reports at this time, as the Deans' reports will be arriving shortly.
5. **Common assessment language for inclusion in a university-level glossary.** (Scott)
Scott reported that he has received feedback from the representatives from Dentistry, Law, CCAS Humanities, and CCAS Social Sciences. He will produce a draft glossary for UAC review in February, but needs additional input from all areas to build the draft. The UAC can continue to enhance the glossary as the university progresses on assessment issues.
6. **Reviewing and responding to Dean's Annual Assessment Reports** (everyone)
Scott presented the following suggestions for reviewing the assessment reports. Members were asked to make additional suggestions or comments.
 - o We expect to receive eight reports
 - o Distribute all reports to each UAC member
 - o Three people will review each report. If possible, one person from the VPHS's area, one person from the VPAA's area, and Scott.
 - o No person will review his or her dean's report.
 - o We will all start from the same review guidelines (see and discuss handout)

- As we review reports, we will modify the guidelines as appropriate; with ideas for improvement distributed electronically by Scott (he will be in each group and will have visibility across all groups).
- We will generate ideas for how best to structure our feedback to the Deans (with copies to the two VPs and President) as we review their reports, and then finalize the structure during our January meeting.
- We will construct our feedback report in time to distribute them to the Deans, VPs, and President on February 1.

Scott also provided the committee with a draft of guidelines for reviewing each of the reports. Those guidelines are shown below:

Essentially, we have asked for two threads of information, and internal and an external thread. The internal thread has as its primary target audience internal decision-makers (e.g., Administrators, Curriculum and related committees, faculty, etc.). The internal thread seeks information related to the following topics:

1. Goals
2. Objectives
3. Direct and indirect measures of those objectives
4. The feedback loop(s) used by the unit
5. The connection of the goals/objectives to unit and university missions and strategic goals.

The external thread has as its primary target audience the Higher Learning Commission. This thread seeks information related to the following topics:

1. Institutional Culture: Collective / Shared Values
2. Institutional Culture: Mission
3. Shared Responsibility: Faculty
4. Shared Responsibility: Administration and Board
5. Shared Responsibility: Students
6. Institutional Support: Resources
7. Institutional Support: Structures
8. Efficacy of Assessment

In the long-term, it will be beneficial if the annual reports can provide information to fill both threads. In the short-term, it is unlikely any of the reports will accomplish that feat. Our review process will be most helpful if we help the annual assessment report authors see how what they wrote addresses, or fails to address, the components of those threads, regardless of the format they used to submit their report. Doing so may hold the best chance to help guide the report authors to produce brief reports tailored to those two audiences, while minimizing the amount of work beyond what they currently do for their other assessment audiences.

The intent of our reviews should be to

1. Come to understand and document the state of assessment in each unit.
2. Offer advice and guidance regarding how to optimize each unit's assessment processes and outcomes without infringing on each unit's autonomy or their responsibilities to other stakeholders.
3. Help the report authors understand how they fit into the larger university assessment process.
4. Identify cross-unit assessment training needs.
5. Other ideas?

Discussion by the committee followed, with members asking for clarification of reporting format based on the guidelines presented.

Comments, questions, and responses:

Question:

Should current reports be re-written to reflect the guidelines of 1-5 on review draft?

Response:

No, not for this round of review. Some colleges/schools may provide us with pre-existing reports as it appears Dentistry did. That is fine. The committee's task is to review the reports to determine to what extent the five internal thread guidelines and eight external thread guidelines are covered, then report on that. The goal is not to create a new report for each Dean to construct. If existing reports do not provide the UAC sufficient information, then we will work with the Dean's, or their representatives, to determine how to get the necessary information at the least trouble to them.

Question:

Would it be advantageous to have a pre-defined template that all Dean's could use as they produce their report?

Response:

Yes, it would. And that might be one of the outcomes of this initial process of submission, review, and feedback. But, such a template would be premature at this point in time. Let's see what we learn from the process we are using. We might find that some college's/school's existing report will work just fine, requiring no additional work for them. We might also find we can propose a workable template that requires little, if any, additional work for people. Currently, I (Scott) am very sensitive to requiring additional work of Deans when the information we need may presently be available in an existing form. Through our review process, we might find that one of the reports submitted may be used as an exemplar that other colleges/schools could use as a model for future reports.

Question:

For the current report, should the report writers specifically cover all thirteen topics as listed in the request for reports?

Response:

Yes and no. Ideally, answers/information relevant to all thirteen topics will be in a report. That could be accomplished by structuring the report around the internal topics (i.e., goals, objectives, etc.) and embedding information relevant to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Or, that could be accomplished by structuring the report around the HLC's topics and embedding information relevant to internal audiences. Or, that could be possible by providing an existing report originally designed for a different target audience, but that still covers all of the topics.

Question:

What if a college/school is not completely "there" on assessment. For example, Pharmacy and Health Professions are trying to identify scholarship of assessment

suggestions to use across the health sciences disciplines, but they have not implemented them.

Response:

These reports are designed to provide the UAC and university administration visibility into the status of assessment efforts across the university. These reports will not be used in a punitive manner. Instead, the reports will be used to understand what is, and offer suggestions for improving that which is as we move forward. It is acceptable if a report states that a college/school is not doing something in one area of assessment (or in one of the internal or external topics). That provides useful information that can be used to help feedback into the system and effect change. It will be problematic for a college/school to ignore areas in which assessment is under-developed; as it will appear that the unit is unaware of what is their status.

Question:

As we review reports, will it be our task to evaluate the appropriateness of a college's/school's goals and objectives.

Response:

No, not on the content of the goals and objectives.

- (The following note has been added by Scott Chadwick after the meeting but before these minutes were distributed: I think the better answer to the question asked would have been, “yes and no.” My original “no” response came from the position that each college and school has the functional expertise required to produce workable goals and objectives and the UAC may lack the expertise required to evaluate those goals and objectives from a functional point of view. Thus, in most cases (and I cannot think of an exception at this point in time) the UAC should not interfere with the “content” of a college's/school's goals and objectives. Once the university agrees on university-level goals the UAC may need to help colleges/schools understand how their goals fit the university's goals. However, the UAC does have the expertise to comment on the form of the goals and objectives. For example, if a college proposes to use an objective that is un-measurable then we should feel comfortable pointing that out and suggesting a way out of that measurement problem. Similarly, the UAC sees ways to improve the efficiency and/or effectiveness of a unit's assessment process as it relates to their goals and/or objectives, then we should feel comfortable offering suggestions for improvement and the rationale behind the suggestions. This question of purview will get more complex as we move ahead. But, if we maintain our focus on helping to understand assessment efforts while providing assistance in order for the colleges, schools, and university to achieve their goals then I expect we will add value to those units and minimize any activities that may be perceived to be interfering with their purviews. I apologize for not fleshing out my response completely in the meeting thus presenting the need to do so here.

Scott asked the members to participate in the report review by choosing a school other than their own to review. The goal will be for each school to be reviewed by a person from VPHS, one from VPAA, and Scott. School reports will be distributed to the committee before Christmas break, as they arrive at ETLA. Scott will arrange group meetings to start the review process once

the Dean's reports come in. The UAC reports back to the Deans, VPAA, VPHS, and President are targeted for distribution on February 12.

Unit	VPHS member *	VPAA member *
College of Arts & Sciences	Barb Braden	Craig Dallon
College of Business Administration	Janet Graves/Joan Norris	Todd Salzman
Dental School	Mike Kavan	Craig Dallon
Graduate School	Janet Graves/ Joan Norris	Isabelle Cherney
Law School	Gail Jensen	Stephanie Wernig
Medical School	Tom Meng	Todd Salzman
School of Nursing	Bill Jeffries	Stephanie Wernig
School of Pharmacy and Health Professions	Tom Meng	Fran Klein
Student Services	Gail Jensen	Jim Knudsen

* Scott Chadwick will serve on each group as a third member.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 a.m.

Next meeting Tuesday, January 20, 8:00 -9:00 a.m., SC 104

Respectfully submitted,

Michele King