

**University Assessment Committee/Faculty Senate Assessment Advisory Committee
Fall Quarter Joint Meeting**

November 11, 2009

Meeting Minutes

In attendance:

Ruth Cook (RC)
Don Dodson (DD)
Carol Gittens (CG)
Diane Jonte-Pace (DJP)
Dan Lewis (DL)
Ed McQuarrie (EM)
Cynthia Mertens (CM)
Dan Ostrov (DO)
Monica Parikh (MP)
Chuck Powers (CP)
Mahmudur Rahman (MR)
Ed Schaefer (ES)

1. Introductions
2. Reflections on what was experienced and learning from WASC CPR visit in terms of assessment.

DJP – WASC was impressed with SCU program review (structure and cycle) while noting assessment was not “enthusiastically” embraced. Also want to see incorporation of learning from assessment

DD – WASC noted considerable progress made, i.e. establishing Office of Assessment and Core Curriculum. More work needed to convey importance of assessment to faculty. DD's impression was that WASC feels that faculty need greater ownership and administration needs to provide greater guidance re: assessment; DJP concurred.

ES – Start using outcomes to make changes re: student learning. His impression is that WASC felt there are too many surveys, particularly utilizing indirect assessment.

DD – Not enough direct assessment has been done, looking at proposal to reduce major surveys.

RC – Questions re: qualitative and quantitative data; does WASC prefer one over the other?

After general questions about the difference between the two types of data, EM explained direct assessment as data that measures student work product; quantitative is numbers, metrics [Definitions of these terms are provided below].

“Direct” Measures of Student Learning

- Assessing student learning based on student work or performance. Direct measures are more meaningful indicators of student learning than indirect measures.

“Indirect” Measure of Student Learning

- Assessing student learning based on perception, such as self evaluations, exit interviews, employee surveys, alumni surveys, etc. Indirect measures are not as meaningful as direct measures but are helpful when used to corroborate results of direct measures.

Quantitative Data

- Information that can be counted or expressed numerically; quantitative data are often manipulated and statistically analyzed. Quantitative data can also be represented visually in graphs and charts.

Qualitative Data

- Information that can be used to describe or categorize performances, work products or observations into patterns; qualitative data are typically gathered using one or more of the following methods: Observation, Field Notes, Journals, Interviews, and descriptive analyses of documents and materials.

DO – WASC seems more interested in quality of data than amount.

3. Annual Assessment Report – what is the purpose, why yearly?

CG supplied a few examples of Annual Reports.

DD – Rationale of annual report is to help departments keep current in terms of assessment of learning goals and department self study rather than have it done all at once at the end of the 8 year cycle. This keeps the task manageable and gives departments an opportunity to apply recommendations/lessons learned (which may in turn reduce/improve workloads). Also help departments review goals and objectives.

CG – One goals of the Office of Assessment this year is to establish a process so that departments get feedback re: Annual Reports; helps them see the value and relevance.

MP – IR (Institutional Research?) is working to demystify their work and research results to help faculty/departments with their assessment tasks/goals.

DO – Suggests doing Annual Reports every two years given longer, 8 year cycle. Allows for a more reflective process and allows departments time to implement changes. Survey, analyze and implement over two years; also gives departments ability to know if a change isn't working.

DO also points out that having assessment reports due every two years could make the UAC do a better job giving feedback.

4. Concern over excessive assessment activity on campus. Where are areas that could be targeted to improve efficiency?

ES – Complaints about assessment expressed in the Faculty Senate Assessment Survey: too much too it; issues of manageability.

DD – Too many surveys by departments squeeze out participation/willingness in institutional surveys. Also, faculty/departments often don't think to look at institutional data already available. To improve efficiency it would make sense to use single work product for multiple objectives. Departments sometimes set too ambitious an agenda; less is often more. Also, external mandates can create the perception of excessive amounts of assessment.

5. What will the next 16 months between CPR and EER site visits look like in terms of assessment activity?

DJP – No new projects before last stage for WASC, although building on several projects already underway, e.g. McQuarrie Report, Work/Life Balance initiatives (Bill Sundstrom, Faculty Development). EER needs to be completed for next year.

DD – New survey being developed by Laura Nichols (Sociology) and Kieran Sullivan (Psychology) for Faculty Work/Life Advancement Committee; What are the stressors for faculty relating to work/life issues.