

University Assessment Committee
January 22, 2010
Meeting Minutes

Members present: Carol Gittens, Steve Lee, Cynthia Mertens, Monica Parikh, Dan Lewis, Chuck Powers, Joseph Hellebrandt, and Ed McQuarrie (via PolyCom)

I. Brainstorm: Strategy for providing feedback to departments / programs on the Annual Assessment Report.

- A. Who will give the assessment report feedback?
 - a. It was decided that the feedback must come from the Office of Assessment (i.e., Carol Gittens until there is additional staff)
 - b. Feedback will be communicated to the Dean's Offices and to the department / program heads

- B. What should be the main message(s) in the feedback?
 - a. The purpose of the Annual Assessment Report is to document the department or program's reflections on actual data / evidence in order to make program improvements.
 - b. Feedback should point out whether the program is or is not staying with the spirit of what is intended in this annual assessment process.
 - c. THAT there is feedback is more important than the length and detail of the feedback provided
 - d. Recommendation: Use statements like "It is really important that you did this...."
 - e. Feedback will also include pointing out, when appropriate, ways to make process more meaningful and manageable (e.g., reducing the overall number of learning objectives, not measuring every objective every year, connecting specific assessment projects to specific learning objectives, etc).

- C. What is ideal timeline and format of Annual Assessment Reports?
 - a. There has been a recommendation to move the reporting process to a 2-year timeline (recommendation was made by members of the FSAAC at the November 2009 meeting of the University Assessment Committee and the Faculty Senate Assessment Advisory Committee)
 - b. Ed McQuarrie said that a move to every other year would be particularly bad for the Business School; other unit reps in the room concurred on behalf of their programs.
 - c. The consensus of the group was that the recommendation would be counter-productive to nurturing a culture of assessment at SCU. Furthermore, it would be unwise given that it will not effectively address negative faculty views or build engagement around assessment and it is likely to be inconsistent with what WASC and AACSB, ABET, CTC (and to some extent ABA) would want to see from our programs.

- d. A biennial report would mean “less work” for Carol each year, but it would also mean that departments/ programs would only receive feedback on an every-other-year basis. This would not be sufficient in frequency to be formative and useful.
- e. A counter-recommendation was put forward: Alternative proposal to *modify annual deadline* and format of report
 - i. Change deadline to end of academic year (e.g., June 1st)
 - ii. Change title of the document to “Annual Assessment *Update*”
 - iii. Recommended format:
 - 1. 2-3 pages;
 - 2. three sections:
 - a. Follow up on the reflections / actions / responses to last year’s activity (paragraph written by last year’s departmental assessment committee)
 - b. Summary of the status of current year’s student learning assessment activities (written by current year’s departmental assessment committee)
 - c. Proposed plan for the coming academic year (representing the plan made by the department as the year comes to a close)
 - iv. Suggestion that departments that have programs within them (e.g., Communication, Modern Languages, Computer Engineering, etc) could assess student learning objectives in a specific program (e.g., Journalism, Spanish Studies, etc). [Carol commented that this has always been acceptable but it is not widely advertised because it doesn’t apply to all departments].
- f. An additional suggestion was made that we should consider offering guidelines for assessment related activities in each year of the new 8-year Program Review cycle.
 - i. For example, in the first year following Program Review, departments should be encouraged to revisit and potentially rewrite their Student Learning Goals and Objectives.
 - ii. In Years 2-6 (or 1-6 if the student learning objectives do not need revision), departments should assess their student learning objectives. These years should be used to cycle through the student learning objectives (one or more a year to get them all done by the end of Year 6)
 - iii. Year 7 should be used to assess Scholarship and Serve Goals / Objectives. It should also be the Program Review Self Study preparation year.
 - iv. It was discussed how this may work for the College of Arts & Sciences, but may not be as wise in Schools on a particular specialized accreditation cycle that doesn’t match with the 8 year SCU Program Review cycle.

- v. It was suggested that perhaps each of the Dean's Offices could be collaborators in designing individualized recommendations for yearly activity to coincide with external accreditation and Program Review timelines.

- g. CG asked if there was anything to be learned from the follow up discussions / feedback sessions that have occurred with departments after their Program Review year. JH and SL both indicated that the best outcome of these meetings was the opportunity for the College of Arts & Science dean's office to listen to what the department had to say. CP offered that in his department it was a meaningful discussion but it didn't feel like "feedback".

Meeting adjourned.

Reminder: Upcoming joint meeting of the UAC and the Faculty Senate Assessment Advisory Committee on February 4th, 2010.