

Assessment Committee Minutes

March 1, 2002

Members Present: Dr. David Underwood (chair), Dr. Cathy Baker, Mr. John Baker, Dr. Eldon Clary, Dr. Jan Jenkins, Mr. Luke Hefley, Dr. Annette Holeyfield, Dr. David Roach, Dr. Carey Roberts, Mr. Ron Robison, Dr. Glenn Sheets, Ms. Carol Trusty, Dr. John Watson, and Mr. Wyatt Watson. Ms. Lori Lebahn was absent due to a prior commitment.

Call to Order

Dr. Underwood called the meeting to order in Pendergraft #325 at 2:15 p.m. The meeting began with the approval of minutes for the December 7, 2001 and the January 29, 2002 meetings. After reviewing the minutes, Dr. Roach asked for clarification of the last sentence in the Official Business paragraph of the January 29, 2002 minutes – “Dr. John Watson suggested that an assessment requirement be added to the current curriculum proposals.” Dr. Watson proposed that the minutes be reworded to specifically address assessment as it relates to the procedures for the proposal of a new course and a new program. Motion was approved to amend the minutes and seconded.

Official Business

The members recommended that a memo be submitted to the Curriculum Committee and to the Graduate Council requesting an addition to the procedures for the proposal of a new course and a new program. Dr. Underwood indicated that he would draft a memo, send it to all the members for approval, and then present it to the Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Council for approval. Since the procedures for the proposal of a new course and a new program are included as part of the Faculty Handbook, the requested change may require approval from the Board of Trustees.

Feedback on Assessment Forms

Dr. Underwood opened the meeting to comments concerning the use of the assessment forms and inquired as to the responses that had been received. Overall, the majority of comments were positive and the majority of members were in favor of using the assessment forms as the standard assessment approach. Several academic department representatives indicated that some of the assessment objectives were already being implemented and that some academic departments were currently beginning the implementation stage. In addition, after reviewing the current assessment approach, many academic departments discovered that although they are measuring assessment, there were no initial assessment expectations. Dr. Underwood stated that although the Student Services representative was not present at the meeting, she indicated that all the feedback she received was favorable, and Ms. Carol Trusty, Administration and Finance representative, concurred. There were also several concerns listed below:

- - Several department heads indicated that they would rather make notes in their own handwriting versus completing a standardized form.
- - There were some concerns about over-standardization for each level listed on the form. Some faculty believe that it would be forcing them into a structure they may not want. If we ask that they use the standard form will we then start asking for standard data on the form.

Dr. Underwood suggested that it is important for the committee to consider whether it is better to use the same form because of the benefits to the committee and the university; consistency, ease of providing feedback, etc., or to have a few individuals unhappy with the process. He stated that we

would be unlikely to ever have everyone in agreement with our ideas. The committee must determine what is best for the university as a whole and then we proceed to implementation. If a few faculty do not trust the administration enough to believe there is no ulterior motive for requiring a standard form for reporting, there is not much that can be done because those faculty are likely to be inherently suspicious. The idea is to use the same format, but the content should certainly vary among departments and programs.

- - A request was made to have an example of a completed assessment form - Dr. Underwood indicated that he would post some examples on the IR website
- - In programs that already have regional accreditation, there might be extra work involved in completing the assessment forms, due to the fact that the program must follow prescribed assessment guidelines – Dr. Underwood pointed out that the assessment guidelines really should not be that different and there should not be much additional work required. Usually, what is required for specialized accreditation, especially NLN, ABET, AACSB and NCATE, is already sufficient for North Central.
- - Departments may not always have specific assessment measures. An example from the business school was given relating to an objective of faculty staying current. Only one measure could be thought of. – Dr. Underwood suggested the idea that the more nebulous an objective, the more measures may be required to indicate how well the objective is being met. He suggested some additional measures that might be considered as proxies for currencies such as; the number of times faculty/staff attended conferences, attended workshops, attended seminars, even publications could be considered proxies of currency.
- – Administrative support is crucial to the implementation of the assessment forms – Dr. Underwood assured the committee that every academic department and academic support department would have the full support of the administration. He pointed out that this committee was formed, and he was appointed as chair of the committee, by the President.

After evaluating the comments and concerns listed previously, the committee unanimously agreed to use the assessment forms as the University's standard approach for reporting assessment activities. Motion to use the forms as the University's method for assessment was made and seconded – motion approved.

Additional Comment

Several comments were made indicating that the committee shared a consensus that the previous assessment plans and processes developed prior to the recent North Central visit lacked a clear assessment objective.

New Business

Dr. Underwood suggested that the committee establish an initial deadline and completion goals for the assessment forms. Dr. Underwood also commented that it would be beneficial if the University could complete at least two assessment cycles prior to the North Central visit. The committee unanimously agreed that each academic department and academic support department complete the first two columns of the assessment form and submit to the committee by mid April, 2002. Dr. Underwood will announce these goals and deadlines at the next Dean's Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.