

Assessment Oversight Committee

Report to Chancellor

June 16, 2016

The Assessment Oversight Committee met on June 16, 2016 in the Chancellors' Conference Room, Administration Building 328, at 9:00 a.m. Members present included Lynn Alexander, Ross Dickens, Patty Flowers, Rich Helgeson, Joe Henderson, Stephanie Kolitsch, Desireé McCullough, and Margaret Toston.

Kolitsch provided the Committee with an update regarding May assessment reports, including feedback numbers; potential areas for future discussions, especially in regards to faculty accomplishments in research and scholarly activity; and an update on the progress towards completing the Third Monitoring Report.

The Committee then focused on assessment coordination committee reports that were submitted in April, 2016. The Committee cited the following institutional strengths:

- Everyone across campus is involved in assessment.
- Feedback has been clear and concrete.
- The assessment process is breaking down “silos” across campus and encouraging cooperation between and among units.
- The campus as a whole has a better understanding of the assessment process and how it works at UT Martin.
- The structure of the assessment process is working for the current situation.
- There has been a clear shift in the mindset from “assessment is the administration’s responsibility” to “everyone is involved in assessment.”

The Committee also cited several concerns related to continuing the assessment process following the SACS COC visit and decision in December. These concerns include:

- UT Martin must have a process in place that pushes units to “stay the course” with assessment.
- There are still faculty and staff on campus who do not see the purpose of assessment, and UT Martin needs buy-in from everyone.
- The current short-term process of assessing everything is unsustainable. UT Martin needs to convert effectively to a sustainable cycle of assessment on a two- to three-year cycle. Furthermore, we need to “gear down” the process without grinding to a halt.
- Reporting and maintaining levels of communication about the assessment process is essential. Right now, everyone has a clear mission: to get off probation. This level of urgency cannot be maintained.
- Units need not only to make data-informed decisions for improvement, but also to collect data following the implementation of the decision to determine whether improvement is actually occurring.
- Unit assessment needs oversight within each unit. Faculty and staff will not remember what needs to be assessed and when it needs to be assessed when assessment is moved to a two- or three-year cycle.

- When changes occur within a program or unit, corresponding changes need to be made to the assessment plan.
- Continued training is essential!

After considering the existing strengths and remaining challenges, the **Committee makes the following recommendations for consideration by the Chancellor:**

- 1. Training in the assessment process should be the top priority.**
 - Faculty and staff should be sent to external assessment workshops specific to their respective areas. Within each area, pre- and post-discussions and communication should occur to determine information of greatest need (prior to the workshop) and to ensure dissemination of that information (following the workshop).
 - The university should provide on-campus training using the expertise of faculty and staff already on campus. After much discussion, ideas for on-campus training coalesced into a conference-style workshop that includes lunch for attendees. A minimum of three different topic sessions would each be offered twice, so that attendees could choose two different sessions to attend. Topic ideas included: closing the loop; direct vs. indirect measures; measurable vs. unmeasurable outcomes; and complete examples of the assessment process in action. The Committee recommended looking at established, national conferences on assessment as models. This conference-style training should occur in January and/or in May rather than in the fall.
- 2. Each unit/department should identify one person to coordinate data collection and analysis and to communicate assessment and data collection deadlines to others.**
- 3. Create individual assessment handbooks corresponding to each of the five institutional effectiveness areas.**
 - Handbooks would include the “basics” of assessment, including definitions, training materials, forms, and examples.
- 4. For academic units, create a Faculty Senate Assessment Committee to provide faculty oversight of the assessment process.**

The Committee also recommended that the assessment reporting forms be kept standard for at least one cycle; that the Assessment Coordination Committees meet a minimum of once per semester; and that the Assessment Newsletters be continued after the SACS COC decision in December, though not necessarily on a monthly basis.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.