

**Assessment Coordination Committee
on Educational Programs and Student Learning**

**Report to the Assessment Oversight Committee
April 18, 2016**

The Assessment Coordination Committee on Educational Program and Student Learning met on Monday, April 18, 2016 in the Chancellors' Conference Room, Administration Building 328, at 2:00 p.m. Members present included Lynn Alexander, Ross Dickens, Patty Flowers, Rich Helgeson, Stephanie Kolitsch, Renee LaFleur, Jeff Longacre, Desiree McCullough, Sam Richardson, Victoria Seng, Cynthia West, Janet Wilbert, and Todd Winters.

The Committee began by considering three different templates for use with academic program student learning outcome reports. After discussion, the Committee recommended that academic program reports use a new template that combined the best features of the three templates under discussion. This new template will be distributed to department chairs and deans for use beginning with the spring reports due in May, 2016.

The Committee then focused on the academic program reports that were submitted in February, 2016, and the consequent feedback given on those reports. The Committee cited the following institutional strengths:

- All academic program reports described assessment plans that included data collection and either specific examples of data-informed decisions or potential decisions based on data collected.
- The reports were read by reviewers from a wide variety of disciplines (through the DQP Task Force, SACS coordinator, and assessment coordinator), thus allowing reviewers from other disciplines to note instances of “assumed knowledge” within individual reports.
- Most of the written feedback focused on issues with completing the template rather than issues with content.
- It is clear that a culture of assessment and data-informed decision-making is being created on campus.
- The institution has made a lot of progress in the short amount of time since it was put on Probation by SACS COC.

The Committee also cited the following institutional challenges and weaknesses:

- The multiple formats being utilized for reporting were confusing.
- Many reports failed to identify who was responsible for collecting and analyzing data, when data analysis would occur, when decisions would be made based on the data, and/or what benchmarks were being used for assessments.
- Written feedback tended to focus more on the how the template was completed rather than the content of the template. Committee members reported requests for feedback on “what was said” as well as “how it was said.”
- Some assessment tools may not reflect best practices.

- The language used to describe decisions made needs to be stronger. For example, some reports used the language “we would like to...” when describing potential changes rather than “we are going to...;” “we will....;” or “we did....”

After considering the existing strengths and remaining challenges, the Committee made suggestions for addressing these identified challenges and weaknesses:

- Universal use of the new template described above should address any issues with multiple formats, identifying those responsible for collecting and using data, and identifying benchmarks for assessments.
- Instructions should be developed (as a separate document) to guide departments in filling out the new template.
- Guidelines should be developed for reviewers to use when reviewing these forms to ensure that content strengths and issues as well as formatting issues are addressed.
- The Committee recognized that the existing DQP Task Force is a temporary committee that was asked to review program reports as part of its charge this year. The Committee recommends that, for the foreseeable future, a small committee consisting of faculty from diverse backgrounds be appointed with the charge that the committee (1) review annual program reports submitted by October 1 each year; (2) provide written feedback to programs regarding both the content and the format of the reports; and (3) provide copies of the written feedback to the SACS coordinator and the assessment coordinator for use in subsequent reporting to the Assessment Coordination Committee on Educational Programs and Student Learning, the institution, and SACS COC.

Finally, the Committee noted that, while UT Martin’s placement on Probation by SACS COC was not a positive outcome of the Second Monitoring Report, the institution has turned this finding into a positive catalyst for change by bringing the campus together to move toward a more long-term culture of assessment. The Committee recommended that statements describing this positive catalyst and resulting changes be included in the Monitoring Report due to SACS COC in September.

The Committee elected Dr. Rich Helgeson to act as its representative on the Assessment Oversight Committee that will be meeting this summer to review the reports of all five Assessment Coordination Committees.

The meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m.