

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Summary Notes for Meeting, 1:30 – 3:30PM, January 22, 2002

Present: Linda Delene (Committee Chair, Vice Provost, Academic Planning and Assessment), Ariel Anderson (Teaching, Learning, and Leadership), Gus Breymann (Director, DCE Lansing Campus), Mozhdah Bruss (Family and Consumer Services), Raymond E. Cain, Jr. (Aviation Sciences), Katharine Cummings (Teaching, learning and Leadership), Beth denHartigh (Disabled Student Services), Eileen Evans (The Graduate College), George Fierro (College of Aviation), Joyce Kubiski (Art), Linda LeBlanc (Psychology), Lynn Lee (Trio Programs), Stephen Malcolm (Biological Sciences), Hossein Mousavinezhad (Electrical and Computer Engineering), Galen Rike (Waldo Library), Daniel Stauffer (Health, Physical Education and Recreation), Diane Swartz (Division of Student Affairs), Edmund Tsang (College of Engineering and Applied Sciences), Martha Warfield (Division of Multicultural Affairs), Robert Wertkin (Social Work). Absent: Bettina Meyer (University Libraries), Robert Peters (School of Public Affairs and Administration), Darryl Salisbury (CELCIS), Elton Weintz (History), Damodar Golhar (Haworth College of Business).

The meeting summary for the November 13, 2001 committee meeting was accepted. Delene provided background on the concept of institutional effectiveness and the academic program planning endeavor that is being initiated by the Provost. The academic program planning initiative will be voluntary the first year and mandatory thereafter with all programs being examined within a seven-year cycle. This work provides the context for the required presentation of assessment information in program plans; and is part of the evidence about strategic academic planning that will be reviewed fall of 2005. The program planning initiative is being explained to several groups around campus including the AAUP Executive Committee, the Faculty Senate, and both the Graduate and Undergraduate Studies Councils.

In response to a question about the provision of release time for faculty to do the assessment work, Delene indicated that was the decision of academic deans for each college, and the respective department chairs. Since each college is different and departments will approach the assessment task differently, it is inappropriate to design a formula approach for the work involved. It was noted by another committee member that part of the advising time could be used for assessment. Some colleges may wish to hire an assessment specialist like Engineering has done with its second associate dean's position and others may approach assessment on a strict departmental basis. In any case, Delene will not be involved in those decisions except as an advisor when so requested by the college or various departments.

Vigorous discussion ensued about how to integrate assessment activities at the grass-roots level throughout the University. While the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences has the most elegant, organized approach, that structure may not work with some disciplines, especially for those without strict accreditation guidelines that also require assessment programs. The major assessment tasks at the University involve general education, undergraduate majors, graduate concentrations and program quality. Departments and colleges will have to determine which tools will work for the needs of their respective disciplines and approaches to assessment. Other than for general education assessment, there is probably not a single approach that will work throughout the campus.

The Committee agreed that it needs to take an active role in clarifying what assessment is or could mean to the different departments and programs. There was no agreement, as was suggested by one colleague, that the *first* task of the committee is to convince everyone that assessment is important and that it will make ordinary academic work easier and more effective. The role of the academic deans is crucial in making assessment an important part of departmental work and planning. The locus of control and decision-making about what assessment activities are necessary to pursue lies within colleges and their respective departments. Departments that simply go through the motions without a genuine commitment to assessment will, in the long run, have their assessment work evaluated as part of the academic program planning effort and with reference to the institution's assessment plan.

After this discussion, it was suggested that the Committee should try and design a draft assessment plan that could be widely distributed and presented for comment, and subsequently refined into a final plan for the University's assessment program. Core ideas about assessment will be presented in the draft plan, including a structure of assessment guidelines for departmental and program assessment activities. And, the assessment plan will incorporate relationships to the university's mission and goal statements, which in turn govern the mission statements of various colleges and their departments.

Delene indicated she would send a list of her top websites of universities that have operating assessment plans and programs with data available (noted again below). This review may help colleagues advise departments on what others are doing and some of the tools that are readily available. Another view expressed was that of simply advising departments and colleges that assessment has been mandated and review what has been or is being done. It is clear that the Committee will have to assist with both policy and structural advice when necessary. There are plenty of different assessment tools available and the faculty remains the best judge of what will work in each program or major. Katherine Cummings will try and determine how best to approach assessment for general education with other members of COGE.

The meeting closed with an agreement to have a small executive committee meets in the next week or so and provide an agenda for the committee's work. Linda also will ask committee members for meeting time information for February and March so those meetings can be scheduled. Committee members will have to inform themselves about activities and approaches to assessment in order to design a preliminary institutional approach to an assessment plan. The meeting was adjourned at 3:15PM.

**RECOMMENDED UNIVERSITIES WITH SUBSTANTIAL
WEB-AVAILABLE ASSESSMENT INFORMATION and MATERIALS**

University sites with developed assessment plans, policy, programs, and reports available on the web are the following ten institutions. *Please note* that you may have to search each individual site to find material about assessment, for example, under academic affairs, planning, institutional research, assessment, or strategic planning.

- Ball State University at bsu.edu
- George Mason University at gmu.edu
- Kent State University at ksu.edu
- Louisiana State University at lsu.edu
- New Mexico State University at nmsu.edu
- Texas A&M University at tamu.edu
- The University of Arizona at Arizona.edu
- The University of Montana at umt.edu
- The University of North Carolina at unc.edu
- The University of Wisconsin at wisc.edu