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Present: K. Wates, G. Senn, R. Li, J. Little, B. Hosch, S. Ozment, M. Bergstrom

Dr. Braden Hosch, the new Director of Institutional Effectiveness introduced himself to the Committee members and gave a brief history of his past work experiences.

K. Wates called the meeting to order and informed the Academic Assessment Committee that Dr. Tom Mack had agreed to Chair the AAC for the 2003-04 school year.

Dr. Ozment explained to the Committee that over the summer the Academic Council had looked at Assessment Forms A, B, and C. There was dissatisfaction with these forms and the Council worked with Dr. Ozment on a new way of reporting assessment. This has been incorporated into the Annual Program Review as Section III. It’s hoped this process will be more flexible for the units to report their assessment, using either a narrative or a chart format. B. Hosch suggested that some combination of the two formats may be most effective. This year will be the pilot year. The Academic Council will lift Part III - Assessment, out of the Program Review and send it to the Academic Assessment Committee. The academic units are to submit the Program Reviews to Dr. Ozment by October 15, 2003. This new Program Review format will replace Forms A, B, and C. It is also being emphasized that Part III - Assessment must be a unit project. All members of the academic unit should work on getting their unit’s assessment prepared. Since this is the pilot year, as questions or concerns come up, they can be adjusted.

Discussion with the AAC members on this new format followed. There is some concern that the instructions in the Program Review do not give much direction and that might put major gaps in the assessment reports. Dr. Ozment explained that the Unit Heads have been told part of their own individual assessment will be based on what they are doing in assessment, tying it together. Another suggestion from the AAC was to make sure the instructions make it clear units need to list what and how they are assessing their goals and the outcomes they get with those assessment methods. B. Hosch noted the Assessment Committee could come up with what really is needed and at the end of the year give guidance to the units. Further discussion on the new format noted that although Forms A, B and C were cumbersome, they did bring consistency to each unit and that made it easier for the AAC to look at each unit the same way. Dr. Ozment stated she does not like charts, and she feels much of the assessment work being done on the campus cannot be captured in a chart.

B. Hosch discussed some of the things he hopes to accomplish as the Director of IE. He informed the Committee that the Institutional Effectiveness office will coordinate the NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) that is supported by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts and coordinated through Indiana University. The Chancellor and VCAA are very interested in having USCA use this survey. A similar survey, the FSSE, corresponding questions asked of the faculty, will also be administered in the spring of 2004 (along with the NSSE). B. Hosch wants to move away from the Student Satisfaction Survey because it’s too long and takes time out of the classroom.
B. Hosch showed the Committee some information from Alverno College that he hopes to use as guidelines for the USCA academic units. He went on to explain that any assessment work that takes place must be meaningful.

One of the charges to the Committee is to go over the Assessment Reports. **This year the Committee will be reviewing Biology/Geology, Visual and Performing Arts, Mathematical Science, BIS, English, and Business.** The Academic Assessment Committee will meet again three times before the end of 2003. They hope to review a few of these units’ reports before the spring semester 2004.

The next three meetings will be on Tuesdays **at 11:00 a.m. in H&SS 201.** The dates are: **September 30, October 21, and November 18.**

Respectfully submitted

Maureen Bergstrom
Present: T. Mack, K. Wates, G. Senn, R. Li, J. Little, B. Hosch, S., M. Bergstrom

Dr. Tom Mack opened the meeting. The September 11 minutes were approved. Dr. Mack turned the meeting over to Dr. Braden Hosch. Literature from Alverno College had been sent to the committee members prior to the meeting.

Dr. Hosch gave a brief history of Alverno College and discussed the development and implementation of the college’s assessment program:

**Outcomes Assessment at Alverno: College-Wide Abilities-Based Curriculum**
- Alverno’s curriculum is centered on the outcomes of 8 student abilities at 6 different levels (this assessment system is multi-modal & multi-level)
- Alverno’s assessment system evaluates the outcomes of these eight student abilities
- Assessment is performed by three major constituencies:
  1. Faculty (assessment by experts)
  2. Self-assessment by students (assessment is learning)
  3. External examiners (“objective assessment” by trained volunteers are less partial outsiders)

**Major outcomes at Alverno**
At Alverno, specific outcomes for each major are determined collectively by the department faculty in consultation with other constituencies. The process typically includes:
- Dialogue among faculty on the meaning of the discipline
- Research on patterns of student performance in the major
- Review of pedagogical literature/learned society/licensing body recommendations
- Input from employers and other stakeholders
- Examination of what students are going to do upon exiting the program
- Every major is not responsible for assessing all eight abilities

After further discussion of Alverno’s assessment practices, the Academic Assessment Committee decided to review some information from public institutions on their assessment programs. Information will be sent to the committee members before the next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, October 21, 2003 at 11:00 a.m., H&SS Room 201.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bergstrom
Present: T. Mack, K. Wates, R. Li, J. Little, B. Hosch, M. Bergstrom

Tom Mack reminded the committee that this year the AAC will be reviewing the assessment reports for Biology/Geology, Visual & Performing Arts, Math Sciences, BIS, English, and Business. Dr. Mack will request the written reports from Academic Council, so reviewing can start at the next meeting rather than waiting until next year. It was also agreed that the same format followed last year, would be followed this year. Each committee member will review the report and the committee as a whole will discuss it. A letter will be sent back to the unit with written comments asking the unit head or representative to come to a meeting and discuss the report with the committee. After that meeting, another letter from AAC will be sent back to the unit and the unit will have the opportunity to respond.

The September 30 minutes were approved. After that meeting, Dr. Hosch sent literature from California State University, Fresno, to the AAC members. A discussion followed on the assessment programs that are in place at CSU Fresno.

Dr. Hosch showed the committee members the current requirements from SACS.

At the next AAC meeting, Tuesday, November 18, 11:00 a.m., H&SS Room 201, General Education will also be discussed. The charge to the Assessment Committee is stated in the USCA Faculty Manual, Page 1.2-2, 2002-2003: “The Assessment Committee: …4. oversees the assessment of general education.” The goal for the AAC is to have a general education plan in place by May 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bergstrom
Present: T. Mack, K. Wates, R. Li, J. Little, G. Senn, B. Hosch, M. Bergstrom

T. Mack opened the meeting and explained to the members that the primary task of today’s meeting was to review the English Department’s Program Review. The next task would be to look at General Education. It is the Academic Assessment Committee’s responsibility to work on the new Gen Ed goals set forth in USCA’s Mission Statement.

Beginning in 2003-04, the Assessment Report has been integrated in Academic Program Review in a format that replaces Forms A, B, and C. The Committee decided that it would review the reports this year and notify Academic Council with the pros and cons of the new format. Committee members expressed agreement that academic units will need more guidelines, strategies, and/or suggestions when completing the new report. It is expected that after the Academic Assessment Committee reviews the reports from Biology/Geology, Business, English, Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS), Mathematical Science, and Visual and Performing Arts, the Committee will develop a set of guidelines and criteria for the assessment section of the program review. Most likely, a clearer set of expectations will result, improving both the reporting process as well as the communication of information about departments to external stakeholders. These guidelines will be made available to academic departments for Program Reviews submitted in Fall 2004.

B. Hosch suggested that the mission and goal statements of individual units more explicitly describe the expected outcomes of student learning. Departments might outline a set of broad goals for student learning immediately following the mission statement; these goals would later be subdivided into specific learning objectives that are measurable and lend themselves to assessment.

After reviewing the Department of English’s Program Review/Assessment Report, the Committee praised the report for its overview of assessment activities in the English Department. The shift to new assessment techniques and measures that will provide more useful information for improvement was evident. Specific areas of commendation included:

- The ongoing assessment of writing skills in the composition sequence and the Junior Portfolio, which employs a rubric tied to specific objectives for written communication. The Committee encouraged the Department’s plan for a longitudinal study.
- The ongoing assessment of senior projects based on a rubric of outcomes articulated for the major. The committee praised the Department’s use of faculty expertise to assess these outcomes (see below for recommendations re: revision).
- The Department’s plan to begin assessment of sophomore-level work as a baseline for entry point to the major.

The following items were suggested for improvement and additional consideration:

- Perhaps most importantly, the new format of reporting assessment results in Program Review may have led in many unit reports to a condensation or omission of important details that would previously have been placed in Forms A, B, and C. For instance, the English Department’s report might include more detail on the Pilot Study to show how the reviewer evaluations will be normed. In another case, the chart on the freshman folders should have numbers rather than simply an indication of goals achieved; as a consequence,
there is no explicit discrimination among the separate scores, only a total. The change in this year’s reporting format should not in itself reduce the amount of assessment data presented or information conveyed by each unit.

- The explicit articulation of student learning outcomes immediately following the Department’s Mission Statement would improve the focus of the entire assessment section of the Program Review. This articulation might include some regrouping of the twelve outcomes under 3-5 broader goals. The unexplained and slightly opaque numbering of the twelve objectives may evidence the need for such reorganization.

- Given that the unit averages fewer than 10 graduates each year, the self-assessment at exit by majors completing the program may yield more useful and reliable results if a focus group were conducted in place of a written exit survey.

As was the case last year, after its review of each unit report, the Committee will send a memo of concerns and suggestions to the relevant unit head along with an invitation to attend an open session with the group. A follow-up memo will summarize the results of that session. In addition to these unit-specific documents, a summary memo regarding general recommendations on Report format and other matters related to the assessment component of the annual program review process will be sent to the Academic Council via the Vice Chancellor.

B. Hosch read the portion of the Strategic Plan that assigns responsibility for general education assessment to the Assessment Committee, the Office of IE, and departments (Strategy 1.a.2 and 1.a.3). Dr. Hosch also observed that the new SACS guidelines for accreditation state that our general education program be “based on a coherent rationale” and that the “institution identifies competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those college-level competencies” (7.c.3 and 15, Principles of Accreditation, SACS, August 2003). He distributed a document showing USCA’s General Education Goals mapped to the new Mission Statement. It is requested that all the AAC members review this document and be prepared to discuss at the next meeting. Dr. Mack, Chair of the Committee, will get in touch with all the members to set up the January meeting and distribute an agenda.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bergstrom