

Academic Assessment Committee
April 8, 2004
Minutes

Present: T. Mack, R. Li, J. Little, B. Hosch, M. Bergstrom
Invited Guests: Dr. Karl Stenger, BIS Director
Prof. Mike May, Chair, Mathematical Sciences

Dr. Mack asked the committee if there were any comments about the General Education document Dr. Hosch sent out to the Committee on April 7, 2004. Dr. Hosch would like to present the document to Faculty Council and ask them to show to their faculty. He would hope they would present the document to their department by May 15 and have a report back from the Unit with any changes, additions, etc., by June 1, 2004.

Dr. Mack welcomed Dr. Stenger to today's meeting and thanked him for his work in assessment in the BIS Program. Dr. Mack explained that this meeting was set up to let the Unit Head respond to the Committee's letter and then for the Committee to go over the letter point by point.

Dr. Stenger told the Committee he had absolutely no problem with the comments from the Assessment Committee. He thought it was a good idea to have a BIS advisory committee because there were many things he had thought of (similar to the recommendations presented by the Committee). However, because he is only one person, none of those things had been carried through. He hopes now with an Advisory Committee that more things will be able to happen. He has sent out a letter to various Academic Unit Heads asking for suggestions on representatives for the Advisory Committee and hopes to be able to meet with them before May 15 (the last day of the academic year).

Getting new goals will be a difficult task and one that will take longer than the Committee has requested. The reason for this is he and the Advisory Committee will be starting from zero. He needs to read through the books Dr. Hosch had recommended to him and then ask the Advisory Committee members to read through them also. They will be able to start from that point getting goals together. He wants to get with the Committee before starting to get the goals together. He is pleased to have others look at the BIS portfolios because they will have more knowledge about certain areas.

Dr. Stenger asked if he should still have a goal about General Education. Dr. Mack said that there is no degree program that's general education. Dr. Hosch noted that the program will only be better if it becomes more structured, if they have a pre-set group of majors already. Some ideas are: American Studies, African American Studies, Latin American Studies. Dr. Stenger said he also felt it important to allow the students to set up their own combination. If they are able to get a stronger program, students will be coming here and noting they want BIS as their major. Not, they came and took Nursing but couldn't make it, so they changed to BIS.

Dr. Mack pointed out the chart on the blackboard. He told Dr. Stenger the Committee will send him a followup letter about today's meeting. Dr. Stenger will keep Dr. Hosch up-to-date on the progress of the Advisory Committee and the goals of the Program.

Dr. Stenger did ask how he should report his assessment next year? He will send a two-year version to Dr. Ozment and keep in touch with Dr. Hosch on his progress.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bergstrom

Academic Assessment Committee
April 8, 2004
Minutes

Present: T. Mack, R. Li, J. Little, B. Hosch, M. Bergstrom
Invited Guest: Prof. Mike May, Chair, Mathematical Sciences

Dr. Mack thanked Professor May for accepting the Committee's invitation to attend today's meeting. The Committee appreciates Professor May's report and are encouraged that he has placed assessment on a high plateau. Dr. Mack asked if Prof. May had any initial comments before starting the meeting.

Mr. May said he wanted to thank the committee for the invitation and to assure them that he is a believer in assessment, but he's not the type of person to make showy presentations. He went on to explain some of the obstacles that he is facing in running the Department of Mathematics, a large employee turnover rate and the fact that the Department is placing all their attention on Computer Science. He also mentioned that a large number of his faculty were opposed to doing anything new and that included assessment. He said he sees hope in the future, they have had better luck in hiring faculty members. However, he noted that the faculty are very busy carrying overloads and that assessment is not on the top of the pile of things to do.

He has initiated an assessment committee in his department and two faculty members, Bruce Manoly and Tom Reid, have volunteered to help get assessment up and running. Mr. May hopes to get a standardized test and use that as an instrument for assessment. He will see if the new faculty will be able to help with this effort.

He would like a program that he, his faculty, and the school will be proud of.

Dr. Mack asked him if the new assessment committee was looking at Industrial Science. Mr. May said that was not the "biggest fire" they were looking at. He noted again that Computer Science is the main concern in the department.

He did want to assure the Academic Assessment Committee that his department has been making changes, recently deleting a course and adding two new courses.

Mr. May said he has read the AAC's letter and feels it would be very ambitious to get done by the end of the Fall, but that he would try. Dr. Mack suggested the Math department take it in three steps, goals, student outcomes, and instruments that will be used to measure them. They could do the Mathematics first then Industrial Science.

Dr. Hosch wanted to mention to Mr. May that a comment he made at the beginning of the meeting, "Goals must be measurable," is not always the case. You can measure the subsets of the goal. Dr. Hosch explained that if the department got a good assessment report completed, it would help them with their requests, and it would help build cohesion. Dr. Hosch asked Mr. May what the AAC could do to help him get assessment going in the Mathematics Department. Mr. May said he needed some information on measurement techniques. He wants to hammer out a set of objectives. He said he would definitely need help getting the plan together.

Both Drs. Mack and Hosch told Mr. May the Assessment report that had been done in 1996 could be a good starting point. It lists goals that may have to be tightened up, but for the most part, it would be a good jumping off point.

They then asked him what deadlines would be most agreeable to the Math Dept. Mr. May said the AAC's letter (with deadlines outlined) looks as good as any. The first week in May they are going to be looking at standardized tests.

Dr. Hosch asked about General Education requirements and that goals and objectives must be written for these requirements. This is mandatory according to SACS and CHE. (?????????????)
One goal they can start off with would be: "All students will learn how to do a graph."
Mr. May said he felt the gen ed requirements are in better shape than the major.

After Mr. May left, the Committee agreed that the letters to both visitors would be almost identical to the present letter (perhaps with some date changes).

At the next AAC meeting, April 15, 2004, 9:20 a.m., Dr. Byington, Head School of Business, will be the guest. The Committee will also talk about the format for next year's Program Review.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bergstrom

Academic Assessment Committee
March 18, 2004
Minutes

Present: T. Mack, R. Li, G. Senn, J. Little, B. Hosch, M. Bergstrom
Invited Guest: Dr. Allen Dennis, Chair, Department of Biology/Geology

Dr. Mack welcomed Dr. Dennis to today's meeting and thanked him for his work in assessment in the Department of Biology. Dr. Mack did say that there were some items that the committee would like to discuss with him, and that they had been outlined in the February 4, 2004, letter sent to him.

Dr. Dennis passed out a document titled "Chronology of Program Changes made in response to Assessment Activities since 1998. This document covered extensively what has been done in the Biology Department with assessment, what changes have been made and other outcomes. Dr. Dennis said he would like to wait another three years to show the Committee even more information with assessment. He feels that there would be a great deal more to show in that time with outcomes from Major Field Testing, etc.

Dr. Hosch asked AD how the revised Program Review affected his assessment reporting. AD said they had never before been obliged to put a whole section on assessment in the Program Review. He said that Dr. Ozment had said it would be a narrative report, and therefore different from the past Assessment Report of Forms A, B and C. AD felt this was a good idea, and it brought some material out from academic units that would otherwise not have been seen. It was discussed that the format might not get at all the information about unit assessment as needed.

The Biology's Department website was discussed – where the committee noted that what was listed now could be objectives derived from the three goals – Learn, Practice, Communicate. It was noted they are very hard to plug – they don't map directly.

Dr. Mack showed AD what the committee would like to see:

Dr. Senn stated that the committee thought the three goals of the department were too broad: Learn our Science, Practice our Science, and Communicate our Science. AD explained that it is difficult to get 100% buy-in at the unit level. However, if they keep it broad, they can keep moving the discussion forward. But that won't happen if they narrow down the goals.

Ms. Wates asked how they can know what the results are if they don't set benchmarks? AD explained that each year, with different students, their outcomes are different. So he hesitates to set benchmarks since one year they could meet them, but then the next year they may not. He noted there is still a lot of paranoia and the unit is concerned if they don't meet their benchmark they will be punished.

Dr. Hosch said he was more concerned about the arbitrariness of the statements. He would like to see results.

AD agreed with Dr. Mack when it was stated that for the first goal, Learn our Science, results can be drawn from the Major Field Test, Research, and the exit survey. For the Practice our Science, outcomes are reflected in the Major Field Tests and the Portfolio (a copy of the most recent Approved BA, Biology portfolio explanation is attached to these minutes). The Communicate our Science results can be seen in the oral presentations, the ABIO 499, and the Portfolio.

AD said he felt the Program Review should have assessment results in an abstract format, so that it will justify what the unit is trying to do to improve their curriculum. That way they can justify their request for financial support with assessment.

BH noted to AD that he would like to see the Biology Department change the word “Learn” (Learn our Science) to “Understand”. BH said that understand would be a better word, showing what the unit is actually doing, rather than learn, (what the student is thinking).

AD agrees, but...

Dr. Dennis noted on the portfolio rubric that was finally agreed on by his faculty, he would like to see all faculty use the rubric to evaluate all student’s presentations. However, the faculty would only agree to having the professor of that course evaluate the student’s presentation.

After BH asked AD what the assessment committee could do to help the Biology Department, AD noted that he would like the committee to focus on how assessment improves outcomes. That assessment is not used against a faculty member, should the results not show the best outcomes.

After Dr. Dennis left the meeting, there was some discussion among the members that perhaps he did not completely understand what the committee was trying to tell him regarding the outcomes and goals. They are afraid that he will remove the page on his website stating the objectives, and that will be all that’s needed to fix the problem. They also want to make sure that he understood the statement about “Learn our Science.” These minutes will be discussed with the members to be sure everything is clearly written and a copy will go to Dr. Dennis.

The committee will meet again today, March 18, 2004 at 1:30. Mr. Benjamin and Dr. Fields will attend and discuss the Visual and Performing Arts Assessment Report.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bergstrom

Academic Assessment Committee
March 18, 2004
Minutes

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

Invited Guests: Professor Jack Benjamin, Chair, Visual and Performing Arts, Dr. Sandra Field

Dr. Mack welcomed Prof. Benjamin and Dr. Field to today's meeting and thanked them for their work in assessment in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts. Dr. Mack asked them if they had any questions about the letter from the Assessment Committee, dated February 4, 2004.

Prof. Benjamin explained that Sandra Field chairs the Department's Assessment Committee and that they had met within the past few weeks with Dr. Hosch. They are re-evaluating their assessment program and they are looking at changing it. Since they have three separate entities, art (both studio and art history), music, and theatre (including dance), they do find it difficult to have goals and objectives that touch all three areas. They both stated that there is a good deal of resistance to assessment in the department. They do feel better after Dr. Hosch had told them they could target specific classes rather than all classes.

Dr. Field is very pro-portfolio, thinking that is the "natural" way to assess Visual and Performing Arts. However, not everybody goes along with that idea. The Theatre is already using portfolios. Students are anxious to keep a portfolio, because this is then used as a resume when they look for work.

For the department to assess works, as was discussed in the Assessment Committee's February letter, they need external jurists and that costs money, and the department doesn't have that in their budget. Dr. Hosch asked them how for an estimate of how much it would cost, and they said about \$500 for one jurist. Dr. Hosch explained that that would not be unreasonable to request putting that money into their budget. Other departments have "assessment" money to purchase Major Field Tests.

There are some alternatives to external jurists. When Prof. Benjamin and his students go to the Kennedy Center for the Arts, their play is judged. They receive a document with a review about the choice of play, the director's style, the actor's styles, and the play itself. They can use that as an assessment tool.

They have thought about asking other schools to come to USCA and judge, and they could reciprocate. However, they state that people are very territorial.

They are not happy with their six goals. They hope to get some common goals and some that are discipline-specific. BH stated they are doing a lot of assessment, but linkage back to a goal is not clear. They are doing a lot, but it is not aligned. They should re-examine their goals.

BH wanted to know if there was anything the Assessment Committee could do for the V&PA department? Prof. Benjamin would like the AC to enforce positive points about the assessment that has been done, but need to clarify across to everybody they have more to be done. Also what the value is to doing this.

Dr. Field would like to find out what type of assessment tools her department could use. Focus groups have been used and they are not sure if those are helpful or not. Plan on tracking it and seeing how the trend looks after about 3 years.

Prof. Benjamin noted that they have “post mortums” after each play. These have been very helpful in gathering information and deciding what should be changed in their curriculum. It was noted by BH and the committee that this could be used as an assessment instrument.

BH also asked them how they felt about writing the assessment report in the Program Review. Prof. Benjamin felt that it would good, because if he can tell his faculty that if they have a need and it is clearly stated in assessment, their request will be easier to present for funding.

After meeting comments:

Dr. Mack felt it went well. The committee was pleased to find out that the department has their own assessment committee.

Dr. Field especially liked Dr. Mack’s chart explaining assessment:

BH summarized the meeting:

1. They are going to reformulate their goals to get more “buy-in” with both common and discipline-specific goals.
2. Discipline-specific objectives.
3. Align all assessment they are doing.

Gary Senn stated they don’t have to get someone from off campus to judge the work. They can use someone in another area of the department.

The next Academic Assessment Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 25, 2004 – 9:20 a.m. in H&SS 201. General Education will be discussed at that time.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bergstrom

**Academic Assessment Committee
February 26, 2004
Minutes**

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

This meeting of the Academic Assessment Committee was called to discuss revisions to the Faculty Manual, namely Section 1.2 Academic Assessment and 8.1 Appendix I, Article VII: Committees, Academic Assessment Committee.

The 8.1 section was discussed first. It was decided, after discussion, that the notation about a student representative would remain in the paragraph. The 8.1 Appendix I paragraph now reads:

**Proposed Changes to Bylaws Section 8.1 of the USCA Faculty Handbook
(Approved by Academic Assessment Committee 2/26/04)**

8.1 APPENDIX I

ARTICLE VII: Committees

Academic Assessment Committee - To serve in an advisory capacity for assessment of academic programs and general education at USCA. The Committee ensures that all assessment programs articulate goals and objectives for student learning outcomes, measure the extent to which student performances meet these goals and objectives beyond the attainment of final course grades, and use the results for curricular improvements and adjustments. Every three years, the Committee reviews full reports from each academic unit about the implementation and findings of its assessment program as well as how assessment is used for improvement. Committee membership includes five (5) faculty (a representative of each college and two at-large representatives, with no more than one representative from a department); one (1) student selected by the Student Government (if Student Government is unable to fill the position, the responsibility reverts to the Committee); and (2) ex officio members, the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness.

Spring 2004

Tom Mack will forward 8.1 (with the student modification) directly to Joe for inclusion on the agenda of the March meeting of the Faculty Assembly. The AAC vote was unanimous in favor of the revised text.

The Committee next discussed Section 1.2. Dr. Hosch will send the revised copy to all members for their feedback. Once that is completed, Dr. Mack will send the modified draft directly to Sandy Chubon for FAC deliberation. Dr. Mack will also let Dr. Chubon know that he will attend the meeting to give that group some feedback before they vote on the matter and send their ultimate recommendation to the Faculty Assembly.

The next AAC meeting will be March 18, 2004 in H&SS 201. Dr. Dennis will attend the meeting at 9:20 a.m. and Mr. Benjamin and Dr. Fields will attend the 1:30 p.m. meeting. The committee will review for each unit head our written comments on their reports to make sure that everyone understands our recommendations and to give each unit head a chance to respond.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bergstrom

Academic Assessment Committee
February 19, 2004
Minutes

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

Minutes

The minutes of the February 5th meeting were approved.

Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS)

[The text below draws on and adds to material in the minutes of Feb. 5th and used in the drafting of a letter to Dr. Stenger, Program Director].

Overall, the report submitted by the BIS Program does not reveal that substantial progress has been made in the design, implementation, or outcomes of its assessment program. Much of this stasis may be attributable to administrative discontinuity and transition. Nevertheless, the Committee strongly agreed that the program's goals for student outcomes as presented in the report are inadequate to serve as the basis for a serious assessment program nor do they provide a solid foundation on which a sound curriculum can be built. The Committee has identified three major recommendations: 1) the formation of an advisory committee of associated faculty, 2) a revision of the Program's goals for student learning outcomes to emphasize currents in interdisciplinary theory and practice, and 3) a realignment of the curriculum based on the newly generated outcomes goals.

1. Faculty and Administrative Structure.

The Committee recommends that the Program Director establish an advisory committee of associated faculty for Interdisciplinary Studies. Led by the Program Director, this committee should meet twice a month and be composed of four to seven faculty from different home departments who teach interdisciplinary courses or have a strong interest in pursuing interdisciplinary teaching. This advisory committee should play a large role in formulating program goals for outcomes as well as revisiting or reformulating the curricular structure of the BIS major. It is expected that the Director will share with this committee information about current trends in interdisciplinary theory and practice as well as models of interdisciplinary programs and outcomes goals at other institutions. These goals for student outcomes should be in place no later than the beginning of the Fall 2004 semester.

2. Program Goals for Learning Outcomes.

The formulation of student learning outcomes in every field can be difficult without participation of several faculty members, and this participation is even more critical in interdisciplinary studies. To this end, the Program Director should approach revisions to the program's current learning outcomes with the assistance of the faculty advisory committee.

- *BIS Goal 1 – A broad based foundation in the liberal arts and sciences with which to anchor additional study in more specifically chosen academic fields or disciplines.* This goal as it is formulated does not represent an outcome goal for a major program, but rather it is indicative of an overarching general education outcome that every USCA graduate should achieve. If the program intends for its graduates to develop a deeper and/or broader set of outcomes that resemble general education outcomes but go beyond them, then this goal should be reformulated to reflect this intent. Further, a set of specific and measurable objectives needs to be developed and some plan for their assessment is required, since general education is delivered by multiple departments.

- *BIS Interdisciplinary Goals (2 - 4)* seem to be too general and uninformed by current theory and practice in the field of interdisciplinary studies. The submitted program review indicates that the Program Director will “peruse” materials provided by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness that offer insight into trends in interdisciplinary studies, curricular structure, and outcomes assessment in interdisciplinary programs.

3. Curricular Structure.

The lack of strongly formulated program goals for student outcomes is reflected in the program’s curriculum, which provides no common basis for BIS majors, especially at or near entry point, to understand what interdisciplinarity means or how to apply such principles. As a result, courses in component disciplines are taken as though they are in a vacuum with no intellectual framework provided to integrate them. At the other end of the curriculum, the portfolio appears to provide a logical assessment point, but because the outcomes goals of the program are not well defined, it is not even clear who should assess the portfolios to determine the extent to which the outcomes have been achieved. Solutions to these problems include:

- Establishment of a 200-300 level course that introduces students to interdisciplinary studies and interdisciplinary theory and practice. This course should be structured in a general way that could make it a component of extant or new interdisciplinary minors as well as a foundational course for the major. It should help students place future coursework into the framework of interdisciplinarity.
- Required common interdisciplinary courses. Many of these already exist as components of interdisciplinary minors or elective courses in extant majors that provide cross-disciplinary experiences (such as problem/issue-based courses) could be coordinated and aligned depending on goals of the program and outcomes of the courses.
- Capstone course / Senior Seminar in Interdisciplinary Studies (1-3 credits) that allows students to reconnect disparate disciplines based upon the program goals. Some sharing of research from individual projects, portfolios, or theses could be a part of this experience, but as a whole, the course should re-establish the interdisciplinary goals of the program.

Finally, the current structure of dual or multiple concentrations should be reviewed. From the report and the description of the curriculum in the University Bulletin, the dual concentration option does not seem to cohesively meld two disciplines but rather appears more like a moderate survey of two or three disciplines without much connection, almost as if students were pursuing a double minor rather than an integrated in-depth major field of interdisciplinary study. Some of the suggestions above might help alleviate this difficulty, but the committee should weigh the outcomes of such concentrations with those of more focused interdisciplinary fields, e.g. American Studies, Environmental Studies, or Women’s Studies.

General Education

Dr. Hosch distributed a handout about general education requirements that was derived from the *USCA Strategic Plan* and from *Principles and Philosophy of Accreditation* (SACS, August 2003). Dr. Hosch emphasized that the strategic plan indicates the Committee’s charge is not to alter the general education requirements but rather to lead and assist in the formulation of the rationale for the current general education program, including goals and objectives for student learning.

The Committee agreed on the plan below to carry out the mandates from the Strategic Plan and from SACS:

- 1) The Committee would generate a draft document that strives to accomplish the following:
 - a) group current requirements into 10 or so categories, e.g. Written Communication, Social Science, Non-Western, etc.
 - b) articulate broad outcomes goals for each of the categories, e.g. students will write effectively
 - c) insert objectives for outcomes, where available (Writing Portfolio evaluation criteria), and
 - d) provide examples of what such goals/objectives look like at other institutions, where parallel examples are not readily available at USCA
- 2) The Committee would distribute and revise the document electronically.
- 3) By the end of March 2004, the Committee would present the document to Academic Council to enlist Departments to review the document and approve, modify, or rewrite appropriate goals and objectives for learning outcomes.
- 4) The Committee expects that the "Skills and Competencies" of the general education curriculum will be complete by late April. The disciplinary-based outcomes will be completed in Fall 2004.

Discussion of the approval process did not extend beyond this level, although further approvals will likely be necessary as the document matures through the drafting process.

The next AAC meeting will be March 18, 2004 in H&SS 201. Dr. Dennis will attend the meeting at 9:20 a.m. and Mr. Benjamin and Dr. Fields will attend the 1:30 p.m. meeting. The committee will review the assessment reports from these two departments.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bergstrom

Academic Assessment Committee
February 5, 2004
Minutes

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

The minutes of the January 22, 2004 meeting were approved.

The original two dates and times set for Academic Unit Heads to review their reports need to be changed. The meetings with the Biology and Visual and Performing Arts Departments will now take place on Thursday, March 18, 2004. Dr. Allen Dennis will be in at 9:20 a.m. and Professor Benjamin will be in at 1:30 p.m. Both meetings will take place in H&SS 201.

School of Business:

Overall, the assessment report submitted by the School of Business demonstrates a commitment to assessment that is supported by tabulated data and analysis of some learning outcomes. Further the organization of the report by major goals helpfully provides readers with an easy understanding of how the School of Business conducts its assessment program. This approach is to be commended and the Committee hopes that the School of Business can continue to build on these efforts.

The primary weaknesses in the report lie in overly broad or missing goals for student learning and measures that do not easily indicate areas for potential improvement. Additionally, the articulation of more specific learning objectives as a subset of each goal would help focus assessment efforts in ways that would provide more useful data. The committee also strongly recommends the removal of the “criteria for success,” which appear as arbitrary targets and often skew measuring scales away from providing useful results.

- The report identifies three primary goals for business majors: communication, technological skills, and global perspectives on business. Perhaps most importantly, these goals appear to ignore the functional content areas of the major (accounting, finance, management, and marketing), nor do they identify different skill levels at the foundational (all majors) and advanced (concentration) levels. The business faculty should collaboratively articulate broad goals and measurable objectives for student learning germane to these areas that are so central to what faculty already do in the classroom (it is best to word these in the format, “students will be able to ...”). Some additional use of Major Field Test results seems appropriate in this context if the School feels that the assessments provide useful information about their students’ level of performance.
- As subsets of each goal, specific and measurable performance objectives should also be articulated. These objectives should discuss student outcomes in terms of skills, knowledge, behaviors, and dispositions rather than achievement of course grades. For instance, the School of Business might consider adopting or adapting the objectives for written communication articulated for the university’s Junior Writing Portfolio (see below). Different levels of competence might be articulated for foundational knowledge vs. in-depth knowledge in communication, technology, and in core disciplinary competencies. For instance, while all business students might have to be able to identify the significant elements of a marketing campaign and evaluate them, only those concentrating in marketing would have to create such elements and justify their critical choices. Such objectives may

already appear on course syllabi and simply require some quick extraction and reformulation to be linked to the broader goals for student learning.

- The criteria for success, such as 80% earning a “C” or better in a course, seem arbitrary and should be removed. More useful data would be obtained if all course grades were reported, not simply a category of “C or above.” This is also true for the analysis of scores on the Junior Writing Portfolio. More importantly, however, evaluation of students’ performance on more specific learning objectives will allow for improvements to be made to the business communication elements in the curriculum. For instance, were the School of Business tracking subscores of the Junior Writing Portfolio, it might be found that business majors exhibit a high level of rhetorical sophistication yet substantially less skill in documenting their work with source material (or vice versa). But without a more nuanced measurement scale that replaces a “criterion for success” measure, such opportunities for improvement may continue to be masked by this gesture toward performance accountability.

The committee feels sure that graduates from the School of Business to some extent acquire both foundational and in-depth knowledge of functional areas of business and that this knowledge is assessed at multiple points in the curriculum in formative and summative ways. The School’s assessment program can and should incorporate these practices as they are organized around shared goals and objectives for student learning that more accurately capture what is already happening in the business curriculum.

Math and Computer Science

While the assessment report submitted by the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science presents an assessment plan that is inadequate to meet the demands placed on the university by SACS and insufficient to yield results that can be used for improvement, the Committee is encouraged by some of the Department’s recent indications to make assessment a higher priority. For instance, since the submission of this assessment report, the Department Chair has met with Dr. Braden Hosch, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness to review models for assessment in the field of mathematics. Additionally, the Department has formed its own Assessment Committee. It is essential both for the Department and for USCA that these early efforts be encouraged and fostered so that an assessment program may be developed that provides meaningful results about the curriculum’s effectiveness.

To this end, the Department should minimally have accomplished the following activities by the time it submits its Program Review in October 2004:

1. The Department should generate and agree upon a set of goals for student learning outcomes in context of the major program. E.g. students integrate mathematical and computer science related problem solving strategies to formulate and solve problems and interpret results (this is a sample departmental goal from Alverno College).
2. The Department should for each goal develop measurable objectives for learning outcomes as a subset of each goal. E.g. students accurately solve quadratic equations in abstract and applied settings.
3. The Department should begin data collection in Fall 2004 in at least one entry-level course for the major, e.g. Calculus I, about the extent to which students achieve objectives for that course (this analysis will go beyond an examination of course grades – what elements of differentiation do students learn and apply most successfully? Least successfully? This

collection could use a rubric or test-outline that would allow for tabulation of student success on particular test or exam questions.

4. The Department should identify learning outcomes that indicate mathematical competence for general education. An analysis of student outcomes in relation to these competencies should begin in early Fall 2004.
5. The Chair and the Department's Assessment Committee should maintain regular and frequent communication with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness throughout this period in order to receive expert assistance and helpful feedback on the design of the Department's assessment program and its implementation.

Pursuit of an assessment program structured in this manner will usefully apply faculty time toward an examination of curricular results and make data-based decisions about ways to improve. The Committee looks forward to a meeting with the Chair to discuss how best to complete these activities and launch a strong assessment program.

Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS)

The Committee began its discussion of the BIS Program, but the final set of recommendations was not finalized. Points raised at this meeting include:

BIS Goal 1 – *A broad based foundation in the liberal arts and sciences with which to anchor additional study in more specifically chosen academic fields or disciplines.*

- This goal as it is formulated does not represent an outcome goal for a major program, but rather it is indicative of an overarching general education outcome that every USCA grad should achieve. If the program intends for its graduates to develop a deeper and/or broader set of outcomes that resemble general education outcomes but go beyond them, then this goal should be reformulated to reflect this intent. Further, a set of specific and measurable objectives needs to be developed and some plan for their assessment is required, since general education is delivered by multiple departments.

Interdisciplinary Goals (2 & 3) seem to be too general and uninformed by current theory in the field of interdisciplinary studies. The submitted program review indicates that the Program Director will “peruse” these materials.

Curricular Structure – the lack of strongly formulated program goals for student outcomes is reflected in its curriculum, which provides no common basis for BIS majors, especially at or near entry point, to understand what interdisciplinarity means and how to apply such principles. As a result, courses in component disciplines are taken as though they are in a vacuum with no intellectual framework provided to integrate them. At the other end of the curriculum, the portfolio appears to provide a logical assessment point, but because the outcomes goals of the programs are not well defined, it is not even clear who should assess the portfolios to determine the extent to which the outcomes have been achieved. Solutions to these problems include:

- Establishment of a 200-300 level course that introduces students to interdisciplinary studies and interdisciplinary theory. This course should be structured in a general way that could make it a component of extant or new interdisciplinary minors as well as a foundational course for the major. It should help students place future coursework into the framework of interdisciplinarity.
- Required common interdisciplinary courses. Many of these already exist as components of interdisciplinary minors or elective courses in extant majors that provide cross-

disciplinary experiences (such as problem/issue-based courses) could be coordinated and aligned depending on goals of the program and outcomes of the courses.

- Capstone course / Senior Seminar in Interdisciplinary Studies (1-3 credits) that allows students to reconnect disparate disciplines based upon the program goals. Some sharing of research from individual projects, portfolios, or theses could be a part of this experience, but as a whole, the course should re-establish the interdisciplinary goals of the program.

Faculty and Administrative Structure The Committee suggests that the Program Director establish an advisory committee of associated faculty for Interdisciplinary Studies. This advisory committee should play a large role in formulating program goals for outcomes as well as revisiting or reformulating the curricular structure of the major.

The next AAC meeting will be February 19, 2004, 9:20 a.m., H&SS 201. At that meeting the committee will complete the discussion of the BIS report. General Education requirements will also be discussed. Kitty Wates will be unable to attend this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bergstrom

Academic Assessment Committee
January 22, 2004
Minutes

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

Dr. Mack presented possible dates for upcoming assessment committee meetings. Future meetings will be held from 9:20 a.m. to 10:40 a.m. on February 5, 12, 19, March 18, and April 8, 15, 22. The committee will be inviting unit heads to some of these meetings to discuss their assessment reports. It is possible that these dates and times may change to accommodate the schedules of unit heads.

Rather than wait the prescribed 3 years until the next Committee review cycle for this year's 5 unit assessment reports, the Academic Assessment Committee requested that the Office of Institutional Effectiveness inspect the 2005 program review reports of this year; targeted units to monitor have AAC recommendations that have been addressed. Thus, Dr. Hosch, IE Director, will review next year's program review reports from Biology, English, Business, BIS, Math, and Visual and Performing Arts to see if these units have made the recommended changes or additions to their reports. Dr. Hosch will send a letter of compliance to the academic unit with a copy to the Assessment Committee and Dr. Ozment discussing his findings.

Other items for this semester's AAC:

- Dr. Hosch told the committee that Dr. Ozment has tasked him, with help from the Assessment Committee, to rewrite the assessment section (Section 1.2) of the Faculty Handbook. BH will email his draft of the section to the committee for their comments or suggestions.
- A General Education discussion should take place in the middle of the term; the committee should have a working set of goals for general education by the end of the Spring.
- The Committee will send to the VCAA a suggested format for the assessment section of next year's program review reports. The Committee agrees that the present assessment report format needs more structure. A checklist of what the unit heads need to have in their reports would be beneficial.

Biology: Overall, the Biology assessment report represents some progress since the last submission to the Assessment Committee even though not all of the Committee's recommendations were addressed in the past three years. Data collection using the ETS Major Field Test has shown that USCA majors perform within one standard deviation of the national mean. Further, a review of the senior research project has led to the formation of a B.A. track in the major (although the data obtained in the review are not presented). Nevertheless, the report on the whole is too broad and does not provide emphasis on the assessment of outcomes as they are linked to intended objectives for student learning. The department needs to be more specific, likely by linking its assessment program to the goals for student outcomes stated on the departmental web site, which appear quite strong, yet are not mentioned in the assessment report.

Learn our Science

A. Biology Major Field Test. *The paragraph is too general, what exactly does the unit expect their students to learn? That is, the word "learn" is too broad – some reference to Bloom's taxonomy may be useful in adding specificity and level of mastery. Further, the Major Field Test divides the field of biology into several major areas – if these divisions reflect the way the department sub-divides the field, then they should be mentioned in the*

goals. It may be the case that the USCA Biology Department focuses more on certain areas of the MFT, but regardless, the department should analyze strengths and weaknesses of student performance by subfield.

B. Senior Research Project. *It would be helpful for the Department of Biology to note how it defines success and the extent to which majors in both degree tracks accomplish the prescribed goals. Again, the specific outcomes for success should be linked back to the goals for learning listed on the department's web site.*

C. Exit Survey. *The questions in this survey should refer back to the department's goals on the web site. The questions should be keyed to goals of the program and then they can note the self-reported outcomes that students provide.*

Practice our Science

B. Second to last line: "Our goal is the participation of as many qualified students as desire the experience in the intellectual life of the department." *What is the department's target? Are they successful?*

Communicate our Science

B. "The department added a one hour P/F ABIO 490 class to the degree experience." *This is not linked to a goal.*

D. "The department maintains a list of student research presentations." *Need to report how many presentations, where they were presented. What was the quality of the presentations? There is not enough detail.*

Comments/Suggestions from AAC: *Use the goals that are listed on the Biology/Geology website. Then communicate how these goals are assessed and what progress/results they are attaining. If assessment is in place, report it. Attach a copy of the Exit Survey. Show the results from these exit surveys.*

Visual and Performing Arts: Overall, the Visual and Performing Arts Assessment Report represents some progress from the last submission to the Assessment Committee three years ago. Importantly, most of the report is commendably keyed to goals for student learning outcomes. However, the Department is still using almost exclusively course imbedded methods for their assessment, and as a result, assessment of outcomes is primarily the responsibility of course instructors to assess their own students. Some sort of juried assessment activity seems appropriate for validation of student learning outcomes, especially at the more advanced levels of the curriculum and placing student works at the review of multiple judges as an assessment strategy would perhaps even further the department's goal to have students internalize professional standards in the fine arts.

Goals 1 and 2 are assessed through courses, pre- and post-tests. The test scores appear quite low, given that students should have achieved the goals/knowledge base by the end of the course.

AARH 106. Pre and Post-test indicated a 20% in the number of students who achieved Goal #1. *Should this read: indicated a 20% increase? How do they measure this?*

Goal 3. "To develop the ability to apply historical principles to practice." *This goal is somewhat vague – what exactly is meant here? Define "historical principles."*

Summary (under Goal 3). “A well defined criteria of skill levels is needed in each area.” *Just art is looked at, not theatre or music. Standard criteria could be used to assess and compare across all levels/courses. Needs external review.*

Goal 4. B. “Criteria for success: 92% of the performance/artistic works will be judged as satisfactory or higher.” *Who is judging? Is a jury involved, if not, why not?*

AART 380: “3-D and Animation – Quick-time movies demonstrate that students acquired the technical ability necessary to produce animated files.” *Are these movies evaluated? A rubric could be used here.*

ATHE 170: “Survey” – *attach a copy of the survey to the report.*

Goals 5 and 6 A. “Method Assessment: Focus Group.” *How many participated? Who does the interviewing? How do the questions asked of the group measure their understanding of professional standards, their own and others?*

C. Goals 5-6 Outcomes. Last sentence: “They also state that one of the strengths of the Fine Arts program is the dedication of the teachers.” *This is not an outcome to Goal 5 or 6.*

Comments/Suggestions from AAC: *A rubric could be used that would assess across all levels/courses of V&PA – too many of the course-based assessment activities do not seem keyed to specific goals, nor do they demonstrate the extent to which student outcomes measure that goals are being met. Most classes, especially introductory, do hit across the board. How are they achieving goals? The Department should strongly consider a juried assessment element, such as a senior performance or exhibit that is reviewed by more than one faculty member (most assessment activities now are simply reviewed by the course instructor).*

Dr. Mack will send a letter to the heads with the AAC’s suggestions/comments on their reports. This letter will come from the entire AAC. The Unit Head will be invited to the AAC’s meeting to discuss their comments/suggestions.

The next AAC meeting will be February 5, 2004, 9:20 a.m., H&SS 201. At that meeting the committee will discuss School of Business, Math, and BIS assessment reports.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bergstrom

Academic Assessment Committee
November 18, 2003
Minutes

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

Academic Assessment Committee
October 21, 2003
Minutes

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

Academic Assessment Committee
September 30, 2003
Minutes

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

Academic Assessment Committee
September 11, 2003
Minutes

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