

Academic Assessment Committee

August 25, 2005

Minutes

Present: S. Field, R. Li, R. Watts, L. Rhodes, W. Schweder, B. Hosch, M. Bergstrom

The new members were introduced and welcomed to the Committee.

First order of business was selection of a chair. Dr. Hosch explained the duties of a chair. Dr. Sandra Field accepted the nomination as chair of the AAC for 2005-2006.

The next item covered was scheduling meeting times for the remainder of the semester. The Fall 2005 schedule is as follows:

September 1
October 20
November 10
December 1

All meetings will take place at 4:10 p.m., B&E 102, pending availability.

A binder was distributed to each member with information about the assessment committee, its responsibilities, USCA guidelines for assessment, and some supporting documentation. Dr. Hosch provided a brief overview of materials in the binder. He mentioned that the next SACS visit to USCA will be entirely different from the one in 2001. SACS now requires all schools to focus on learning outcomes.

Dr. Hosch observed that the Committee has been working with faculty to articulate goals and objectives for student learning outcomes for general education since Fall 2003. He reported to the Committee that he pledged to the Executive Vice Chancellor that the Committee would make every effort to finish the process of articulating these outcomes before the end of Spring 2006.

The process of reviewing the Assessment Reports from the Program Reviews was also discussed. The Committee will review three academic units this year: Chemistry/Physics, Communications, and Education; the School of Education will submit five separate reports, one for each undergraduate degree program. It may be possible to review one of these units this Fall.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bergstrom

Academic Assessment Meeting
September 1, 2005
Minutes

Present: S. Field, R. Li, R. Watts, L. Rhodes, W. Schweder, B. Hosch

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the August 25th meeting.

Dr. Hosch reviewed the assessment binder passed out at the first meeting with the Committee.

The Committee gave Dr. Hosch authorization to allow the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to nominate a student representative to the Committee. This was done with a unanimous vote by the Committee.

Dr. Hosch read the SACS Strategic Plan on Assessment from the binder.

Dr. Hosch reviewed the Principals of Accreditations on page 10 of the binder.

Dr. Hosch noted that Programs Reviews from the various academic units are due October 11th.

Dr. Hosch stated that M. Bergstrom was working to create an electronic database program reviews and data dating back ten years.

Dr. Hosch showed the Committee a rubric that the assessment committee created last year. The current Assessment Committee will fill out these rubrics this year.

Dr. Hosch reviewed the Goals and Objectives for General Education document with the Committee.

The Committee gave Dr. Hosch authorization to speak with the chairs of the various departments to help finalize the Goals and Objectives for General Education. This was done with a unanimous vote by the Committee.

Dr. Fields asked if the review of the general education requirements was a part of the Strategic Plan. The answer was yes.

Dr. Fields asked who determines the goals and objectives for the Non-Western requirements. Dr. Hosch mentioned that he would like a delegate from each department that teaches those courses to talk about redoing the requirements.

At the next meeting Dr. Hosch will have reports and decide when to have discussions with persons from the Social Science and Humanities departments.

Respectfully submitted,

Windy Schweder

Academic Assessment Committee

October 20, 2005

Minutes

Present: S. Field, R. Li, R. Watts, L. Rhodes, B. Hosch, M. Bergstrom

The minutes of the September 1, 2005 meeting, with slight modifications, were approved.

Dr. Hosch discussed the status of a student joining the AAC. The Student Government Association has been unable to identify a student who would be available to attend the meetings. It was suggested that Graduate Directors in the School of Education and the Psychology Department be contacted. A Graduate Student from one of these academic units may be interested in being a member on this committee and offer some valuable assistance. Dr. Hosch offered to contact the Directors.

The Assessment Committee Evaluation Checklists from 2004-05 were discussed. Last year, the Assessment Committee reviewed five majors. The summary table with the mean evaluations of these majors is on the report presented to the committee; this table summarizes "where we are and where we need to be." In all categories, the assessment sections of program reviews were below the level of meeting guidelines, and in three areas, they were below the "approaches" guidelines category. Dr. Hosch was cautiously optimistic that some improvements to the process would generate better results, but he also encouraged Committee members not to alter their standards of evaluation in order to see the indicators rise.

Assessment of Academic Programs

| | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 | 2002-2003 | 2003-2004 | 2004-2005 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Number of Majors Reviewed by Assessment Committee | -- | -- | -- | 6 | 5 |
| <i>1=Missing, 2=Approaches Guidelines, 3=Meets Guidelines, 4=Exceeds Guidelines</i> | | | | | |
| Goals | -- | -- | -- | -- | 2.4 |
| Objectives | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1.8 |
| Measurement | -- | -- | -- | -- | 2.0 |
| Findings | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1.7 |
| Use of Results | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1.7 |

Dr. Hosch mentioned that some program reviews at other institutions link assessment data to the request. It was suggested that the AAC may want to send a request to the Academic Council noting that requests should be linked to assessment.

General Education was discussed. Dr. Hosch noted that the Gen Ed report had a cosmetic change, to make the report look "prettier." There is now a box of editorial changes that describes changes made. Two additional sections have been completed: World Civilizations and American Political Process. Dr. Hosch will have a meeting in the near future with the Social Science professors, Drs. Bosch, Callen, and Kuck. The Natural Sciences section will remain in draft form for AY 2005-06, but several faculty members in Biology and Chemistry are assessing student learning using the draft outcomes this semester, even though the outcomes have not received final approval from each faculty. These results are being collected online in 2005-06 and this assessment process will be monitored. Learning outcomes for Humanities and Cross-Cultural understanding will be addressed in meetings with faculty later in 2005-06 to modify the current draft of outcomes.

The Program Reviews from Chemistry, Communications, Exercise & Sports Science, Ruth Patrick Science Center, and School of Education were distributed to the Committee members. The question the Committee needs to answer when reviewing these reports is: Would SACS be convinced the students in these programs are meeting goals and objectives?

It was agreed that the Committee will review all program reviews first and then call the Academic Unit heads to discuss. The Committee will review in January.

The next meeting of the Academic Assessment Committee is scheduled for November 10 at 4:10 p.m., B&E 102. At that time, the General Education report will be discussed further and a review of the presentation that Drs. Hosch and Rhodes gave at the SAIR conference.

Respectfully submitted, Maureen Bergstrom

Academic Assessment Committee

November 10, 2005

Minutes

Present: S. Field, R. Li, R. Watts, L. Rhodes, A. Bouknight, B. Hosch, M. Bergstrom

Dr. Field called the meeting to order. The minutes of the October 20, 2005 meeting, were approved. Dr. Hosch introduced the student representative, Ashley Bouknight, a graduate student in the Master's Program in Clinical Psychology.

A copy of *Liberal Education Outcomes, A Preliminary Report on Student Achievement in College* (American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2005) was distributed to the committee. Dr. Hosch explained that this document discusses student outcomes in a useful way. It also demonstrates some alignment between USCA's general education curriculum and this formulation of a "model" curriculum for a liberal education.

Dr. Hosch gave the AAC an update on the finalization of General Education outcomes at USCA. He met with Drs. Val Lumans and Bob Botsch to revise general education outcomes in their respective areas. Changes were presented to the Committee and were approved with a minor editorial change in American Political Institutions. A meeting with Drs. Botsch, Callen, and Kuck is planned for December to revise the outcomes for Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Last year's Academic Assessment Committee charged Dr. Hosch with making sure the academic units addressed the suggestions from the AAC. Because of a three-year interval between reviews, it was decided that a follow-up review by the IE Director in the year after review by the AAC would be the best way to handle keeping up with the assessment portion of the Program Review. The units reviewed by Dr Hosch were: History, Nursing, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology. Dr Hosch reported that overall, fourteen recommendations were made by the AAC to these units. Four recommendations were fully addressed, six were adequately addressed or in progress, three showed some progress or change but fell short of addressing the recommendation, and just one was not addressed at all. In all, 71.4% of Committee recommendations were either fully addressed or actions were in progress to address them. This level of responsiveness represents significant improvement over last year, when only 33% of recommendations were addressed in some way.

Dr. Hosch concluded from his examination that recommendations from the AAC might be more readily discernible if they were put into a summary. He noted that the letters to the units may have been too cumbersome and the units may have had difficulty identifying the recommendations. It may also be beneficial if the letters get out to the units earlier so the heads have more time to work on the recommendations. Also, he indicated that AAC could re-examine the timeline for reviewing all of the reports, such as starting before December to accelerate the process. It was agreed by the AAC:

- 1) Make review letters clearer
- 2) Review reports earlier (before the end of the year)
- 3) Meet with the unit heads the beginning of January

The next meeting of the Academic Assessment Committee is scheduled for December 1 at 4:10 p.m., B&E 102. The members were asked to bring their schedules and calendars for the Spring semester to allow setting up next semester's meetings.

Respectfully submitted,
Maureen Bergstrom

Academic Assessment Committee

December 1, 2005

Minutes

Present: S. Field, R. Li, R. Watts, L. Rhodes, A. Bouknight, M. Bergstrom

Dr. Field called the meeting to order. The minutes of the November 10, 2005 meeting, were approved.

The Academic Assessment Committee will review the assessment reports from Communications, Chemistry, Education, and Exercise Science in that order next semester. The goal will be to have these reports reviewed by February 10, have the AAC members meet with the appropriate Unit Heads and have the AAC report completed and sent to the units before Spring Break, 2006. It was also requested that the AAC members read all four assessment reports before the first meeting in January.

The scheduled AAC meetings for Spring 2006 are:

| Date | Day | Time | Place | Review |
|------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| January 19, 2006 | Thursday | 3:00 p.m. | B&E 102 | Communications and Chemistry |
| February 2, 2006 | Thursday | 3:00 p.m. | B&E 102 | Education |
| February 9, 2006 | Thursday | 3:00 p.m. | B&E 102 | Exercise Science |

After the AAC reviews these reports, they will invite the Unit Heads to meet with the Committee. Those meetings will be set up at the convenience of the Unit Head.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bergstrom

Academic Assessment Committee

January 19, 2006

Minutes

Present: S. Field (Chair), R. Li, R. Watts, L. Rhodes, W. Schweder, B. Hosch, A. Bouknight (student representative)

As defined in a three year cycle, the Committee began its annual review of USCA's academic programs with reports from the departments of Communications and Chemistry/Physics.

The Committee based discussion of each program on the Committee's checklist of "Characteristics of Unit Assessment Report"; thereby, the Committee specifically evaluated each report in terms of stated Goals, Objectives, Measurement, Findings, and Actions Taken. The Committee seeks to determine if the departments' reports demonstrate clear evidence that each department had met or exceeded the defined guidelines for assessing student learning.

Dr. Hosch reminded the Committee that Goals should be appropriate to each discipline and that alignment and refinement of Objectives, Measurements, and Findings is on-going for academic departments. He assured the Committee that Communications and Chemistry have made good faith efforts to align assessment goals with student learning objectives, and that our task is to assist these departments with formative feedback. After discussion, the Committee drafts letters to the department chairs with broadly defined comments on each report and invites each department chair to meet with the Committee once we have finished the annual analysis of all reports submitted this year, to conclude our Spring 2006 review session.

Dr. Hosch acknowledged that all departments will need to fold in assessments pertaining to general education. Also, he acknowledged that some departments still rely primarily on student perceptions such as exit surveys even though stated guidelines for assessment note that **"the primary measurements of student performance should be assessed by faculty or other qualified professionals"** (Committee emphasis). We briefly acknowledged two "schools of thought" concerning use of course grades in this regard.

Further, Dr. Hosch reminded the Committee that departmental data collection and analysis were always somewhat dated. These reports were generated in the Summer 2005.

Since the Communications report was generated soon after Dr. B. Harpine became Chair of Communications, this report naturally represents Dr. Harpine's first efforts at composing assessment reports for USCA. In that regard, the Communications Department has identified "Objectives" that the Committee recommends re-labeling as Goals. Alignment of survey results to the stated "objectives" should be revisited by the Communications Department to craft subdivisions that more accurately realign Goals and Objectives. Exit survey items might more accurately be restated as Objectives, and Measurements such as the exit survey and the capstone evaluation might be clarified as objectives or measurements by attachment of evaluative rubrics which are directly related to explicitly stated Goals. The Committee also recommends use of the Junior Writing Portfolio results to complement the Communication Department's emphasis on assessment of writing skills in the major.

To summarize, the Committee recommends that the Communications Department revisit and refine its Goals, define Objectives through use of the exit survey language, provide rubrics to accompany its Measurements, rank order its Findings, and more clearly focus Actions, highlighting strengths in theory, and identifying areas of practice to be addressed by use of rank ordering in a summary table to move more actively into conclusions.

Regarding the Chemistry Department's report, the Committee expressed confusion with stated Goal #2 which the Committee recommends refashioning. Programmatic goals (#1 and #3) are related to student learning. The Committee agreed that Goal #2 is more operational, and thus perhaps more accurately a Measurement for student learning. Chemistry's use of Objectives might also be restated; again, relying on

the Committee's guidelines, **Objectives should "be measurable... and should be phrased in the format 'Students will...' or 'Students will be able to...'"** (Committee emphasis).

In regard to Chemistry's stated Measurements, the Committee was puzzled by the reference to a "tool" which might be attached, and the Committee also identified lapses in clarity regarding Findings and presentation of statistical data. Dr. Hosch noted that Chemistry's report demonstrated a required cultural shift. USCA has traditionally required department performance reviews which have been tied to the budgeting process. Dr. Hosch thus applauded the progress that has been made in recent years to more accurately align assessment data to defined student learning objectives, but he also acknowledged that most if not all of the major departments are still in this process of re-alignment. As seen in the Chemistry Department's report, Actions are embedded in narrative discussion, as an artifact, perhaps, of prior reporting formats.

To summarize, the Committee recommends that the Chemistry Department continue to refine Goals, to restate Objectives to emphasize measurability, to attach assessment instruments and tools and to label charts used for Measurements and Findings, and to highlight Actions in a summary section. In scope, the Committee suggests "repackaging" parts of the report from Chemistry.

Dr. Hosch collected members' scoring sheets and reminded us that after the minutes are submitted, a letter to the chairs of Communications and Chemistry will be composed, and after Committee review and approval, these feedback letters will be sent to these department chairs.

Our reviews of the semester's reports will continue on February 2, 2006 with the Assessment Reports from the School of Education.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynne Rhodes

Academic Assessment Committee

February 11, 2006

Minutes

Present: S. Field (Chair), R. Li, L. Rhodes, W. Schweder, B. Hosch, A. Bouknight (student representative)

After review and approval of the minutes from Jan. 19, 2006, the Committee continued with its annual review of USCA's academic programs with reports from Exercise Science and the School of Education. For information purposes, Dr. Hosch reported on progress with defining learning objectives for the Humanities core; he offered two versions which will be presented to the humanities chairs later this month, one with three items and the other with four, and there was brief discussion. The Committee also noted that campus discussions to define learning objectives for the non-western component of general education will be scheduled once the Humanities objectives have been finalized. The Committee was reminded that we will schedule times for department chairs to meet with the Committee once we have finished the annual analysis of all reports submitted this year, to conclude our Spring 2006 review session.

In regard to Exercise Science, the Committee noted that the objectives and rubrics are well defined and specific. We questioned some areas of implementation: We recommended clarification of whether measurements were course embedded, as labs or clinical experiences. We noted that the challenge for the major will be to expand the implementation of the rubrics across all courses involving all faculty. Assessments appear to be manageable even with high advisee numbers. Without results, actions to be taken are missing. To summarize, the Committee recognizes that Exercise Science has committed to assessment, diligent in defining the major goals and student learning objectives, and will in time move into full implementation.

In regard to the School of Education, the Committee noted that clearly a great deal of assessment that was focused towards meeting NCATE accreditation was obvious; it was, however, difficult for this Committee to see distinct learning objectives and benchmarks, without a verb driven description (instead of "dynamic educator discussions, our guidelines ask for "students should be able to... / students will...."). We noted that ADCP dimensions (which are defined as ten skills) could be included, and that an aggregate ranking (based on data presented in the report on pages 11-12) could simplify decisions about actions to be taken based on strengths in the program. Particularly with Praxis data, it is difficult to link to actions. To summarize, the Committee recommends that the School of Education "repackage" parts of the report; much of the data can be attached as supplemental, while some (i.e. page 23) can be mapped back to goals and objectives. Goals and objectives are defined, but alignments of measurements to particular objectives, so as to rank strengths, so that actions can be clearly related to the goals.

Because of the Committee's efficiency, our tentative meeting scheduled for February 9 was deemed unnecessary. Dr. Hosch asked us to keep this slot open on Thursday afternoons to plan for visits from department chairs for further discussions.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynne Rhodes

Academic Assessment Committee

March 23, 2006

Minutes

Present: S. Field, W. Schweder, B. Hosch, R. Watts, W. Harpine

The committee welcomed Dr. William Harpine, Chair of the Department of Communications to discuss the Committee's letter of March 16, 2006.

Dr. Harpine was invited to make some opening remarks. He distributed several evaluation forms used by the Department that had been mentioned but not included in its initial report. He explained his difficulty in preparing the initial report due to his assuming the chair position only a few months prior to the report's deadline. He emphasized the importance of the capstone project and mentioned that significant changes in the curriculum had been instituted.

The Committee noted that the evaluation forms presented contained scales that were weighted differently and recommended that the Department standardize the scales used to create rubrics, so that they can easily compare results. The Committee also stressed that the instruments would create the most useful information if they were directly linked to educational goals and objectives. The Committee recommended that existing label of "objectives" be changed to "goals" since these outcomes are broad-based and that specific objectives could be derived from some elements of the Exit Survey. The Committee also recommended that student performance be assessed by faculty or other qualified professionals rather than depending most heavily upon self-reported evaluations. It was agreed that the Department would then be better able to implement measurements that would be useful in determining changes in the program that could improve student learning outcomes.

When asked how the Committee could assist the Department, Dr. Harpine requested some technical advice and if the Committee would be able to determine how long the existing goals and objectives had been in place. The Committee offered to write a letter that would specify the recommendations made by the Committee and to meet with the Communications faculty if warranted.

Dr. Braden Hosch announced that the Natural Science portion of the General Education curriculum had been approved and that the Humanities portion's approval was pending, but likely.

Respectfully submitted,

G. Randall Watts

Academic Assessment Committee

April 14, 2006

Minutes

Present: S. Field (Chair), R. Li, L. Rhodes, W. Schweder, R. Watts, B. Hosch, A. Bouknight (student representative), Maureen Bergstrom (Institutional Effectiveness)

Visiting: Dr. A. Willbrand and Dr. M. Fetterolf (Chemistry); Dr. J. Priest (Education)

These discussions with the Department Chair from Chemistry Department and with the Head of the School of Education complete the Committee's reviews of assessment reports from the Department of Chemistry and the School of Education.

Dr. Willbrand and Dr. Fetterolf clarified the Chemistry Department's use of the National ACS exam. They also explained their use of senior research and senior projects to examine their curriculum and to make adjustments. They agreed to rethink their organization of goals / objectives and to more directly link each of the three distinctive goals to particular measures and outcomes: 1) course related; 2) skills related; 3) communication of results. They also agreed to provide emphasis through structural changes in their report. They provided the Committee with a rubric that has been developed by the Department for assessment of the Senior Research Thesis and Oral Presentation, and they also noted that in their final department meeting of each semester, they self assess and reflect on their teaching to provide linkages that are "built in" to the course sequencing. Dr. Hosch encouraged them to consider use of "pivot tables" to provide snapshots of their data and to create a flow chart that visualized the feedback between members of the department. To conclude our analysis of the Chemistry review, we discussed extensions of the Department's assessment to include physics, particularly starting with 201/202 (regarding general education).

Dr. Priest clarified the School of Education's use of the conceptual framework (The Dynamic Educator). He also noted that he has already asked for coordinators of each area (special education, early education, secondary) to look at the assessment data to refine what they have collected and to narrow down the links between "artifacts" and standards / learning objectives. He provided the Committee with a handout to explain how the School is "layering" its data to show how each area of data contributes to the overall goals and objectives. He acknowledged that "pivot tables" could also assist with analysis of the data, although he already knows that planning is the area of strength for majors, followed by communication and instruction, while professionalism is less evident as a area of strength for majors, and managing is the weakest area especially for secondary majors. Dr. Priest noted that secondary education majors don't have any experience with special education which could explain the novice teachers' problems with classroom management in the secondary classroom. Dr. Priest also explained that the School now advocates use of Praxis I earlier in the student's academic program; however, more analysis of the subset scores is still desired.

The Committee plans to meet one final time this semester to discuss the Exercise Science review with Dr. Christopher DeWitt, on Thurs., April 20.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynne Rhodes

Academic Assessment Committee
April 20, 2006
Minutes

Present: S. Field (Chair), R. Li, L. Rhodes, W. Schweder, B. Hosch, A. Bouknight (student representative), Maureen Bergstrom (Institutional Effectiveness)

Visiting: Dr. C. DeWitt (Exercise Science) and Dr. J. Priest (Education)

This discussion with the Department Chair from Exercise Science and the Head of the School of Education complete the Committee's review of the assessment report from the Department of Exercise Science. Dr. DeWitt first thanked the Committee for our review and noted that the assessment report is a "work in progress"; he also noted that all of the faculty in Exercise Science have cooperated with him to designate particular courses that are tied to both the goals / objectives and to accreditation with the professional program. He also commented that he would like to move towards use of some kind of computerized data manager for efficient analysis; Dr. Hosch commended Dr. DeWitt for his exemplary work. The Committee asked for some clarification of how the assessments fit into the professional accreditation process, and Dr. DeWitt explained that the Department has recently undergone a site visit from the National Athletic Training Association and that the Department is now considering that report as well as having recently made changes to pre-requisites through the normal C&C process. Dr. Hosch noted that the Department should be able to stress "use of findings" in the next review; he asked for a rank ordering and deliberate emphasis on strengths and weaknesses for all seven goal statements for ease in looking at the quantitative picture. Dr. DeWitt asked how these assessment reviews will contribute to the next SACS review, and Dr. Hosch responded that since most of the analysis is now done by an off site review team, it is essential to stress the assessment loop back into substantive changes.

Further business for the Committee after our visit with the Department Chair included a final look this year at General Education Outcomes Goals: We approved wording for Mathematics, Statistics, and Logic; for Natural Sciences; and for Humanities (noting that we have previously approved wording for Oral and Written Communication; for Foreign Languages; for Social and Behavioral Sciences; and for World Civilizations and American Political Institutions). All that remains to be worked out and approved will be the Non-Western / Cross Cultural Understanding Outcomes Goal. Dr. Hosch acknowledged that he is generally pleased with the amount of agreement on almost all of General Education, and that given the mix of disciplines especially in the Humanities, a Non-Western Committee (which is not yet formed) will have a challenging task to define Non-western and to tighten the list of options / learning outcomes.

Next year, reports will be forthcoming from English, Business, Biology, Mathematics, and the Visual & Performing Arts. Dr. Hosch noted that beginning with the 2006-2007 review, he will stress that each discipline with general education emphasis will be required to report on both general education outcomes and goals / objectives for the discipline.

Dr. Hosch thanked the Committee for the year's work; he also thanked Dr. Sandra Fields for her effective leadership as Chair; Dr. Fields in turn also thanked the members of the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynne Rhodes