

Assessment Committee Meeting

February 27, 2009

12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

John Spotts Room

Meeting called by: Mary Beth Reynolds

Members Present: Bill Pierson, Dan Holbrook, Calvin Meyer, Louis Watts, Mary Beth Reynolds, Rex McClure, Celene Seymour, Loukia Dixon, Matt James, Janet Dooley, Pat Gebhart, Michelle Duncan, Janet Dozier, Judy Silver

Ex-Officio Members Present: Frances Hensley, Sherri Smith, Karen Barker (Recording Secretary)

Members Absent: Ed Bingham, David Pittenger, Jeff Pappas

Minutes

Agenda item: Approval of Minutes from January 22, 2009

Discussion: Celene Seymour was omitted from the list of those absent from the November meeting. Minutes were approved as amended.

Agenda item: CLA and NSSE Updates

Discussion: NSSE:

- Mary Beth thanked the committee for encouraging students to take the NSSE
- Prize drawings are being conducted during the SGA meetings. The first drawing was held and three winners notified by email and posted on the Assessment website.
- The current response rate is at 21%.

CLA:

- So far, 58 students have been tested. 42 more are needed to meet the 100 mark. Mary Beth is in the process of scheduling 4 more sessions.
 - Mary Beth requested that committee members have seniors who might be interested in taking the CLA contact her directly.
 - Students are putting forth a good effort during the exam rather than rushing to get done.
 - Bill suggested having chairs & advisors of students who have been invited, but not yet participated, encourage them to register. Mary Beth said that she would send that information to the chairs & advisors.
 - Matt asked about whether he could recruit students to participate and the committee approved that idea.
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Agenda item: Program Assessment Report Discussion

Discussion: Mary Beth asked for feedback regarding the Annual Assessment Report review process.

Suggested Changes for Reports due in 2009:

- The committee noted the need to communicate to departments that they should use the updated forms, which are on the Assessment website, rather than older versions that may be saved on individual computers.
 - Fran suggested having an example of a mission statement that supports the university mission.
 - There was a discussion of the varying terminologies used by different departments (ex. Student Learning Outcomes vs. Program Goals).
 - Marybeth asked for feedback on the new report format.
 - Sherri suggested adding a section for departmental review of syllabi.
 - Cal said that he appreciated the changes that have been made.
 - Report reviews are due to the Office of Assessment and Program Review by March 16th.
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Agenda item: Syllabus Evaluation Discussion

Discussion:

- The committee engaged in a discussion of whether the existing process is the best way to evaluate student learning at a course and program level. Mary Beth explained that she had tried to make the process objective; however, in doing so, evaluation of essential learning data may have been

compromised.

- Dan questioned the importance of having Student Learning Outcomes on syllabi. Mary Beth explained the idea of using the syllabus as a vehicle to drive the course and also discussed the value of detailed outcome planning along with clearly tying the outcomes to the activities. Fran discussed a nationwide shift in the academic community toward viewing the syllabus as a form of discourse, or a “living” document, between the students and faculty. She explained that even though faculty believe that they are clearly explaining their expectations, values, etc to students; the students’ unfamiliarity with discipline terminology and structure can interfere with that transference of information. Cal also shared that clearly listing the SLOs can assist in determining whether a class qualifies for transfer credit.
- The committee also discussed the value of having non-learning outcome related items as requirements (ex. Academic Dishonesty Policy may not be necessary for every course). Judy suggested not requiring policies that are generic to the university and instead having a link to the official policy. Mary Beth shared that the Assessment office currently has a link on their website which has the Incentive Weather, Affirmative Action, and Computing Services Usage policies. The university Academic Dishonesty, Attendance and Disability policies will be added to that document.
- Janet Dozier requested adding the University name as a required item. The committee agreed.
- Mary Beth noted that the most frequently missing required item is the course description. She asked for input about this matter. Cal reiterated the utilitarian use of having the description on the syllabus for transfer credit review. Fran mentioned that it is beneficial for faculty to check the description yearly against the current catalog description. If a great disparity exists, the evolving nature of the course may not be accurately reflected in the catalog and a new description should be developed. She also pointed out that faculty can link to the catalog description rather than including it in its entirety on the syllabus.
- Mary Beth asked for feedback concerning the proposed changes to the syllabus review process as outlined on the handout. Cal asked when Mary Beth would meet with the chairs to go over the departmental syllabus review procedures. Mary Beth said that she had originally planned to meet with the chairs in the fall; however, she decided to move those meetings up to the end of April and include the deans.

Agenda item: Multicultural / International Committee Reconfiguration Update

Discussion: The committee has been reconfigured and has had their first meeting to work on revising the learning outcomes. Mary Beth reported that she is looking into the creation of a database to house multicultural/international articles, similar to that used to upload syllabi to MU Bert.

Agenda item: Assessment Day Discussion

Discussion:

- The website is almost complete.
- Pat is working on the surveys.
- Mary Beth shared that faculty encouragement is the single most effective means of encouraging student participation. She asked the committee members to encourage their constituents to share their departmental Assessment Day activities with their students.

Agenda item: Survey Dissemination Discussion

Discussion: Deferred

Agenda item: Additional Business

Discussion: No additional business was brought forth.

Agenda item: Future Meetings

Discussion:

- April (TBA)

Meeting Adjourned

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Barker

Karen Barker
Recording Secretary