University Assessment Committee Meeting Minutes
Friday, March 8th, 2013
2:30 - 3:30 pm
137 Science and Technology Center

Attending: Fernando Perez, Jaedock Lee, Ken Levitt, Mark Kilker, Jeff Weber, Chris Dudley, Jennifer White, John Robinson, Kelly Harrison, Jo Greenawalt, pam Kramer Ertel, Paul Creamer, Sheila handy, John Chang, Michael Sachs, mike Jochen, Suzanne Fischer Prestoy, Adam McGlynn, Joann Stryker, Laura Waters

February UAC Minutes Approved.

Ken Levitt gave an update on the General Education Committee (GEC).

GEC hoping to revise our general education program; ESU really has to do this. In 2005 we committed to Middle States to assessing and revising our General Education as necessary. This hasn't happened yet for various reasons.

Ken met with UAC co-chairs, Dr. Tauer and Dr. Reidhead earlier in the week and this was a very productive meeting.

General Education Revision. GEC is planning on having a GE revision proposal introduced to faculty and administration by end of semester. GEC hopes to have this revision approved by end of spring or early in fall semester. To this end the GEC has done two surveys - a general survey in November and a more focused survey out now. There are currently >150 responses to the current survey which takes about 15-20 minutes to complete. The results of this focused survey of the faculty are going to be used to formulate the general education revision proposal.

GEC Planned Actions for Spring 2013. GEC has other actions planned in advance of MSCHE Monitoring Report due in September. GEC looked at Proficiency Profile data - ESU scores in reading are very low when taking comparison school results into account. Reading was lowest - starting now to address this before Gen Ed revision is implemented. GEC is planning the following activities to address ESU student reading:

1. CETL - workshops for faculty that can be used to help students develop reading skill.
2. Early Start program running this summer. Dr. Beverlyn Grace-Odeleye is in charge. GEC has asked that there be a focus on reading skills for the Early Start classes.

3. Recommending a pilot program for students identified as having low reading skills.

4. Sending out articles to faculty about reading skills.

**Question:** Since 2005 ESU has been talking about GE reform, when will it be delivered?

The plan is to have a framework on the table by the April APSCUF meeting and to present at APSCUF faculty forum. Keep in mind that any GE revision must be passed by faculty vote of 50% plus one.

The GEC is taking a different approach from that taken in the past. The GEC is obtaining input from faculty prior to developing the GE revision.

**Question:** The survey that just went out - did it go to non-classroom faculty?

Dr. Levitt will follow up on this.

**Question:** When GEC is rolling out the planned actions will there be information about resources needed to make them happen in proposals?

Yes, although some things don't require a lot of resources or piggyback on existing frameworks. All four things don't require resources other than what we already have available. GEC is working within existing structures or piggy backing on existing programs.

**Workgroup Updates**

a) Program Assessment Workgroup

Met this past Wednesday, the workgroup is focusing on assessment reports. They are developing a rubric for evaluating those program level reports to provide feedback. The workgroup came up with four or five factors to
evaluate. They will be looking at a first round of reports applying the trial rubric.

b) **Institutional Assessment Workgroup**
Met today and discussed ways to get students to participate in the institutional assessments (National Survey of Student Engagement and the Proficiency Profile) that are being conducted right now. We would like to get a good representative sample. Discussed advertising campaign, radio station announcement, stroud courier interview, asking deans to stress to department chairs, and having John Robinson discuss with student organizations.

Workgroup has also started discussing the concept of making an exit assessment a graduation requirement. This was brought up in reference to the Proficiency Profile which is now an ESU selected funded performance measure. As a faculty, if these assessments are going to impact how I am going to teach, I would rather have more numbers than less. Faculty would rather spend the money to have information be based on n of 1200 rather than an n of 200. Faculty felt we can get a more exact sense of where the students are at especially concerning some of the low critical thinking scores.

The workgroup also discussed ways to link resources to student learning outcomes. They are reviewing other MSCHE reports and strategic plans to see how other universities link resources to learning outcomes. How do we make these linkages happen? TracDat can be used in the long term to track and document linkages.

c) **Professional Development Workgroup**
This workgroup is meeting after the full UAC meeting.

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**Consultant, Dr. Jodi Levine Laufgraben**

Friday, March 15th she will be on campus giving a mini assessment facilitation workshop for the University Assessment Committee and the Assessment Consulting Team.

In February she received 2 binders of information regarding assessment at ESU. Information about our committee, assessment structures, and program assessment (learning outcomes, plans and reports) was included in these binders. Today we received her
preliminary report regarding these materials. The UAC members were asked to review the draft report and come to the lunch meeting next Friday with their questions. There was a general review of the report and the following points of discussion arose:

- What is still missing from our program assessment information is the “what did you assess and what changes did you make as a result of that assessment.” There was a suggestion that we be sure to have items related to this as part of the assessment rubric for the program assessment reports. Also what sort of evidence is the basis for the changes that have been made.

- Several departments were identified in the draft that we can use as examples, possibly acting as mentors. Physics, Psychology, and Sociology were noted positively for both their assessments and the way they used and responded to their data.

- Joann mentioned that some of the accreditation reports were huge and were not included in the binders. Computer Science is one such example.

- There appeared to be a misunderstanding about the dating of the assessment plans. This will be discussed on the 15 with Dr. Laufgraben. We need to have a regular cycle for updating plans and doing the (annual) reports which is well known and understood.

- We have said that if a program has a disciplinary accreditation report that covers student learning then they can submit THAT report as their annual assessment report. In the draft report from Dr. Laufgraben, there appears to be a different statement on this. We will seek clarification of this issue on the 15th and make sure the message is consistent.

If programs haven't submitted an assessment report, they should submit something with their combined activities over whole time (2010-11 and 2011-12).

Moving Forward
UAC will be continuing with gathering Curriculum Maps both undergraduate and graduate, as well as the Annual Assessment Reports.

The focus needs to be on actions taken as a result of these assessment processes. Some actions are very simple. There have been many recent major curriculum changes so the information of what drove those changes is part of this picture. Remember the mundane - the little things changed mean a lot.

Looking at these reports will be a big task but needs to be done as soon as possible while faculty are available to clarify information as needed.

Student Affairs and Student Activities Association is working to take what were doing in the extra-curricular activities and tying it back to the university-wide student learning outcomes.

**Question:** For the annual program assessment reports, what is the normal deadline?

They are due each September, after the first departmental meeting of the academic year. This timeframe was developed based on faculty input. The thought was during the academic year assessments would be collected, collated and analyzed over the summer, and then discussed at the first department meeting for action.

If a program has not submitted any assessment reports, one report can be submitted which covers the whole period rather than going year by year.

What can the UAC do to move program assessment forward? How should we share the good examples?

- Hold workshops on direct assessment techniques and how to write up an assessment report.
- Ask identified departments to participate in a panel or a workshop.
- Distribute identified good assessment reports via email to faculty. Share the examples, distribute them.
• Identify which departments are having difficulty and then go see them, talk to them, talk to the chair (along with the emails.

• Assessment consulting team is a part of this picture. Would like to see the literature that is part of that discipline to see how this discipline operates.

**University Assessment Committee Website**
The website needs an overhaul to better meet our information distribution needs. All UAC members were asked to review the website and identify what is missing. Is there a particular assessment website you think is well organized? Perhaps a summer intern from the Instructional Technology Graduate Program could help with this.

The next UAC meeting is April 12, 2013.
Preliminary Report
Review of Assessment Documents

East Stroudsburg University

The following observations and recommendations are based on a preliminary review of assessment documents (two binders and a folder) provided by administrators at East Stroudsburg University (ESU). The following questions guided the review of materials:

- What are the strengths of submitted plans and reports?
- What are the weakness of submitted plans and reports?
- Are these plans and reports consistent with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education’s standards for assessment of student learning?
- Is there evidence of a culture of assessment at East Stroudsburg University?
- How might East Stroudsburg University improve assessment planning and reporting?

General Observations

As a collection of document, the materials provided demonstrate that East Stroudsburg is attempting to organize and expand assessment of student learning beyond the establishment of learning outcomes. The Development of a Culture of Inquiry (2010) document outlines the framework for ESU’s assessment activity but there is no update on the campus’ progress for either phase I or phase II. Is this culture developing?

A University Assessment Committee is in place and is charged with developing and implementing a comprehensive process for identifying and assessing student learning outcomes at ESU. This group plays an important role in advancing the culture of assessment. Its 2012 charge outlined four action areas. What is the committee’s progress in meeting its original (2008), and updated charge?

From the material provided it is evident that programs have well defined, measurable student learning outcomes (SLOs). Some programs have further defined learning outcomes in terms of key skills. The student learning outcomes documents provide a solid foundation on which to base assessment plans.

ESU has developed a set of assessment planning tools to assist programs:

- Assessment Plan
- Plan Feedback Report
- Annual Report

The binders contained examples of all three but rarely were all three provided for a particular program. The assessment plan is a good template on which programs can outline their
assessment activities. The assessment plan feedback report is an excellent tool for providing programs with advice on how they might improve their assessment planning and activities. When provided, the annual reports offered a summary of assessment but very little information on how assessment is being used to improve teaching and learning. There were also few plans beyond 2010-11. **Lack of information on uses of assessment of student learning for continuous improvement is a noted and significant deficit of ESU’s current assessment efforts.** In describing the assessment infrastructure, ESU should define the expected use for all three tools and how—when taken collectively—they provided a comprehensive look at the state of a program’s assessment activity. There needs to be widespread evidence that these tools are being used.

There is a summary chart of planned assessments. The chart is useful for outlining the extent and range of assessment activities, however, many assessments are noted as cancelled and postponed. What are plans for getting programs back on track?

The University has University SLO’s (which I believe are also referred to as general education outcomes). How are these being assessed? ESU has administered the Proficiency Profile. How were the results shared and discussed with faculty? How is the information being used to improve general education? The ILT was used to measure information literacy. This is a good example of an assessment of a University SLO, but how was the analysis shared? Used? **Demonstrating use of assessment to improve student learning is a key expectation of the Middle States standard on assessment of student learning (Standard 14).**

While most of the documents provided describe assessment of student learning, some institutional effectiveness measures were included as well. ESU is using a range of measures to assess institution effectiveness, including a senior survey and employment satisfaction survey. These tools can provide useful information. While a summary of key finding is important, these documents did not discuss how the information was disseminated to the broader campus community or how the information is being used to inform planning, decision-making and ongoing improvements.

**Program-level Assessment**

The College of Arts and Sciences has developed a five-step approach to assessment that demonstrates a good understanding of the stages of assessment of student learning. It begins with goals and ends with uses of assessment for continuous improvement. The College nicely outlines measures of effectiveness and student satisfaction (surveys) along with tools for direct measurement of student learning (portfolios, internships and culminating exams). For this college and its degree programs, learning goals and tools for assessing student learning are in place, however, there is considerably less evidence as to what assessments have been completed and how the information is being used.
Physics, Psychology and Sociology are programs that had more complete assessment reports. The Sociology report (2010) describes how and when faculty discuss assessment and the report includes a chart outlining actions taken. The report describes “strengths and gaps in student learning.” This is a report that you could share with other departments that may be struggling to complete the findings and uses sections of the report template.

The Engineering transfer program 2010-11 report includes results and minimal discussion of planned actions. Did they make these changes? Has there been follow-up assessment to determine if changes led to improvements? Many other programs had assessment plans but no reports of results. For example, Art and Design has clearly defined learning outcomes and developed a rubric for portfolio evaluation, but was the rubric used and what did they learn about students’ abilities? Music describes use of performance portfolios but there was no report of what was collected and analyzed. Political Science has a nice, professional looking plan that describes use of multiple measures to assess student learning. Their report includes measures of overall program effectiveness but little information on how the data is being used. For almost every program in the college, I had the same questions: Was the assessment completed? What did they learn? How did they use the information?

Examples of 2011-12 assessment reports show improvement in quality of the reports, particularly in terms of use of assessment information.

In its 2011-12 report, the Math department described use of gateway and Praxis exams to establish benchmarks and assess student learning. The assessment report included analysis of results and description of how results are shared with faculty. They discuss planned implementation of online algebra supports—a great example of a change/support directly based on information on how students are doing and how they might improve.

History discussed its Praxis results and provided analysis of impact of curricular choices on test performance. Their 2011-12 report discuses possible redesign of survey courses and the creation of common course objectives in some upper-level courses. They present a revised assessment plan and indicate that faculty will meet annually to discuss results. This assessment report nicely shows discussion and use of assessment data and could also be a model for other programs.

Several programs have submitted NCATE reports or documents to other programmatic accreditors. These reports contain information on assessment of student learning that can be included (cut and paste it fine) in ESU assessment reports. Encourage and remind programs that assessment information collected for their accrediting bodies should be expanded upon and used to demonstrate ESU’s compliance with Middle States’ expectations for assessment.
Recommendations

1. The emphasis for 2012-13 assessment reports must be on **findings and how the information is being used to improve programs, specifically teaching and learning.** What are programs doing with the information collected from the assessments? What are students’ strengths and weaknesses as learners? What changes are they considering or making to improve the program(s) and student learning?

2. Clearly articulate the purposes of the three assessment planning tools (plan, feedback form and report). Establish a timeline for submission of plans and reports.

3. The plan feedback form is an excellent tool. The Assessment Committee might consider assessing how the feedback is helping programs refine their assessment activities.

4. If there is a gap between 2010-11 reports and the present, consider inviting programs to submit a combined 2011-12 and 2012-13 report at the end of the current spring semester (May or June 2013). For example, History just submitted a 2011-2013 report that summarized assessment activity and uses of assessment to make program changes. Ask programs to describe any assessment activities over the past two years with a particular emphasis on findings and uses of findings for planned improvements. Look for examples of where programs made changes to curriculum, pedagogy or assessment due to findings from these assessments.

5. Consider possible reasons for the delay in 2011-12 reporting. Did programs understand expectations and timelines? How might the assessment committee and campus administration assist programs in sustaining assessment activity and reporting?

6. History, Math, Physics, Psychology, Sociology and Nursing are examples of programs with solid assessment plans and reports. Use these materials as examples to help other programs better understand good assessment practices and assessment reporting expectations.

7. Help programs with specialized/programmatic accreditation or state approval processes understand how assessment used for these purposes might also be considered direct and indirect evidence of assessment of student learning for Middle States. Programs do not need to do “two or different assessments (NCATE v. Middle States)”, but rather need to show how they are using some of the assessments already in place to improve teaching and learning.

Conclusions

There is a solid foundation of learning goals, learning opportunities (such as capstone courses) and tools on which to expand assessment activity and reporting. It is the hope that more assessment and use of findings is occurring than is being reported. This is not uncommon. Many campuses struggle with how to systematically report and monitor assessment. If programs
are analyzing and using results, then the challenge is how to get them to share and report that information.

All programs appear to have well-defined learning goals (SLOs). Many describe assessment tools and timelines. What is unclear is what assessment has been completed and how information is being used to improve teaching and learning. Few assessment reports described results or uses of results. Few programs appear to have plans beyond 2010-11, however, recently submitted 2011-12 reports were much stronger in terms of reporting uses of assessment. The goal now is to get caught-up with reporting but more importantly, collect information on how programs are using assessment to improve teaching and learning (curricular, pedagogical and assessment changes).

Submitted by:
Dr. Jodi Levine Laufgraben
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