Minutes of the Core Review Committee  
1 December 2009

The CRC met on 1 December 2009 at 11:05 AM in the GIS conference room (SLC 143).

Members present: Brian Whitman, Mischelle Anthony, KarenBeth Bohan, Greg Castelli, Susan Hritzak, Andy Miller, Gina Morrison, Amy Patton, Philip Simon, Ernie Trujillo, Bridgette Zielinski

Guests: Vernon Harper (Associate Provost), Rachel Duda (intern accompanying Susan Hritzak)

Dr. Whitman called the meeting to order. The minutes of 12 November 2009 were approved with modifications.

Old Business

Writing Across the Curriculum — Assessment Questionnaire

The Letter to Department Chairs and Deans Regarding WAC Assessment Reports (24 Nov 09 Draft), prepared by Dr. Bohan, was presented to the Committee. It attempts to balance tight questions with flexibility for different programs. Dr. Miller expressed concern the CRC is dictating how to prepare reports, rather than coordinating. Dr. Bohan explained that the Committee is only gathering reports, and allowing departments to assess as they feel best. Although WAC is a programmatic activity, the Committee felt that its assessment should be separate from the Program Reviews, rather than embedded in them. Dr. Harper pointed out, however, that a single cross-sectional assignment (see below) could be an artifact for both programmatic and WAC assessment.

Dr. Bohan’s letter received the general approval of the committee: it is non-threatening, straightforward, and provides examples. Minor suggestions were provided. To forestall impressions that the CRC is forcing rubrics on the departments, it was considered best to indicate how to obtain sample rubrics or help if desired, rather than including the samples.

Related to this topic, a desire was expressed that the CRC invite the English faculty to an upcoming meeting, to discuss ENG-101.

New Business

Update on MAPP Test for Freshman and Seniors

Dr. Whitman announced that the sample of freshman asked to take the MAPP test is ongoing; however, with roughly one week left, only 34 of the 184 students asked have taken it. Dr. Simon added that students have had many examination times to chose from and have received numerous reminders. One problem is that there is neither a penalty nor a significant incentive: students receive a letter of thanks, and a letter indicating their participation is placed in their folder, but there is not direct grade consequence. As only selected members of an FYF class take the exam, class time cannot be used for it, nor can it be part of the FYF grade.

According to Dr. Harper, the literature shows that the best response rate occurs when entire sections are required to take the exam, as part of the course grade. Given the small Wilkes population, it is not feasible to increase the number eventually participating by raising the number of students selected for the exam. Mr. Castelli suggested that, during the summer orientation, a sample of students could be asked to take the MAPP instead of the Orientation Survey. Performing it at this time would have the added advantage of showing the freshman baseline before the students have begun at Wilkes.

Lastly, ETS has announced that the MAPP test has changed its name to the “ETS Proficiency Profile”.
Update on the Activities of the University Assessment Committee

Dr. Harper updated the CRC on the UAC’s progress. He shared a draft *Process Evaluation Brief of WU Program Review* (11 Nov 09) containing concerns and recommendations, which emphasized timely review and feedback, logical rather than imposed reporting units, and less frequent (triennial?) reviews similar to the current annual ones, with minor reviews between. Division leaders would have the flexibility to define appropriate reporting units — departments, programs, etc. Dr. Harper distributed a streamlined version of the Academic Program Review form, based on the existing Program Review form: it has fewer, more directed item than the current form.

Secondly, the UAC has agreed that the Program Review mechanism is not appropriate for the GenEd. As GenEd concerns itself with student development over the “Wilkes journey”, it requires a more holistic, qualitative reporting mechanism that captures student experiences. Members of the CRC agreed that GenEd assessment should be separate from the Program Reviews. The UAC will create a new reporting mechanism designed for the purpose. Dr. Morrison suggested that individual students could be tracked. Dr. Harper recommended cross-sectional assignments, in which all sections of a GenEd course would have a common assignment. Artifacts for assessment would be pulled from the resulting pool every few years. Although this approach would introduce a measure of standardization, the standardization would be under faculty control, rather than imposed from above.

Dr. Simon asked whether the UAC feels the need to compare Wilkes with other institutions. Dr. Harper stated that there was no sense of this on the UAC, although it is always useful. The MAPP would allow for such comparison, but the internal reports would be more useful to the faculty.

Thirdly, Dr. Harper distributed a sample Program Profile. Each unit that submits a Program Review would create a profile. The profiles would define the program and list its objectives, expectations, and how it assesses itself. The profiles would be made publically available (web).

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

— Ernie Trujillo