

**University Assessment Committee
End of Academic Year Report
2013-14**

Summary of Accomplishments in 2013-14:

- Adoption of new charge and changes to membership/representation
- Creation of a new website to support assessment planning and communication
- Multiple Conversations about assessment: A conversation with FAC about curriculum mapping, a presentation to full faculty on the same topic, 3 separate conversations with a faculty member each, representing the Sidhu School undergraduate programs, undergraduate engineering programs (particularly Mechanical and Electrical), and the English program, regarding curriculum mapping, and a conversation with the full faculty to increase awareness of the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs).
- Update of the Disciplinary Accreditation Schedule
- Administered Gen. Ed. Assessment to Seniors & P2 (Pharmacy) students and reviewed results
- Communicated Gen Ed Assessment results to the University Community via today@wilkes
- Made recommendations for GE Area II (Scientific World) Assessment (consider class year and degree of exposure to Wilkes 105 GE science courses – 1st or 2nd?)
- Review of One-Stop Assessment processes and recommendation to include relevant items from the graduate student satisfaction survey (Adult Student Priorities Survey) in set of metrics for tracking improvement.

2013-14 Committee Members:

Advising/Learning Center – Blake Mackesy (Administration)

Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences – Mike Garr (Faculty)

Assessment & Certification – Diana Keosayan (Assessment Expert) – *left University in November 2013*

Business & Leadership – Ge “Grace” Xiao (Faculty)

Education (Interim Dean) – Rhonda Waskiewicz (Assessment Expert)

General Education Committee – Amjad Nazzal (Faculty)

Information, Analysis & Planning – Brian Bogert (Administrative Co-Chair)

Library – Elizabeth Sullivan (Administration) – *joined in October 2013*

Pharmacy and Nursing – Adam Welch (Faculty Co-Chair)

Science & Engineering – Ernie Trujillo (Faculty) - *stepped down from UAC in October 2013*

Science & Engineering – Ed Bednarz (Faculty) - *joined in January 2014*

Student Development – Phil Ruthkosky (Administration)

Student (Graduate) – Scott Skammer – *joined in January 2014*

Student (Undergraduate) – Kayla Gradwohl – *joined in October 2013*

University Assessment Committee (UAC) Charge

Composition: Five elected faculty members (one from each college or school whenever possible) and one appointed by the General Education Committee; two staff representatives appointed by the Vice President of Student Affairs; the Director of Information, Analysis and Planning; a representative from the Farley Library appointed by the Dean of the Library; two additional assessment experts appointed by the Provost; and two student representatives, one undergraduate student appointed by student government and one graduate student selected by the committee.

The Faculty co-Chair of the Assessment Committee will be elected by the Committee. Faculty members serve three-year renewable terms.

Functions: (1) Support, promote, coordinate, and otherwise facilitate assessment activities and best practices to advance institutional effectiveness and student learning across the University; (2) ensure that goals and objectives developed by University programs or units are in alignment with the mission and are used for continuous improvement; (3) communicate relevant information about assessment activity to all constituencies of Wilkes University.

2013-14 Activities

Revision to Committee Charge and Membership

The functions of the committee were altered to be less binding to 'compliance'-oriented tasks in order to better align with the Middle States language for Standards 7 and 14 (Institutional and Student Learning Assessment, respectively), and to focus more on support and facilitation of assessment initiatives and activities. The more general framing of the functions language allows for necessary flexibility, supporting the committee's work in addressing and supporting assessment needs most effectively. Membership/representation was also reviewed and revised as specified above. Final approval of language for incorporation into next iteration of Faculty Handbook came in May 2014.

Election of a Faculty Co-Chair

Adam Welch (Nesbitt College faculty representative) was elected unanimously by the committee to be faculty-co chair in October 2013. Adam Welch replaced Beth Johnson (Education; left University in May 2013) as UAC Faculty Co-Chair.

Assessment Website

Over the summer, Diana Keosayian, with some direction from Brian Bogert, had provided a substantial update to the University's Assessment website. Content included an overview of assessment (focused on both institutional assessment and assessment of student learning), as well as committee membership and functions, relevant accreditation dates and information, a library of assessment instruments (rubrics used to aid in assessment), a link to a survey schedule maintained by the Office of Information, Analysis & Planning, additional assessment resources, and an assessment glossary. The new web content was shared with the committee for discussion and feedback in late September 2013.

Mapping Pilot

The committee started the 2013-14 academic year by proposing a "mapping pilot", essentially curriculum mapping course to program outcomes. The intent of the pilot was to ensure programmatic alignment and coverage while also facilitating UAC coordination of appropriate assessment recommendations and support. Rhonda Waskiewicz and Adam Welch presented to the committee on how this mapping had been coordinated within the School of Pharmacy. Rhonda and Brian Bogert then made a joint presentation to both the FAC and full faculty in early fall 2013 about this prospect.

Brian had followed up with selected programs, speaking with Justin Matus about the Business Administration program, with Larry Kuhar about the English program, and with Syed Kalim (with Amjad Nazzal) about two of the undergraduate (ABET-accredited) engineering programs (Electrical, Mechanical). What was found was that all of these programs have their own methods (perhaps as required by external/disciplinary accreditors) of mapping course to program outcomes. All could provide examples and serve as a resource for others, but were not interested in re-mapping their outcomes using a standardized template (which would simplify coordination by the UAC). Although the mapping pilot was "tabled" in late November due to an inability to move forward, the committee deemed it to be highly important for supporting assessment, and should be revisited.

Update to Disciplinary Accreditation Schedule

Preliminary discussion preceding the next round of the program review process (summer to mid-fall 2014) made the argument that programs holding an external/disciplinary accreditation should be able to reduce or eliminate their need to complete a program review, to the extent that content within the University's review process is covered within their program accreditation requirements/documentation. A schedule of where each externally-accredited program is in its accreditation process, coordinated by the committee, was circulated to the deans with the assistance of Terri Wignot, the Interim Provost/Sr. Vice President. It is the committee's hope that this schedule will be totally up-to-date by the start of the summer's program review process.

Support of General Education Assessment

ETS Proficiency Profile

Throughout the fall semester, the chair of the General Education Committee (GEC) was invited to several UAC meetings but was never able to attend for a discussion regarding UAC support of GE assessment. However, in the early spring 2014, offline conversations with the GEC chair provided sufficient support for the UAC in coordinating the administration of the ETS Proficiency Profile (standardized test of general education skills first used at Wilkes in spring of 2009) to a sample of seniors and P2 (2nd year Pharmacy) students. Administration to this group followed the disappointing results from spring 2010. The spring 2010 test administration was hampered by a less than representative sample, and poor testing conditions. The UAC sought to improve the sampling and testing conditions for the spring 2014 sample, and also administered following the test, a 10-question multiple choice survey called the Student Opinion Survey (SOS) from James Madison University. The SOS is a respected instrument used to assess motivation (measured in terms of perceived importance of the test, and effort expended).

Results of the ETS Proficiency Profile were discussed at the final spring committee meeting in May. Overall, Wilkes seniors and P2 students scored in the 80th percentile compared to 252 institutions that had administered the test to seniors between 2008 and 2013. The sample of 70 was deemed 'representative' by the UAC as well as the Office of Information, Analysis & Planning (provided support for the project). It was noted that this group of seniors and P2s should be treated as a baseline for future assessments, since it was the first use of the ETS Proficiency Profile by Wilkes for this population of sufficient number (over 50, unlike spring 2009 (46)) and was also considered to be representative of the population (unlike spring 2010). The good news about achieving the 80th percentile was shared with the University Community via today@wilkes, posted on May 8th.

The spring 2014 results will be shared with the GEC for deeper analysis and consideration as one method of assessment for various components of our current general education curriculum.

Recommendations for Area II (Scientific World) Assessment

An assessment group comprised of 5 faculty from the College of Science & Engineering (CSE) committed to re-assess the general education knowledge and skills of non-science majors (follow-up on assessment done in spring 2012). Amjad (GEC-UAC linking member) and Brian brought this to the UAC's attention for discussion. The UAC made several recommendations for the CSE faculty assessment group's process and analysis, including if possible, analyzing the results by whether it was the students' first or second Wilkes GE "Scientific World" course, as well as the class year of the student. The UAC also expressed additional concerns about the low-stakes nature of the assessment – and how that can negatively impact motivation (similar to concerns expressed in UAC regarding the ETS Proficiency Profile). Recommendations were communicated to Holly Frederick, as the faculty member heading up the CSE group. Brian will be working with the group this summer (due to role in Information, Analysis & Planning Office) to support the assessment/analysis.

Assessment Preparation/Follow-Up for Periodic Review Report (Due June 2015)

The University must respond to recommendations made in the 2010 Self Study in the upcoming Periodic Review Report, due in to our regional accrediting organization, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) in June of 2015. As such, the committee reviewed a compilation of assessment-related recommendations from the Middle States Self-Study. The intent was to get a sense of where we were in addressing each recommendation and to see what plans and actions may need to be implemented in order to address them if not sufficiently addressed already.

Communication of Core Learning Outcomes

An underlying issue that permeated many of the assessment-related recommendations was the need for a stronger, clearer, and more sustainable institutional commitment to supporting assessment planning and initiatives. Part of addressing this issue adequately is for everyone to understand the basics for the assessment structure. The Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) are not as widely known and understood as hoped. These are the five outcomes with which all undergraduate programs (and our first professional program in Pharmacy) should be able to map their program outcomes (and had as part of academic program review in spring 2012). Adam Welch spoke briefly at a full faculty meeting to bring these ISLOs (adopted in November of 2007) back to awareness. A related issue that the UAC hopes to address in the near future is a conversation with the Graduate Studies Committee on the development of an appropriate set of graduate-level ISLOs. It is understood that the ISLO conversation is far from over, but it is important that they are well understood if they are to be what all programs are mapping their program outcomes to as part of their assessment processes, to ensure alignment of programs with the educational mission of the institution.

Continued UAC Operation over Summer to Support Program Review Processes

Another way to address the need for a clearer, better understood and supported assessment process is to ensure that our communication of those processes improves. The next full round of program review will occur for academic and administrative units in summer into mid-fall 2014. The UAC will continue its work over the summer to ensure adequate support, coordination, and communication for the process. This will be a departure from the 2012-13 academic year, when the committee did not meet over the summer months.

Ensuring Effective Assessment/Improvement Processes for the One-Stop/Student Services

Brian Bogert met with Janine Becker, then Executive Director of Student Services, to check on the status of another of the recommendations, regarding assessment and use of results to improve one-stop services, “functions, effectiveness, and efficiency for undergraduate, graduate and employee processes”. Janine had provided several metrics that have been used to track and inform progress and improvements in the processes and service of the one-stop over the past several years. A recommendation was made by the committee that the one-stop not focus solely (aside from other non-survey-based metrics) on survey results from the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI; collected from undergraduate and first-professional students) but also on results of the Adult Student Priorities Survey (ASPS) which asked many of the same service and satisfaction-oriented questions of graduate students.

Summary of Plans so far for 2014-15:

- Continued operation over summer to support program review process
- Review/update program review schedule going forward
- Development of a University Assessment Plan
- Update to Assessment website (over summer + more regular maintenance)
- Hold a joint meeting with the Gen. Ed. Committee to discuss Spring 2014 Gen Ed. Assessment (ETS-PP) results and to develop an assessment plan for Gen Ed going forward

- Meet with Graduate Studies Committee to discuss/draft graduate-level ISLOs
- Continue discussion/follow-up on assessment-related Self-Study recommendations
- In coordination with the GEC, ensure appropriate support of General Education through a review of past GE assessments and recommendations
- Possibly revisit mapping pilot
- Support the development of processes for improved Graduate Teacher Education student learning assessment.
- Other projects as needs develop