

University Assessment Committee
Meeting Minutes for December 14, 2017
Room: CSC 101

Attendees: Brian Bogert, Christine Mellon, Paul Reinert, Elizabeth Sullivan, Pat Sweeney, Yong Zhu

The meeting was called to order @ approximately 11:00 am.

Minutes from the November 9, 2017 meeting were approved without revision.

Status Updates

- **Curriculum Committee Assessment Addendum** – Pat provided an update on this. She had attended a Curriculum Committee Meeting on 11/21 to dialog with committee members regarding any questions or concerns they had about the addendum and incorporating it into their review process. The conversation seemed to clear up most concerns. Curriculum is planning to suggest some minor wording adjustments to the addendum. Pat and Brian will coordinate with Karen Franz Fry (Curriculum Committee Chair) to ensure adjustments are addressed. Following Curriculum’s approval of the adjusted addendum, the change will be introduced to Full Faculty by/before the end of the spring semester.
- **Analysis of Areas of Need, from UAC Review Feedback** – Brian indicated that he has begun looking at this, but hopes to have a fuller report for the committee soon, perhaps comparing trends across Program Review cycles so results are more meaningful.
- **Program Review Next Steps** –
 - **Integration of changes to Program Review forms from Provost’s Review** – Pat and Brian reported out on their meeting with the Provost and Associate Provost to discuss how the Program Review forms can be adjusted to be more in line with Middle States’ assessment expectations. Proposed changes (to be discussed/reviewed by the UAC) are the following:
 - **ANNUAL UPDATE form** –
QUESTION 1 (Follow-up to improve performance on outcomes/objectives):
 - Instead of only needing to provide an update on improvement efforts where performance (*student* performance for academic programs or *unit* performance for administrative units) fell below outcome/objective benchmarks/goals, programs and units will now be expected to provide an update on improvement-related (or high-performance maintaining) actions taken since the last review and associated updates on measurement of performance for all program or unit outcomes/objectives.
 - Prompts are more specific, focused on concrete actions taken rather than references to any improvements. The examples provided are much more concrete also and focus on action rather than process-related language.
 - The committee members in attendance generally liked these changes, since the “concrete-ness” of the prompts and examples should make it easier for individuals to complete the forms, and for the UAC to be able to review & collect specific examples of what programs and units are doing to support ongoing improvement efforts.
 - **QUESTION 2 (New Item):**
 - **“What specific curricular changes have been *implemented or planned* as a result of the review process described above?”**
 - Included to provide an opportunity for academic programs to focus on what they’ve learned through the assessment process and how they’ve applied that learning towards making improvement-focused change through the curriculum. There will be an equivalent question regarding what’s been learned and how the learning has been applied for improvement in the administrative Annual Update form also.
 - The committee thought this change would provide helpful information.
 - It was suggested that we find a way within the form to differentiate the prompt(s) for implemented vs. planned changes so we have a better

sense of what has been done vs. what is being planned, similar to what we've done elsewhere in the form.

QUESTION 3 (New Item):

- **Resources**
 - Included to have a more explicit way of tracking where resources are requested to address ongoing improvement efforts/needs, and the degree to which those resources are received to support those efforts.
 - Again, positive feedback from the committee, since this makes things more concrete for those completing and reviewing the forms.

QUESTION 4 (Initiatives undertaken in the past year focused on improvement):

- The only change here (suggested by Pat) was to remove the lead-in (“Regardless of whether all benchmarks were met in your program's last full review”) to more directly ask about the initiatives undertaken.

QUESTION 5 (Tactics/Strategies used to engage faculty/staff in the activities described):

- Changes were proposed for this item to help quantify and make meaning from what individuals completing the forms share, so the UAC is able to provide more useful feedback. Sometimes individuals completing the form shared strategies used that did not get at the intent of the prompt. Suggestions made from conversation with the Provost and Associate Provost were to include a list of response options for how others in the department or unit were engaged in the assessment process (e.g. Discussions in regularly-held meetings, shared responsibility for assessing performance on outcomes/objectives, etc.). A final response option can allow for individuals to write in additional strategies used that may go beyond those standardized within the form.
 - Since this should help to clarify the intent of the prompt, and facilitate the UAC's ability to assess engagement strategies used, this change was seen as positive by committee members.
 - This item shows up in the **Full Review** form also.

Pat Added that UAC collection and review of information in this way (with these changes implemented in the form) should facilitate our efforts for sharing/promoting best practices regarding what assessment strategies (e.g. adjusting courses in response to troubling student performance data, useful strategies for engaging faculty, etc.) have worked well/been useful.

▪ **FULL REVIEW form:**

RETENTION:

- Pat and Brian had shared with the Provost & Associate Provost the discussion the committee had recently –related to “**Tab B**”/Retention of the Academic Full Review form, regarding whether we should direct academic programs to focus on their within program retention or retention within the University. The Provost suggested that both are important and that we should avoid getting too caught up in the details. The purpose is for those completing the form to reflect on what they believe they (those who support the program) can do/contribute towards to improve retention (however we mean it) for the students they serve. The form prompt(s) will be adjusted accordingly.
- Discussion also focused on collecting information on retention or graduation rate-related strategies that are working well for programs.
 - Committee members did not express any concerns with adjusting the form accordingly.
- **Continued Follow-Up on Program Review Process/Form Adjustments**
 - “**Staff Accomplishments**” section of the Administrative Unit form
 - Brian suggested removing this section from the form. It is not asked on the academic full review, and it had been suggested to him that there may be significant (conceptual)

overlap between this section and HR's Performance Management process. The UAC also does not do anything with the information collected. He did share however, that in a recent meeting, the Associate Provost suggested keeping this section, since it's good to focus on sharing the good things accomplished by staff within a unit.

- Elizabeth added that the University's Performance Management form does not request this level of information (these specifics) – and that if the program review process is inclusive (and individuals within the Unit get to read it before it's submitted – as had been the case for her in the Library) then there is an opportunity to learn a lot about great things that colleagues have accomplished.
- The committee agreed that although there is not a want to request information that we will not do anything with, it is a nice opportunity for units to reflect on the good work that individuals within the unit have done to contribute to the unit's success.
 - **Recommendation:** Add language to prompt to suggest that this component of the Administrative Full Review is not required, but is encouraged.

○ **Timing for Program Review Window(s) in spring**

- Brian passed out program review Process Flowcharts – one for Academic Programs and one for Administrative Units. This was to follow-up on the UAC's request to differentiate the timing of the review windows to allow UAC members greater opportunity for equitable contribution to the review process.
 - The schedule for the academic programs is nearly the same as it had been last year. Checking had been done to make sure it was not due during pre-registration for the following fall, since the deadline for completion of the form would conflict with the faculty priority of advising students.
 - The administrative units are proposed to have earlier due dates than the academic programs.
 - Regarding communication about the start of the process (Box 1 in each flowchart) – It was noted the language “Start of the review process begins with the following, provided by the University Assessment Committee (UAC) and possibly Provost” should be adjusted to make it clear who is responsible for what. Brian noted that he had softened the “Provost” communication language because in the past year or so, the UAC had taken over some of the communication responsibilities that had previously occurred through the Provost.
 - **Brian will follow-up with Jon Ference** (Associate Provost) to address the language and appropriate communication strategies, at least for starting the Program Review process.

- **Spring Semester Meeting Schedule** – Christine suggested going back to meeting on 3rd Tuesdays if that worked for people. It was also noted that 2nd Thursdays (November and December meetings) were known to conflict with the Associate Provost's ability to attend (since there is also an FAC meeting at that time slot), so the move back to 3rd Tuesdays may help to enable the Associate Provost to be able to attend the meetings more regularly. It was noted that the 1st day of the spring semester is a 3rd Tuesday, so for January, we should plan to meet on the 4th Tuesday. The group in attendance generally agreed on this schedule. Brian indicated that he would follow-up to get the meeting dates on people's calendars following the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:05pm.