

University Assessment Committee (UAC)
End of Academic Year Report, 2017-18

Highlights/Overview of Year's Accomplishments:

- **Assessment Addendum and Guidelines for Developing an Assessment Plan**
 - The UAC and Curriculum Committee continued conversation and refinement of an Assessment Addendum (continued from last academic year) to be incorporated into the Curriculum Committee's proposal form. To provide guidance and support for this new "assessment plan" component of the proposal form, the UAC developed, reviewed, and approved [web content for developing an assessment plan](#) for new major programs.
- **Adjustments to the Program/Unit review cycle**
 - Staggered timing – Administrative Units due earlier, Academic Programs stay on the same schedule as in the previous year.
- **Adjustments to UAC Member Reviewer Expectations and Timing**
 - Each UAC member will review more reviews (last year, the standard "max" for most reviewers was 4, this year is it 6) for more equitable coverage between committee members. Faculty representatives will be assigned reviews first to allow sufficient time for completion prior to the end of May.
- **Adjusted expectations for Deans & Vice Presidents in the Review Process, added Prioritization**
 - Deans and VPs are no longer expected to complete a section of the UAC Review form for each program or unit, but they are encouraged to call meetings with chairs, program coordinators, or directors to discuss the UAC's feedback.
 - A "Provost-endorsed" and supported list of programs prioritized for assessment-related follow-up conversations helped to boost visibility and importance for these meetings to reliably occur. This prioritization, based on UAC reviews, should occur each year to ensure that the discussions that most need to happen to address assessment-related concerns do happen.
- **UAC Feedback now (starting this past November) shared directly** with the individuals who completed & submitted the review forms rather than needing to go through the Dean and Vice President first. The Dean and VP will still get a copy of the UAC's feedback too.
 - Going forward, UAC feedback will be shared by the start of the new academic year .
- **Use of Google Drive to coordinate program review archival and access.**
- **Summary statistics by type of review from the 2016-17 process were generated and reviewed.**
 - These summaries can be generated each year, to aid in tracking progress and for identifying areas in need of additional support from the UAC.
- **Norming sessions held to support common UAC-member interpretation of submitted reviews when reviewing/providing feedback related to guidelines on documented assessment process.**
- **Adjustments to the Program & Unit Review Forms**
 - Several updates, including splitting Full & Annual Review forms, several changes proposed by the UAC to the Full Review form for academic programs, and several changes proposed primarily by the Provost and Associate Provost for Academics to the Annual Update forms (for both academic programs and administrative units) to provide more useful information, and be more in line with Middle States' assessment process documentation expectations.
- **Adjustments to UAC Review Guidelines to align with form updates and to provide additional clarity for reviewers (inclusion of direct references to components of submitted forms).**

2017-18 Committee Members:

Faculty

- Arts, Humanities, & Social Sciences – Christine Mellon (rotating off end of 2017-18)
- Business & Leadership – Jennifer Edmonds (1st year on UAC)
- Education – Paul Reinert (1st year on UAC)
- Nursing – Patricia Sweeney (Co-Chair, 4th year on UAC, 1st after re-election)
- Pharmacy – Adam Van Wert (rotating off end of 2017-18)
- Science & Engineering – Yong Zhu (2nd year on UAC)
- General Education Committee (GEC) Representative – Kalen Churcher (3rd year on UAC)

Staff/Administration

- Advising/University College – MaryBeth Mullen
- Institutional Research – Brian Bogert (Co-Chair)
- Library – Elizabeth Sullivan (fall), and Brian Sacolic (spring)
- Student Development – Phil Ruthkosky

Assessment Experts

- Associate Provost for Academics – Jon Ference

Students

- Student (Graduate) – vacant
- Student (Undergraduate) - Hunter Hughes

Meeting Dates:

- September 19, 2017
- October 17, 2017
- November 9, 2017
- December 14, 2017
- January 23, 2018
- February 20, 2018
- March 20, 2018
- April 17, 2018

****A detailed overview of UAC accomplishments from 2017-18 are included on the pages that follow.***

Detailed Overview of 2017-18 UAC Accomplishments

Curriculum Committee Proposal – Assessment Addendum

- The UAC participated in additional review and refinement of an “Assessment Addendum” to be added to the Curriculum Committee’s proposal form (original version attached to the 2016-17 UAC End-of-Year Report). UAC Review in 2017-18 included discussion of Curriculum Committee’s recommended adjustments to the addendum, and the development and review of guidelines to support the development of an academic assessment plan. The Curriculum Committee had suggested web content be developed by the UAC to reference within their (Curriculum Committee’s) proposal form to serve as a source of information and guidance for developing an assessment plan. This web content was developed, reviewed, and approved by the UAC, and shared with the Curriculum Committee to reference in the proposal form.

Notable Program/Unit Review Process Items

- The Committee staggered the review schedule starting in 2017-18 – with administrative unit reviews due prior to academic program reviews. This adjustment to the schedule should enable a greater proportion of reviews to come in prior to the end of the semester. Faculty serving on the committee – particularly if on a 9-month contract, will be assigned reviews first, to ensure they have time to complete their reviews within the scope of their contract for the academic year. Later reviews will be assigned to non-faculty serving on the committee, or if necessary, faculty on the committee not on a 9-month contract. These adjustments should greatly reduce the assignment of late reviews to be completed by co-chairs (in previous years, nearly 50% of reviews were covered by a UAC co-chair).
- A change was made to the ‘UAC Review Guidelines’ template/form to remove the (yellow-shaded) space designated for notations from Deans and/or Vice Presidents. This change was made because the UAC was not receiving this evidence that Deans and Vice Presidents were having these follow-up conversations, so the non-receipt made it appear that these conversations were not happening even though they likely were in many cases. Despite the removal of this section/expectation, language was added into the program review process overview flowchart to indicate that Deans and Vice Presidents are encouraged to hold follow-up meetings or discussions to program review.
- Another change from the previous review cycles was that the UAC’s feedback on the reviews would no longer “go through the hierarchy/chain of command”. Instead, UAC feedback would be shared directly with the individual who had completed the review for each program or unit (often department chairpersons, program coordinators, or unit directors), as well as the appropriate dean or vice president. This change was made to ensure that regardless of whether a follow-up meeting/discussion occurred with a Dean or Vice President, individuals who completed reviews would receive feedback on their documented process from the UAC.
- At the Provost’s request, UAC leadership compiled a “priority follow-up conversations” list for academic programs. Academic programs were included on the list if UAC reviewer feedback indicated that either a learning outcome benchmark had not been met in the most recently-submitted review, or if there appeared to be issues that needed to be addressed to make the program’s assessment process more useful. Additional programs were included on the list to prioritize assessment-related conversations when the most recently-submitted review indicated

the program's assessment process was undergoing change and further development, or if the program did not submit a review the previous year.

- The Provost, Associate Provost for Academics (then Interim), and a UAC Co-Chair met to discuss the list and make final decisions for which programs would end up on the final list. The list was then segmented by Academic Dean and shared with each (Academic Dean), asking them to prioritize assessment-related follow-up conversations with department chairs or program coordinators representing these programs.
- The 4 program review PowerPoint presentations posted at <https://wilkes.edu/programreview> were updated with current dates, and updated process and form references. Instructional videos (recorded 2 years prior) were removed due to low viewership and inconsistencies with updates to forms and process. Administrative unit and academic program review schedules were also posted in PDF to the website to be more easily/reliably accessible.
- The UAC instituted Google Drive as a repository for the Program Review Process this year. Previously-submitted program or unit review forms were uploaded for reference in case needed, as were review forms to complete for the current year (also attached to emails sent about the process). Instructions were provided for how to locate relevant forms.
 - UAC members also had for the first time a central repository for where to go to find their assigned reviews, and where to upload them.
- UAC Review guidelines for the Academic Program and Administrative Unit Full Reviews, as well as Annual Updates were updated to align with the updates to the forms (see below). Additional direct references to sections of forms (e.g. "See Row 11 of FR form A1 or A2) were added to each set of review guidelines to clarify intended reference points associated with each guideline.
- Three norming sessions were held to support a common understanding and interpretation of the review guidelines. One norming session was held for Annual Updates (since the same prompts used between academic programs and annual updates) and two were held for Full Reviews (one for academic programs and the other for administrative units).
- An exercise referred to as an "Analysis of Areas of Need" (in agendas, minutes) was conducted for the program review information collected in 2016-17. This entailed summarizing all information collected through the UAC reviews of the submitted reviews – by type of review. So summary statistics were generated for each of the 4 review types (e.g. for Academic Full Reviews, the % of reporting programs with measurable learning outcomes). Although this exercise did not result in more than some general discussion, it is anticipated that tracking statistics such as these will be useful for the UAC going forward to determine the impact of the UAC's support of review processes, and to help determine where issues continue to exist that require additional support.

Notable Program/Unit Review Form Changes and Updates

- Several adjustments were made to review forms based on UAC feedback, and user (completers of the forms) feedback from the previous review cycle.
 - *This included:*
 - Separating the Annual Review Form from the Full Review Form for both academic programs and administrative units

- More explicit/visible placement of request to submit supporting rubrics with academic program full reviews
- The addition (to the “Placement” tab of the academic full review form) of a prompt asking for (if known) the proportion of graduates/alumni employed in their field
- Completion of the ‘Staff Accomplishments’ section in the Full Review for Administrative Units is now encouraged, but not mandatory. Since the UAC does not currently do anything with this information, the decision was made not to make it mandatory, although it remains “encouraged” since it provides a good opportunity to reflect on the important individual contributions of staff.
- Reshaping the Retention/Graduation Rate/Time-to-Degree section of the Academic Full Review form to create distinct tabs/sections relevant for undergraduate vs. graduate programs;
 - Changes require form-completers for undergraduate programs to directly reference the *Data Profile* provided by the Institutional Research Office to answer questions/prompts. Depending on how form completers respond to those questions, they may be prompted to share effective practices they employ for retaining and/or graduating students.
 - Graduate program full review completers are now asked what method(s) they use for tracking their students (retention, graduation rate, time-to-degree, etc.), and for an update on what their tracking suggests (e.g. are students graduating on-time? etc.); Further, they’re asked to share practices that have been effective (if relevant) for supporting student persistence.
- Several adjustments were made to review forms based on feedback from the Provost and Associate Provost for Academics. UAC Co-Chairs had met with the Provost and Associate Provost for Academics to discuss possible updates to review forms to be more in line with Middle States’ assessment process documentation expectations.
 - *This included:*
 - On the Annual Update forms (for academic programs and administrative units), the program or unit must now provide an update on the assessment of each program SLO (academic) or objective (unit) for the referenced year – providing what they’re doing to improve performance if needed OR (this is new) to maintain strong performance or further improve it, if performance had not been a concern at the time of the last full review for the program or unit.
 - Annual Update form prompts were reviewed to make them more concrete – less focused on documenting processes and plans, and more focused on actions.
 - Along with the increased focus on actions, a new section was incorporated into the Annual Update form to ask specifically about what changes (*curricular changes* if the academic program Annual Update form) have been implemented as a result of the program SLO process described. Planned actions are also requested.

- Another new section was incorporated into the Annual Review form to ask about resources. Prompts were added to ask whether resources were requested in the last review, and if so, if they were received. A space was added to restate what the resources were, and what they were requested to address. An additional space was added to see what resources are needed/requested at the time of the Annual Update to address the issue (if not resolved).
- Standardizing the most popular methods used for engaging faculty and staff in assessment processes, but also including open-ended space for any additional strategies that programs or unit would like to share. The standardization should facilitate aggregating and reporting out on effective strategies used for process engagement. This change is relevant for both Annual Updates and Full Reviews, for both academic programs and administrative units.

Leveraging D2L to Support Assessment of Student Learning

- UAC Co-Chairs met with Jason Wagner in the Office of Technology for Teaching and Learning to discuss how new Desire 2 Learn (D2L) capabilities can be leveraged to support assessment of student learning going forward. Jason will be asked to a future UAC meeting to demonstrate this new D2L capability when it has been built out/is ready to share.

Ideas for Areas to Focus on in 2018-19

- Continue current support of program/unit review processes, perhaps integrating workshops at the start of the process in spring 2019 (since it's been several years since we offered the last workshops).
- Generate assessment summary from 2017-18 UAC reviews and evaluate progress and areas of continued or increasing need. Discuss results in committee to determine strategies to most effectively address areas of need.
- Provide guidance and support for programs or units (many may be new) developing or refining their assessment plans.
- Invite Jason Wagner to a UAC meeting to demonstrate D2L capabilities for supporting student learning assessment.
- Focus more deliberately on supporting strategies for assessing general education skill development. Work with the General Education Committee (GEC) – perhaps meet jointly if possible. Assessment strategies should be piloted (if new) in 2018-19, and a calendar should be drawn up outlining frequency of occurrence and designating responsibility/coverage to increase likelihood of ongoing support.