

University Assessment Steering Council
June 23, 2016
Minutes

Present: Dr. Richard Berry, Dr. Todd Brown, Dr. Anjum Najmi, Dr. Jannah S Nerren, Dr. Deborah Pace, Dr. Mark Sanders, Prof. Scott Shattuck, Dr. Louise Stoehr, Dr. Hans Williams

Guests: Dr. Larry King and Mr. Perry Moon

Discussion of Senior Level Core Assessment with Drs. King and Moon:

- Dr. King provided an historical overview of SFA's core assessment plan prior to its approval by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). This original plan included assessment of the core objectives at the senior level and called for all programs to identify student work that would be collected for each core outcome.
- Dr. King explained that this year the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee (CCAC) revisited the original core assessment plan and recommended some changes. The revised plan calls for programs to examine assignments currently being used for assessment within their programs and determine where existing student work may also effectively be used to measure some of the core objectives. For example, Dr. King reported that approximately 90% of programs at SFA already have objectives related to communication and at least this same percentage have objectives related to critical thinking. The CCAC believes that work targeting these program objectives already exists and some could also be used to measure the critical thinking and communication core objectives.
- The CCAC has set a November deadline for departments to submit actual student assignments. The goal is to make our process more efficient; this is an opportunity for "double-dipping". The committee is seeking to limit the demands on faculty and is not asking them to create new assignments. The only assignments being requested are those that already exist and which could be used to assess at least some of the core objectives. At this point the target is primarily information gathering. Mr. Moon emphasized that this process will not impact program assessment.
- Members of the University Assessment Steering Council (UASC) emphasized the need for additional communication about this request for submission of assignments, possibly including instructions or a simple template. Council members encouraged early communication in the fall using multiple formats, including presentations at chairs' forums, opening faculty meetings, etc.
- Council members also suggested including information about next steps in the process and how this collected information will be used.
- Dr. King and Mr. Moon also responded to questions related to plans for evaluating the assignments submitted and for scoring the student work eventually collected under this revised plan. The CCAC will first compare the

submitted assignments to the existing core assessment rubrics to determine how well they hit the targets; this process will probably involve additional communication with submitting departments for clarification. Dr. King noted that the current rubrics were developed by faculty committees and were intentionally left broad enough to be useful across disciplines. In response to a question about the possibility of revising the rubrics, Dr. King indicated that this would cause a problem in comparing results to those reported at the entry level.

- Council members mentioned concerns voiced by some faculty regarding how these senior level assignments would be evaluated, given that work at that level is often highly discipline specific and difficult to evaluate by those outside the area of content specialization. Dr. King noted that the method to be used for selection of scoring committees has not been determined. He added that he has not previously experienced difficulty in recruiting faculty to serve on scoring committees. Dr. King also reported that scoring teams have generally been able to set their own schedules and that faculty have not found the time demands to be excessive. To date, faculty have received small financial compensation for service on the scoring committees, but it is not clear at this point whether similar compensation can be sustained.
- Dr. King reported that he anticipates establishing a chart/timeline for assessing work at the senior level much like the one that has been created for the entry level assessment.
- In response to a question about possible use of Live Text for senior level assessment, Dr. King indicated that uploading student work into Live Text, possibly using a randomization process, would be ideal. Dr. King cited retention of student work in a central place as one advantage since work is not purged from Live Text. He also noted that Live Text was created to handle e-portfolios and added that some departments are going in that direction for program assessment.

Approval of minutes from May 12 meeting:

Minutes were approved with minor edits.

Edits to 2014-2015 Educ and Program Action Plans:

- Council members agreed that the flow of information through the deans to department chairs seemed to work more effectively than sending emails directly to departments or faculty.
- The council also discussed the importance of effective communication and timing in providing such information to colleges and departments.

Updates on Fall Assessment Workshop:

- Dr. Pace explained that Dr. Szafran had developed a list of contacts at a few universities in Texas and met with her to discuss information to be requested from them. We are asking these contacts if are aware of any institutions,

including their own, that have had notable success in using their assessment results to improve student success. We are especially interested in Texas public institutions that do a particularly good job of assessment, both with core and program/institutional level assessment. Dr. Pace reported that she has received email responses from several of these contacts and is expecting more. She and Dr. Szafran will collect any recommendations submitted from these contacts as well as those from council members attending the SACS Summer Institute.

- Council members noted that they would also like to know how faculty interpret the culture of assessment at their institutions before selecting those we plan to invite as presenters at the fall workshop.

Updates on the Comment Box:

- There have been two comments submitted since the last council meeting. One comment asked about results of a previous SFA faculty survey on assessment culture. Dr. Nerren confirmed with Dr. King that this survey was done and she is requesting more information.
- A second comment expressed concern about the timeliness of the information received by chairs requesting edits to the 2014-2015 action plans. The council agreed that the schedule this year was not optimal but that we anticipate processes will be smoother going forward. Dr. Nerren will respond to the faculty member via email.

Action Steps for next meeting:

- Dr. Nerren will follow up on the two comments submitted online.
- Dr. Nerren will send a poll to select time for the next meeting in July or August

Meeting adjourned at 10:20.