

University Assessment Steering Council
August 2nd, 2016
Minutes

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

Guest attendee: Dr. Kimberly Childs for Dr. Deborah Pace
Guests: Dr. Steven Bullard & Mr. John Callahan

Dr. Nerren started the meeting by welcoming Dr. Steve Bullard and Mr. John Calahan as guests to the meeting. Dr. Steve Bullard was invited so that he might respond to a report by Dr. Matthew Fuller of Sam Houston State University. This report included survey results regarding faculty perceptions about institutional culture of assessment. (A request for the UASC to pursue making Dr. Fuller's report public to the university was sent through the UASC website.) The UASC wants to be responsive to emails it receives.

Dr. Bullard said that dissemination of the results would serve no real purpose and had the potential to be hurtful and inflammatory to people who had served SFA. The results pertaining to SFA were part of a larger data set that included multiple institutions. He reported that he and Dr. Mary Nelle Brunson had reviewed the findings, and had discussed them with Dr. Nerren, and they believed that disseminating the results would serve no purpose. He would be willing to share the results with any of the members of the UASC and encouraged one or two to members review the results and then brief the UASC on their findings to facilitate communication with faculty.

Next, changes in leadership at the Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment (OSLIA) were discussed. Dr. Bullard confirmed that Mr. John Calahan would serve as Interim Director for OSLIA. Dr. Paul Henley, who holds a PhD in music education from South Texas College, has accepted the position to start September 1, 2016, as Assistant Director of OSLIA. Dr. Bullard mentioned a possible name change was being considered for the Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment to that of Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness. Dr. Bullard said the UASC and its role in helping to re-engage the work of assessment across campus is important. He hoped the Council would continue to guide the direction of assessment by working with colleges and the provost to communicate assessment issues and concerns.

Dr. Bullard said that to assess and improve, and have data to support these efforts, were powerful ideas behind many great innovations throughout history, such as the steam engine. He used the example of the *Re-imagining the First Year* project from the *SFA Envisioned* strategic plan as a demonstration of how "to measure, improve, and change" is an ongoing process. He emphasized the importance of institutions making the effort to grow a culture of improvement. The Student Success Center was an example he used that will help student persistence and retention to align with the university's goals and mission. Other similar examples were the 60x30 plan to reduce student debt by the Texas

Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), the Open Education Resources initiative, and the Financial Literacy initiative.

The Council thanked Dr. Bullard and John Callahan for attending the UASC meeting.

Members of the Council then moved on to discuss the assessment workshop that is being planned for the fall 2016 semester. The plan is to invite speakers from other public four-year institutions in Texas to share assessment practices, especially if they have recently completed the SACS 5 year report affirmation. The timing of the workshop is important, as there is a March deadline for the SACS fifth year accreditation report. By the end of the fall semester there would be no real use for a workshop on the SACS fifth year report. It was recommended that members email Dr. Robert Szafran and Dr. Debbie Pace suggestions for potential speakers from other four-year schools in Texas.

Next, Dr. Todd Brown shared information about the session he attended at the SACS Summer Institute. This was a session by the University of North Dakota (UND) on “Inclusive Assessment.” He recommended that members discuss with faculty within their units about their thoughts on adding a new field to the Faculty Activity Report in Digital Measures that would allow them to record activity related to assessment. The idea is that the additions to the FAR could be similar to that described in the UND presentation. It was agreed that each council member would collect this information and share at the September UASC meeting.

The next UASC meeting will be in September, with the dates and agenda sent out by Dr. Nerren.

The meeting adjourned 5:10 pm.