

University Assessment Steering Council
November 16, 2016
Minutes

Present: Dr. Todd Brown, Dr. Anjum Najmi, Dr. Jannah Nerren, Dr. Debbie Pace, Mr. Scott Shattuck, Dr. Louise Stoehr, Dr. Hans Williams, Dr. Courtney Wooten

Guest: Dr. Steve Bullard

The meeting convened at 8:00 am. After opening remarks the council approved minutes from the October 25 meeting with no revisions. These minutes will be posted to the UASC website. Council members conducted discussion on the topics outlined below.

Updates on Council Membership and the Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment (OSLIA):

- The council welcomed Dr. Courtney Wooten as a member of the council replacing Dr. Robert Szafran. The College of Education will also select a replacement for Dr. Nerren to take effect after she leaves SFA employment in January.
- Mr. John Calahan and Dr. Paul Henley have been visiting departments to discuss assessment at the program level and to offer assistance and solicit input regarding support that can be provided by the OSLIA.
- Dr. Bullard commented on the importance of the UASC for its role in communication and advice. He added that the council will continue to be important as we approach the period for filing the SACSCOC 5th year report and anticipate additional changes to SFA's assessment process for the purpose of improving the effectiveness, efficiency and culture of assessment. In addition, as SFA implements the strategic plan, it will be important to maintain alignment between our initiatives and assessment of those initiatives.

Chair of UASC:

- Council members and Dr. Bullard thanked Dr. Nerren, current chair of the UASC, for her time and leadership.
- Dr. Nerren's job change will necessitate replacing her as chair of the UASC, and Dr. Bullard noted that this role involves a significant time commitment with responsibilities that include regular communication with the provost's office, OSLIA, Faculty Senate, Chairs' Forum, and other groups. Accordingly, Dr. Bullard suggested that the leadership responsibilities and time commitment might put undue time demands on a faculty member and lend support to having an associate dean assume the chair's position. The council discussed several options, including having the council led by co-chairs. All members agreed that it is important for whoever assumes the chair position to have some experience on the council and to have a broad perspective of assessment practices at the college and university levels. Dr. Bullard indicated that it was not necessary to make a decision immediately and he invited council members to communicate any recommendations to him.

Director of the OSLIA:

- Dr. Bullard indicated that the selection process for the next director of the OSLIA will probably begin in the spring semester and confirmed his expectation that the UASC will have input in this selection.
- According to Dr. Bullard, current budget constraints prohibit hiring an external candidate. Council members discussed possible options, including streamlining assessment processes and reducing the need for additional paid positions.

Addition of Assessment Category in Digital Measures:

- Dr. Nerren reported on her presentation to the deans and shared a document developed by Ms. Karyn Hall on possible assessment categories to be added to the service category within Digital Measures. Council members discussed options and recommended that, in general, the language used should be consistent and category descriptions should be simple enough to navigate easily and encompass a variety of activities. Additional levels of detail could be added at a later date, if indicated.
- Dr. Nerren also noted that the handbook for Digital Measures will need to be revised and include instructions for this new category.
- In additional discussion, Dr. Bullard noted that the deans are investigating reports that some other universities are utilizing the full capabilities of Digital Measures more effectively to simplify other processes, such as post-tenure review. They hope to discover ways that SFA can make more effective use of this software.

Miscellaneous Discussion:

- Dr. Bullard reported that he would like to have a group of faculty who are routinely involved in analyzing available SFA data for decision making.
- The council discussed options for maintaining good communication between the UASC and faculty, including sending regular emails to notify faculty of recent council meetings and reminding them about the website and minutes of meetings.
- Some council members reported receiving several questions recently about upper level assessment of core objectives. Dr. Wooten, also a member of the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee (CCAC), confirmed that at this time the CCAC has recommended going forward with senior level assessment of core objectives since it is part of the existing Core Assessment Plan. She also indicated that faculty would probably receive an email from that committee within the next few weeks.
- The council briefly revisited the issue of responsibilities of the two university level committees related to the core curriculum, the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee and the Core Curriculum Advisory Committee. Members agreed that it would be helpful to have a description of the membership, function and differentiated responsibilities of these two committees.

Action Steps:

- Dr. Nerren will visit with Ms. Karyn Hall regarding the Digital Measures assessment categories.

- Council members may communicate with Dr. Bullard directly on recommendations for replacement of Dr. Nerren as chair of the UASC.
- After the next chair is selected, Dr. Nerren will send an email to faculty notifying them of this change and reminding them about the website as well as recent activities of the UASC.

The meeting adjourned 9:15 am.