

Academic Affairs Assessment Committee
Minutes 1/30/09

Members Present: Sandra Brigance, Julie Coon, David Marion, Todd Staislav, Cheryl Thomas, Robert von der Osten (Chair), Roberta Teahen (ex officio)

Members Absent: Michael Cron, Pat Klarecki, William Potter

Next meeting: Friday, February 27, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in FLITE 442. To review the results of the Academy Assessment Survey with invited guests.

Support to be given for additional conference attendance and guest speakers. Members present approved unanimously the motion that AAAC assessment funds be dedicated to support travel to assessment conferences, at least two representatives per College. In addition, where it would be helpful, we will support funding of a guest assessment expert that will be helpful in the development of a particular area. Robert von der Osten will send an e-mail to the Deans encouraging participation with a list of conferences, including the TracDat conference in Pittsburgh.

Samples of TracDat assessment plans were reviewed. A number of programs demonstrate clear, measurable outcomes; effective assessment methods, including multiple measures; and reasonable criterion for success.

Weaknesses include the following:

- Outcomes that are too general or vague and don't reflect the program.
- Multiple outcomes collapsed into a single outcome statement.
- The use of success in courses as a measure of achieving outcomes, when these are not effective given that the concern of assessment is to determine whether the courses result in the desired outcomes at the end of the program.

These weaknesses will need to be addressed. Primarily it will be the responsibility of Department Heads/Chairs to insure that assessment plans are appropriate. Mentors and members of college assessment committees will continue to work with programs to enhance their assessment plan.

Program assessment plans and results need to be transparent to faculty in programs. There needs to be assurance that the material entered into TracDat is consistent with faculty understanding of program outcomes and assessment methods. In April, faculty in programs will need to be offered read access to their program's TracDat plan. Department Heads/Chairs will be asked to run the report on the assessment plan to date and e-mail that plan to all faculty in the program.

Additional Training in improving outcomes and assessment methods. On May 11, we will offer a retreat for mentors, members of assessment committees, and department heads/chairs on enhancing learning outcomes and assessment methods using available TracDat examples. The retreat should focus on working with approaches in the individual Colleges. The training will be led by Todd Stanislav, Robert von der Osten, Matt McNulty.

We shared best practices across multiple colleges.

The Department of Languages and Literature, College of Arts and Sciences, is conducting a reading group to enhance the understanding of assessment. Many members of the department are reading *Promoting Integrated and Transformative Assessment: A Deeper Focus on Student Learning* and discussing the book and assessment both online and in face to face meetings.

The College of Business shared Maureen Heaphy's presentation on "Using Grading Forms to Track Assessment of Learning Outcomes as Easy as 1-2-3."

The College of Arts and Sciences, Social Work Program, provided its detailed model for Portfolio Review, including

format guidelines and evaluation process.

The College of Education and Human Services uses hallmark assignments and a standard rubric, employing Live Text, the electronic portfolio software. The conversation about the assignments and the rubrics were especially useful in normalizing teaching practice and enhancing the practices of adjuncts.

Members of the committee were asked to forward the electronic version of their best practices so that they could be posted to the Assessment Best Practices Web Page.

Most recent NSSE data is available and will be discussed at a general meeting to be called by Robbie Teahen, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs. Members of the AAAC will be invited to the general meeting. Robbie Teahen will forward the NSSE data to every member of the AAAC.

Several questions were addressed.

- It was noted that we still lack a representative from Pharmacy. Robert von der Osten will follow-up and request a representative.
- Courses will be made available in TracDat in the next two weeks. Initially only those course prefixes under the curriculum control of a program will be made available to that program. Department Heads/Chairs will need to request the release of the programs, specifying the courses in question, to the College TracDat liaison, who will forward the request to the system administrator. Given the design of TracDat there might initially be difficulty with how the courses work. Courses are linked to programs so any course listed in more than one program will show a blank shell in each program. Outcomes and assessment data in one program will not carry over to the others. This problem will be discussed with Paul DeSante on February 17. We will follow-up with Nuventive to try to resolve this difficulty.
- Program goals – such as “place students in careers in related fields” can be entered as outcomes and identified as other. This can include broad goals. If programs have broader learning goals that the program outcomes are related, such goals can be posted at a reporting unit level and then related to the outcomes. This would be relatively rare at an individual program level. Programs that believe that this is essential should speak with Robert von der Osten or Roberta Teahen.
- Currently outcomes are identified as learning or other. This is not to slight the many functions, such as enriching student experience through art performances. However, in the implementation of TracDat it was determined that the identification of other categories either resulted in overlapping categories or the excessive addition of categories. The categories are intended for reporting functions. Where activities including work experiences, theater presentations, concerts, lectures, and demonstrations add to the quality of students’ experience or changes students in some way, the outcome should be considered a learning outcome. Other is a category for outcomes not affecting the skills, knowledge, attitudes, or experiences of students such as placement rates or student retention.
- There are differences between the AAAC assessment plan deadlines and the TracDat implementation plan. The AAAC plan is really the “drop-dead” university deadlines—the point at which there should be 100% compliance for specified participation levels. Roberta Teahen will forward to Dean’s the finalized TracDat deadlines.