

Academic Affairs Assessment Committee  
Minutes 10/23/09

Members Present: Julie Coon, Adnan Dakkuri, Bill Potter, David Marion, Roberta Teahen (ex officio), Robert von der Osten (Chair)

Members Absent: Sandra Brigance, Michael Cron, Pat Klarecki, Todd Stanislav

These minutes are organized to reflect the logic of the discussion rather than the order of the discussion. They reflect a general discussion to identify guiding principles for granting access to TracDat.

## General Principles

- The fundamental work of assessment at the program or course level is independent of TracDat. Faculty should be involved in the development of outcomes, assessment methods, and the collection of data that will be useful to them. They should be involved in the discussion of the data to decide how to improve student learning at the program and course level. TracDat is merely a database to store the information from these collaborative working sessions.
- It is understood that the very process of assessment, whether developing means of assessment or creating a curriculum map or reviewing data, may result in a review of extant outcomes and yield revisions to outcomes. **Any change at the outcomes at the program or course level should follow standard curriculum processes within a department and be approved by the appropriate committees and the faculty.**
- Colleges and Departments across campus have very different structures and needs. Departments and Colleges should make decisions concerning access to TracDat that is most effective to them. Faculty should be a part of this decision making process. However, it is important to recognize that access to TracDat does not actually serve as a replacement for an active assessment process and is not essential to such a process.
- It is important to be clear that privacy is not guaranteed for anything entered in TracDat. Department Heads, Deans, and the VPAA office will have access to their respective areas of responsibility. However, the intent will be to treat the information discretely and recognize that the key role of assessment data is to be formative and to allow faculty to enhance student learning at the program and course level.

## Levels of Access to TracDat

There is some confusion about access levels to TracDat. Below is a description of each of the levels.

**System Administrator** – Kim Wilber in the VPAA office. This level has design control over the database and is the only level that can add users and grant authorization.

**Administrator** - College TracDat Liaison. This level can enter home page information such mission statement, accreditation status, program review schedule. The administrator can also provide e-mail only status.

**User** - Users can enter data at the assigned level including outcomes, means of assessment, and results. They can also generate reports. Users can be assigned to specific programs or specific z- prefix level. Multiple users can be assigned to the same program or z-prefix levels.

**Reports Only** - At this level, the user can only generate reports. They do not see the input screen but only the report screen but can run reports on the assessment plan, results, or other reports available for the level they are assigned.

**E- Mail Only** – At this level, a User can assign an e-mail owner recipient to enter results into TracDat. The e-mail only individual will receive an assignment and a brief form to fill-in which once completed will be entered into TracDat. They will not need to enter the database to add the appropriate results data. The Assign function is found under the Means of Assessment tab on the bottom of the page.

Requests for authorization and access must be made using the authorization form on the TracDat web site, forwarded to the Liaison and the Dean's office which will then forward the necessary documents to the VPAA office.

## **Program Level Assessment**

**User Level** - Colleges and Departments need to determine the most effective method to enter assessment information into TracDat, discussing the matter with key stakeholders, including faculty. Program Coordinators may be granted user level. Multiple individuals, such as Department Head and Program Coordinator may be granted user level access. It is important to limit user level access since it is important to insure that only information that is approved by appropriate processes are entered into the program level.

**Report Level** – There are many ways to share the information in TracDat with faculty. It is easy to run a report in TracDat and share all of the key information on the program with all faculty members by e-mailing them a copy of the report on a yearly basis or as needed or requested. Similarly reports can be provided to others outside the program in response to specific requests. Many faculty may not be interested in generating reports themselves. However, where a department or program concludes that it is important for faculty report level access, it is reasonable for them to have this access. They will probably need training in what they will or will not be able to find in TracDat and how to use the report function which they have access. Similarly, if following appropriate decision making process, faculty in a program may decide to grant others outside the program report level access.

## Course Level Assessment

To decrease the demand on the database system and to avoid an unmanageably large list of courses, courses have been grouped into areas based on prefixes such as Z- ENGL which includes all courses, regardless of number or content, which has an ENGL prefix. Any one granted a level of access to a Z area as access to all courses in that area. So someone given a user or report access to a Z-ENGL will have access to ENGL 150 but also ENGL 301: Introduction to Linguistics or ENGL 415: Theories of Writing Instruction. For reasons concerning the administration of TracDat, individual and separate access to an individual course will not be granted. So, there will not be separate access to only ENGL 301.

**User Level** – How user level will be distributed should be the decision of Departments based on the discussion of faculty. User level may be granted to an assessment leader in a Department, a course champion, a chair of a committee, or other faculty. The key role of the user level is simply to enter the data in TracDat. This does not substitute for the discussions among faculty to identify outcomes and assessment methods, to collect data, and to discuss the implications of data for the course(s) in question. There are significant challenges in having multiple individuals identified as user at a z-level. Information may be entered without following department processing, material may be changed to any course in that z-level by anyone with access to that z-prefix. Since some courses reflect the information on only one individual faculty member who teaches the course, there may be some concerns about who might have access to that information. Where individuals will have data to enter, e-mail level access can allow the User to assign individual faculty members to enter the data on their course or area, if they are an area coordinator. The Academic Affairs Assessment Committee does not believe that most units are well served by giving broad user access at the course level. However, where Departments have concluded based on their structure and the decision of the faculty that such broader faculty access is the most effective option of them, such access can be granted following the authorization process.

**Report Level** – It is important to remember the reason for access to reports at the course level. The reason to have this access is for faculty to make decisions on how to enhance or adjust their courses based on assessment data. The most important activity here is the actual discussion of assessment data and making decisions based on that data. It is not clear, as well, why most faculty would want to generate their own reports. TracDat makes it easy to generate discrete reports on key courses or course areas which can then be shared with interested faculty. Reports on courses taught by only a few faculty can be shared with those faculty exclusively. Similarly, where outcomes or assessment methods or even results may be needed by programs or areas outside of the course area, the simplest method to gain access would be to request a report where that report can be generated to meet a specific need. It does not seem necessary to have Report Level access to an area when a report may only be necessary once in a few years. However, where faculty in an area decide collaboratively and following decision making processes for

their area, report level access may be granted to individual faculty internal to an area or others outside the area.

**E-Mail Level** - Anyone who may be entering results into TracDat who will not need User Level can be granted e-mail access. They should be consulted with before they are assigned a project.

## **Decrease Time to Meet TracDat Requests**

The Associate VPAA, Robert Teahen, will investigate having an additional person with systems administrator access to support current personnel.

**The chair will communicate this information with the Deans and encourage them to share this information with Department Heads/Chairs.**

**The Associate VPAA should bring to the Dean's Council the key concern that faculty are unevenly involved in the assessment process. Clerical and even Department Heads should not act independently to determine outcomes, assessment methods, collect data, or determine the significance of that data. The assessment process should, with administration leadership, involve the faculty.**

**The chair will contact the Dean and Associate Dean of the College of Business to arrange a meeting, including David Marion, to determine how to most effectively engage faculty across COB.**

**The chair will contact the Chair of the Curriculum Committee to confirm that changes in outcomes in TracDat at the program or course level need not be corrected on Form E and forwarded to the U.C.C.**

Minutes were prepared by Robert von der Osten  
24, October, 2009