Academic Senate Retreat
August 20, 2019

Table Discussion Summary
Data Driven Decision Making: The Role of the Academic Senate

Both sessions began with Kemi Fadayomi providing an overview of the history and work of the Data Driven Decision Making Task Force (DDDMTF) and David Pilgrim and Jennifer Johnson sharing action items from the proposed Strategic Plan regarding collection and use of data.

The discussion groups acknowledged that while the timing of this discussion aligns with preparations for the HLC visit, the overall purpose is independent of HLC. There is urgency in getting this process up and going to provide ongoing support of continuous quality improvement.

Significant concerns were expressed regarding the validity of data that is being collected, leading to impaired faculty buy-in across Colleges. There may be an assumption that "everyone in academia knows how to handle data" but that is not true, and there needs to be a focus on providing education and resources to help faculty collect and analyze data. There is an opportunity to leverage expertise from within in the University to improve methods. A quality review process is needed in order to make sure data is valid. Additionally, clearly defining variable should be a part of the data use process in order to make sure that data is being interpreted correctly/as intended.

Faculty acknowledged that it is often a struggle to gather full data set from students due to low response rates on student evaluations (SAI/IDEA/etc.). Strategies for improving the volume of student feedback without negatively impacting quality were discussed. It was also pointed out that different tools are used in different programs, and the Senate may want to consider making a recommendation to standardize the instrument that is used.

Much time was spent discussing the need for a centralized location to house and manage data, and faculty should be made aware of what data is available and how they can access it. This is also an opportunity to establish what data is important and actually needs to be collected and maintained. It was suggested that the University hold a "Data Summit" to communicate what data is being collected and used currently. This would create transparency around the data use process and begin to develop a culture of data-driven decision making across the University. In order to establish trust, faculty need to be assured that data is not being used punitively, but rather as a tool for continuous quality improvement. It also needs to be clear that data is being used consistently across campus (e.g. using data to make determinations regarding course offerings).

Senators were asked to provide feedback regarding the University Assessment Committee proposed by the DDDMTF. Opportunities associated with the creation of such a committee included the establishment of faculty governance over the data use process related to assessment of student learning, the identification of best practices across the University, and the desire to close the loop on actions taken in response to data. Relevant resources to consider include the Canvas LMS platform, which is able to track outcomes and import directly into Improve, and outside resources including data from the Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information related to industry demand. The most consistent concern regarding the proposed Committee was the potential workload on faculty committee members. Mitigating suggestions included support staff to manage reporting and respond to requests for data, as well as structural changes at the University-level such as establishment of an "Office of Institutional Effectiveness".

A summary of opportunities, concerns, and ideas that were discussed related to data-driven decision-making, as well as a suggested division of responsibilities between the proposed University Assessment Committee and a hypothetical Office of Institutional Effectiveness are provided in visual format on the following page.

Respectfully Submitted,

Katie Axford

Opportunities

- Sense of urgency created by Strategic Planning and HLC
- Expertise within the University regarding data handling
- Canvas rollout with data tracking capabilities

Concerns

- Quality and quantity of data being collected
- Accessibility and use of data - continuous quality improvement, not punitive
- Faculty workload

Ideas

- Consider standardizing instruments utilized across the University
- Hold "Data Summit" to create transparency
- Need combination of faculty governance and structural changes at the University level

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University Assessment Committee

(proposed)

- Collect data related to student learning
- Assist faculty in using data for curriculum improvement

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

(hypothetical)

- Manage data and reporting across Divisions
- Conduct real-time monitoring of University effectiveness