

Informal Assessment Work Group
Meeting Notes
November 15, 2006

Present: Rula Awwad-Rafferty, Doug Baker, Dick Battaglia, Ben Beard, Suzi Billington, Alton Campbell, Jeanne Christiansen, Gail Eckwright, John Foltz, Grace Goc Karp, Meredyth Goodwin, Brenda Helbling, Marla Kraut, Linda Morris, Michael O'Rourke, Howard Peavy, Bruce Pitman

Bruce provided an overview of the work that has been completed to help prepare the university to fully implement the strategic plan. A number of individuals attended the Greater Expectations Institute in the summer and developed some initial recommendations for process and building institutional capacity. The formation of this informal work group is an extension of those recommendations and the interface between the Goal 1 work group and the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs Office.

Jeanne reviewed the initial purpose, composition, and procedures document developed for the informal assessment work group. This is a first draft at functions and will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Jeanne provided background on what we have done and what we need to do now as we implement Goal 1 strategies. University learning outcomes were affirmed by Faculty Council in October. Next steps are the articulation of program learning outcomes, measures of student learning, and assessment cycles. A draft model of a university process and reporting structure and a draft model of an assessment cycle were shared. Comments and suggestions on both are welcome.

Provost Baker provided an overview of the national and regional contexts within which we are working. We need to identify what we want students to do, seek feedback, and integrate the feedback in decisions about changes for program change to improve student learning. He shared examples of the impact of this process at the instructor and program level. Questions and comments included:

- What needs to be completed in May 2007, August 2007, and October 2007? 1) learning outcomes defined and agreed upon by program faculty for degree and certificate programs, 2) an assessment plan in place that let's us know how well we are doing, and 3) actions for improvement linked to the assessment data.
- Is it essential that the process is completed for all programs by May 2007? (Can we do the level of work needed in this time period?) Doug will follow up with NWCCU to seek additional clarification on this.
- How are program learning outcomes linked with the university learning outcomes? There are several strategies: 1) programs can adopt the university learning outcomes, 2) programs can map existing learning outcomes to the university learning outcomes, 3) programs can "personalize" the wording of program learning outcomes within the context of the five university learning. Programs may have unique and additional learning outcomes. There needs to be a spiritual adoption of the learning outcomes.

Several suggestions were made:

- Ad hoc assessment group
 - Share processes across units
 - Provide examples of learning outcomes and assessment strategies

- Chair and director training
 - Provide template with university learning outcomes and types of measures filled in
 - Base Nov 28 session on skill sets needed to complete template
 - Increase invitation to other unit members taking a lead in unit assessment work

- Assessment
 - Review and adopt existing rubrics matched to university learning outcomes for application across all programs

- Building knowledge and capacity
 - University Matters
 - Techniques for effective focus groups
 - Interactive Teaching
 - Design and use of rubrics
 - Critical thinking
 - Learning

Members were encouraged to review the RFP for Assessment Assistance Grants for the 2007 calendar year and to consider applications that might help support this work.

Jeanne will follow up on these items:

- Meeting date and time for December 2006 meeting and for spring semester 2007
- Seek additional suggestions for University Matters and Interactive Teaching sessions for spring 2007