

University Assessment Committee
May 20, 2003
Fetzer Boardroom

Members present: Dr. Noni Threinen (**Chair**), Dr. Jim Amundson, Dr. Dale Healey, Dr. Anita Manne, Dr. Lynne Hvidsten, Mr. John Pirog, Dr. Rob Scott, Dr. Chuck Sawyer, Ms. Emily Tweed, Dr. Jane Wittich

Absent: Mr. Bill Haugen, Mr. Cody Hoefert, Ms. Jane Richardson, Ms. Lisa Simensen,

Guest: Dr. Mary Huba

Introduction:

Dr. Threinen introduced Dr. Mary Huba, the consultant from Iowa State University, as our special guest at today's meeting. Everyone introduced themselves and stated their position at the University.

Report and discussion from committee members on progress of University assessment based on NCA "Levels of Implementation":

Dr. Threinen led the discussion regarding our current Levels of Implementation regarding the assessment review process. She requested that members of the Assessment Committee rate what they feel our current status is regarding the following areas:

- The Institutional Culture regarding shared values and our mission
- Shared Responsibility with faculty, administration, the Board of Trustees and Students
- Institutional Support regarding resources and structures
- Efficacy of Assessment

Dr. Scott & Emily Tweed felt we've tremendous progress with defining and working toward the mission of our institution within the past year.

Dr. Sawyer expressed some concern regarding resources, noting that we're on the cusp for data management collection, and shared his concerns regarding how we'll collectively organize the information in a helpful format. Dr. Hvidsten commented that we've made significant resource commitment within the past year, even though that wasn't part of the budgetary process for last year.

The suggestion was made that we need release time for faculty to be able to attend workshops.

Dr. Huba commended the Assessment Committee for having the courage to “rate ourselves”, and share our perspectives of how collectively everyone feels we’re doing in the assessment review process.

Dr. Huba further elaborated that since we have a relatively small faculty, she feels the key to the assessment review process is to having faculty embrace the concept of assessment, and that students will follow the lead of faculty. She also suggested that faculty should consider moving away the exclusive usage of the lecture format in their teaching styles. Dr. Huba stated that students have to reflect and assess their own learning abilities, and only then will the process come “alive” for them. They need to reflect on their progress in the academic program and develop some of their own academic goals.

Dr. Huba suggested that it could be quite helpful to consider the usage of focus groups with students at the program level to provide them with an opportunity to vocalize their thoughts regarding the strengths and weaknesses of our academic program. She realizes this can be a threatening process for faculty, since they believe they have the answers for the best approach to teaching. Dr. Huba emphasized that we are all components of teaching students and need to learn from each other. At those meetings, they could discuss the structure of the curriculum, timing of content, etc.

Dr. Sawyer commented that Student Senate officers have previously met with the Curriculum Committee to provide input and feedback, and it was helpful to gain their insight.

Dr. Huba also commented that resource needs will change as the assessment process evolves, since faculty will need future support, and it can be beneficial to anticipate future resource needs.

Dr. Sawyer inquired whether Dr. Huba feels there are any key areas of our assessment review that we need to focus on. Dr. Huba felt that faculty ownership of the assessment review process is a critical key to our success with student learning. She added that it is also very important that everyone from senior administration on down realize that we have to be accountable to each other in assessing student learning.

Dr. Huba also elaborated on the criteria for accreditation standards that will become effective in January of 2005:

1. Mission shows integrity
2. Preparing for the future
3. Preparing student learning and effective teaching
4. Lifelong learning
5. Engagement

Our next self study will be held in 2008-2009. Dr. Huba commented that we’ll need to demonstrate efficacy of assessment. She added that we need to be driven by student

learning and that we'll be aggressively analyzed in this area. We'll have to demonstrate our plans with the institution and the community of how we've supported learning opportunities.

Dr. Scott inquired how we can improve student learning. Dr. Huba suggested sending some faculty to the Alverno College in Milwaukee for workshops. They have developed a "Vision of Learning" program targeted toward understanding a variety of teaching styles. She added that we need to be free to make mistakes, and learn through that process. She also suggested rewarding faculty for trying new techniques, and/or teaching styles.

Dr. Threinen commented that we recently held an in-service for our faculty regarding assessment that was helpful to members of the faculty.

Dr. Huba also suggested the benefits of a faculty development group that meets regularly to discuss a variety of issues. She stated one workshop can be helpful, but emphasized the benefits of making a longterm commitment to help members of the faculty to discuss issues associated with learning.

University Assessment Feedback Loop:

Dr. Threinen presented and reviewed two charts regarding the University and Curriculum Assessment feedback loop. She inquired whether members of the committee had any additional comments regarding the process.

Dr. Hvidsten inquired who would be responsible for analyzing data. She added this could be a resource allocation issue, and wonders who will be responsible for interpreting the data? It was noted the Curriculum Committee will place a priority on their interpretation of data, and a group or a department will discuss their own focus for learning issues.

Closing remarks and next steps:

Dr. Threinen thanked Dr. Huba and everyone for their participation today regarding our assessment review process. She added that there are many interesting aspects about the overall teaching and learning process that will emerge from analyzing our assessment of student learning. Dr. Threinen also feels that we've made significant progress throughout the past year and we should be commended for our achievements so far.

The Committee also discussed upcoming conferences at Alverno College on June 18-24th, the AAHE Conference in Seattle June 22-24th, and a conference in Indianapolis in the fall.

Minutes written by: Diane Newcomer

Approved by: _____
Noni Threinen, D.C., Chair
Assessment Team

Cc: Dr. Chuck Sawyer,
Senior Vice President