Academic Assessment Committee
December 1, 2010  2:00 pm
CTE – E-210

MINUTES

Attending Members: Maxi Armas, Tom Porebski, Jose Delgado, Maria-Tereza Dyer, Annette Jajko, Carol Lynch, Mary Casey-Incardone, Ric Segovia, Will Edwards, Mary Ann Tobin, Maureen Musker
Attending Guests: Jeremiah Williams (TCSA), VP Latham

A. November meeting minutes approved (Annette Jajko/ Maxi Armas)

B. Program Assessment Updates –
   ○ The Chair reported that as of meeting time 17 program assessment plans had been submitted this semester with several forthcoming per phone contact with program liaisons. An updated status report is on the web page and will be emailed to deans and program liaisons.

C. By-Laws
   ○ Committee name change – The Chair reported that the name change to Academic Assessment Committee was approved at the November Senate meeting. There was brief discussion about whether or not something has to officially happen to make this valid. VP Latham said that Lidia Aratyn will make whatever document changes are under her purview. The committee chair will update committee documentation to reflect the change.
   ○ Membership changes – We discussed whether or not to include adjunct faculty as committee members or resources. A unanimous vote occurred in favor of the following wording to be recommended at the December Senate meeting: “…that three rather than one adjunct may be included as committee members.”
   ○ Committee Function Discussion – VP Latham had requested such a discussion be added to the meeting agenda and was in attendance to share the results of a administrators’ discussion on this topic and to get committee response.
     ● The following are key suggestions/concerns that were brought up and/or addressed by VP Latham:
       ○ In general, VP Latham expressed the view that the committee should shift its focus from “policing” academic assessment to a more inspirational, creative approach. One recommendation was that instead of reporting to the Senate on the number of plans received, for example, share a particularly good assessment with the faculty. She suggested the committee should focus more on the sharing of good assessment practices as well as continuing to provide support to programs to help them through the process along with the CTE Director.
       ○ Another primary function of the committee would remain to develop assessment models to be used on campus (ex. PEAR) and recommend the best tool(s) to make this happen.
       ○ Currently, our assessment process is too fragmented, without enough use of data collected and a sense that we are using the data for positive change. One proposed solution was to bring the Office of Institutional Research back into the academic assessment process. The thought was if this office housed the collected data, they could better review it for trends across areas.
       ○ The committee should be focusing more on the quality of assessments rather than the quantity.
       ● Will Edwards added that his sense from the administrators’ meeting was that policing is paralyzing the committee. We should be deciding on the approach to academic assessment and leave it up to the administration to figure out how that happens.
     ● Committee response-While this is structured in the minutes as one side then the other, it was a back and forth discussion. This is just an attempt to highlight key points.
       ○ Some committee members expressed concern that the “policing” efforts, depending on how those are perceived by faculty, could undermine the efforts to
inspire meaningful assessment. This has been an ongoing issue, not new to this
discussion, but a concern if the committee is no longer involved. While it may
liberate the committee to focus elsewhere, we want to make sure the efforts on
both sides are working in concert. Those administrators present expressed the
same desire, although nothing concrete about how this will work was determined.

- Committee members expressed concern that faculty may fear their assessments
will be used to reflect negatively on programs (especially in light of the internal
program review process) and decrease participation. VP Latham noted that in the
past assessment reports were compiled and published by the Research Office, so
this is not a new concept, and those fears were never realized. The purpose of
reviewing them would be to close the loop and make data-driven decisions;
otherwise, the process will be an empty one.

- Another concern was that faculty will balk if we develop new models, form,
processes. Those present agreed that we can enhance and adapt our current
model for continuity.

- To lessen the fragmentation, we revisited a suggestion from our last meeting that
we turn our focus to:
  - Developing a Gen-Ed outcome assessment that could be used across
disciplines. This will be a major undertaking for the committee.
  - Working with Master Plan experts on campus to pull out a potential
focus for 2011/2012 program assessment. This could lead to assessment
cohorts and connect these efforts to other campus planning.

- As a new program review process is underway, we discussed the importance of
aligning all these efforts: ICCB or outside agency review, HLC assessment
requirements and Internal Program Review to remove redundancy.

- In reviewing the committee functions, we also noted one of them was to "Review and
approve institutional academic assessment tools and procedures." There was a question,
and disagreement, as to whether or not the Internal Program Review process should have
been reviewed by the committee as part of this function.

- VP Latham clarified that she will do her best to financially support those who wish to
attend assessment events, provided that their professional development funds be used first
if not earmarked for other purposes.

- VP Latham also recommended we recruit new faculty committee members.

Action items:

Committee chair will:

- Meet with CTE Director and/or Research Office rep to determine logistics moving forward for a
smooth transition of submission and storage of data.
- Work with the CTE Director to establish a protocol for sharing of information and feedback about
the academic assessment efforts on campus.
- At the next Senate, recommend:
  - establishment of a campus-wide assessment task force
  - rewording of membership requirements
- Provide Gen Ed documents at the next committee meeting
- Confer with administrators on Master Plan link for 2011/2012 Program Assessment
- Follow up with Liz Brindise regarding time slot at Spring 2011 Faculty Meeting
- Solicit liaisons to provide testimonials.
- A review of this discussion will be an agenda item at the February meeting.

Next Meeting – February 2, 2011 from 2-3 pm in the CTE.

Submitted by Maureen Musker.