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Assessment of Student Learning Minutes
(Inactive)

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11-16-2012

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Minutes.

Assessment of Student Learning

Meeting 2:15 pm on 11/16/2012

Notes on discussion taken by S. Burks

Present: Ted Pappenfus (chair), Jana Koehler, Brooks Jessup, Nancy Helsper, Wendy Emo, Emily Sunderman, Steve Burks

Absent: Stacy Aronson, Andrew Sletten, Barbara Burke

Agenda review

Ted reviewed scheduling of meetings for new attendees. We may have a meeting in Dec. depending on progress today. Ted will set new meeting schedule for spring.

Review of minutes

Motion Steve, second, Nancy, to accept minutes as presented. All in favor except for one abstention (Wendy, who was not present at the last meeting)

Substance of the Meeting.

GenEd Survey: Background from Nancy. Started with pilot in 2001; 2002-10 was administered to graduating seniors in spring. Until budget issues hit there was a \$5 incentive. Stopped in 2010, as HLC visited then, and we planned to update based upon results of visit. But survey hasn't yet been updated, nor administered, since 2010.

Ted: we did decide we will re-institute the survey, but should we revise it, and if so, how? Also decided that we will request a Higbie's incentive. Dean will fund incentive (per request form Ted to Dean).

Nancy: first couple of years this was done in-house at UMM, was a problem to carry out effectively. Then we found we could send it to UMTC and they would implement it over the web. But now the structure of things has changed at UMTC, and we would now need to go to "Measurement Services" to request a survey; they review, and then implement. It will now be done using the "Qualtrix" software application U has licensed. In the past we received both raw data and a report, plus open-ended question answers; presume we can get the same under the new regime.

Ted: in terms of potential modifications, we are thinking of cutting more than anything else, but we don't want to change too much of the parts we keep in order to maintain comparability with prior years.

Steve: let us focus more sharply on what we do with this. The HLC is concerned most about the Assessment of the GenEd requirements, whether the GenEd structure is working the way we intended, etc. Suggest that we cut all the questions except the "did you achieve" and "how important was it" for each GenEd, as the rest of the questions provide data that we would be very likely to actually use. This is because the answers are not course-specific nor even in most cases discipline-specific, and if changes are going to be made in how we try to achieve particular GenEds they are likely to be focused at the course or discipline level (where relevant assessment is already going on). What the two questions to be kept help us with is, at least to

some extent, the big picture: do seniors believe that the current GenEds are being achieved, and do they understand the importance of the GenEds?

Wendy: asked for clarification.

Brooks asked for clarification.

Nancy: find that FineArts and Foreign Language are often low in perceived importance (also in achievement). Curriculum Ctte decided that this means we should better explain the purpose and importance of these requirements. Also, in prior analysis the ASL Ctte found that both achievement and importance scores vary sharply by major (if you are in the arts, FA is higher, etc.)

Ted: second to Steve's proposal, and let's also look for just one or two extra questions that might be better than current text for meeting expectations of the HLC with regard to assessing GenEds.

Jana, Ted: both comment that it is very important to survey alums.

Nancy: This is hard. Admissions surveyed one-year-out alums last year. Have some preliminary info (57 responses?). Nancy will bring more info next meeting.

Nancy: Gary Donovan was doing annual survey of alums, but it was on paper, and cost \$2000 per year (plus time involved), and TC started such a survey, so we killed ours. But the TC response was too small (15% or less) to be usable. Thus Bryan Herrmann started his own from Admissions, to meet internal needs.

Ted: can we do our own survey as ASL if we so choose?

Nancy: yes.

Ted: speculated on what we might get if did own alumni survey, but then put this aside for now.

Nancy: We have some questions from NSSE that we can compare across peer institutions.

Nancy: NSSE data. Shows that we are below our peers by a statistically significant amount on a few items (and above on some others). We are at the BAC-LA norm for question 11.a, but above COPLAC and NSSE means. But we are below relevant peers on College Writing, and possibly some others. In discussion it was noted that we can map some of our other GenEds besides CW to some of the other parts of question 11 on NSSE.

Ted: has boiled down the HLC requirements we need to meet for Assessment report (see meeting document). Bart (the Dean) is really focusing on 1, GenEd assessment. The CW issue has been initially addressed by the campus (reference here to recent changes to college writing requirements that were just approved by Campus Assembly). What else do we need to do?

Nancy: we had talked about looking at actual discipline GenEd assessment results.

Ted: we did in fact do an initial look last year, but found little (some work done in science & math, but it was limited). So we asked all disciplines to do such an assessment this year.

Ted: we will ask Divisions to have disciplines respond before the end of the semester on a) is there a plan in place for GenEd assessment in the discipline, b) what is it (two sentences), and c) when will there be a first-semester report discipline-based GenEd assessment report?

Nancy: attended conference at which St. Catherine's U reported using TaskStream software that they used to coordinate their assessment efforts (Walden, Winona also use it). Nancy will Bring us more in of on this software at the next meeting!; her initial view is that using this seemed to be producing exciting results.

Ted: back to this question, “what can we add to the survey of seniors that will help us with respect to HLC?” Could we add a general question of some kind, perhaps open-ended?

Wendy: that might be helpful.

Steve: all we will get is a list of anecdotes, because we won’t be able to spend the effort to code all the open ended responses, but that still may be worthwhile.

Emily: we should add a question asking about GenEds satisfied elsewhere vs. those done here. My experience was very different in satisfying these in the two different ways.

Several members: good idea.

Steve: suggested to look at Roger’s proposal to reword the GenEd descriptions. His point is that using the catalog language, which is conceptually quite complex, reduces the survey responses, and we aren’t bound to that exact text. Could Wendy help us with this?

Nancy: would disciplines or Curriculum Ctte. need to look at such rewordings and approve them?

Steve: Ask them for advice but here we have authority to make our own decisions—it is a survey by our committee for our committee’s needs.

Ted: Steve, can you try to rewrite the SocSci GenEd description?

Steve: the complexity reflects the current status (“not unified”) of the actual fields, but will try.

Ted: is February still the planned time frame for administration?

Nancy: we do NSSE every even year in March, so we set the survey of seniors for February so it would not conflict with NSSE in those years, and would be at a standardized time every year in.

Ted: 2013 is the crucial year for the 2015 HLC report, so we should do whatever we need to (e.g. run in March) to make sure 2013 happens. We can go earlier the following year if we want to run it on the same year as NSSE.

Ted: Wendy did not receive the meeting documents. Ted will send Wendy all the forms members received. Will also bring a computer and projector to the next meeting so we can do some live editing.

Ted: everyone please write one draft question for the survey of seniors, to address HLC concerns, to be reviewed at next meeting.

Notetaker: next meeting is B. Burke or Jana Koehler.

Meeting adjourned by consensus.