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Assessment of Student Learning Minutes  
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1-24-2003

### Assessment of Student Learning minutes 01/24/2003

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# Assessment of Student Learning

## University of Minnesota

**DATE:** January 24, 2003

**SUBJECT:** Assessment of Student Learning Committee Minutes

**PRESENT:** Dian Lopez (Chair), Katherine Benson, Nancy Helsper, Tim O'Keefe, Michelle Page, Rujira Rojjanaprapayon, Tim Soderberg, Sarah Black, and Chris Huether.

**GUEST** John Bowers

**ABSENT:** Stephen Burks,

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Lopez called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM in the Prairie Lounge.

Lopez asked for comments or approval of the ASL minutes dated 12/12/02. Helsper noted two changes to be made to the GenEd Assessment section of the minutes. Motion: (Huether, O'Keefe) to approve the amended minutes, unanimously approved.

Lopez said the discussion of the NCA report would be added to today's agenda.

### **Announcements:**

- Helsper will discuss later in the meeting the UMM survey working group that has been formed.
- Lopez and Helsper have been meeting with different groups to discuss assessment, and will continue meeting with all divisions.
- Collaboration Conference in Twin Cities, February 20-21, 2003. The conference title is "The Connected Campus: How Technology is changing teaching and learning." Lopez said that technology is something that needs to be assessed, and attendance at this conference is encouraged.

Lopez introduced John Bowers, Director of Computing Services, to the committee. Lopez asked Bowers to summarize what Computing Services is doing for Assessment. She explained that the committee is gathering assessment results from all campus units and would like to learn more about the Computing Services Assessment Program. Bowers reported the following items: 1) observed feedback of faculty and student usage 2) an evaluation form is used after each formal training session for feedback 3) workshops are scheduled semester by semester, determined by questions and concerns of students and faculty. He noted that the spring schedule would come out today. Bowers also noted that some workshops are directed more for faculty, while others are directed more towards students. 4) Network measurements are important; this indicates which programs are being used. 5) If the help desk or other computing service personnel get frequently asked questions, a document will be put on the web explaining what they need to know. For example, the impact of file sharing and file piracy on the network and what steps the 4 campuses are forced to take to keep impact from being overwhelming. Bowers noted that the Computing Service is a support group, and that no credit is given for courses they offer. He said that students learn from workshops and labs, and that it is not a formal learning program. Helsper asked how computing services is documenting assessment. Bowers replied that documentation was done in

February 2000, and that he can do it again. Lopez noted that assessment should be documented with numbers, what questions are being asked, etc. Bowers said that he will type a report for this year indicating what they are doing for assessment, and will do a report annually in February.

Lopez said she was impressed that Computing Services was able to use feedback so quickly and that this concept is the core of assessment. She thanked Bowers for attending the meeting and said the committee will be looking forward to his assessment report.

### **Sub-Committee Reports**

#### **Discipline Assessment** (Soderberg, Lopez, Page, Rojjanaprapayon, Huether)

Discussion included the status of the e-mail, which was sent out in November requesting assessment results. Lopez said that another e-mail should be sent out requesting a paragraph describing what changes they made to their curriculum because of assessment. Lopez said that she has received 10 assessment results. O'Keefe commented that feedback should be sent back to the disciplines with suggestions or letting them know that what they are doing is acceptable. Lopez said that the committee will send out samples of what other disciplines are doing. O'Keefe said in order to prevent misunderstanding, a note should be included with these samples indicating what is good and what is not necessary. Lopez said that the goal is to streamline assessment, so that it will be done every year.

Helpser noted that if the assessment reports are requested and received electronically, it would be easy to update the assessment web-site. Members of the sub-committee will meet to put together a package to send out to Disciplines requesting assessment reports and permission to post it to the web.

#### **General Education**

Helpser and Lopez met and discussed with Schwaller the NCA 2000 report. Helpser said that after reviewing the NCA visiting team report of 2000, they identified the need to specify objectives and specific goals for all fourteen components of GER. She said that they have objectives for all of the GER components, but only three components have specific goals. Helpser said they have questions on what terminology to use; objectives, goals, and outcomes. Helpser said they didn't think they needed to use the term outcomes. A copy of the draft memo to the Curriculum Committee was distributed to members and discussion followed. It was noted that the GenEd survey is getting results, but that it does not measure direct learning. It was suggested that faculty fill out a form which lists the specific objectives of the GER for the course for each 1-2000 level course. Faculty would check off what objectives are met by their course and a summary of all courses for each GER would help determine if the students are learning in the GenEd courses what we want them to learn. It was noted that it could be possible for the student to pass the course, but not learn the GER objective. Huether questioned how the two could be disconnected, passing the course but failing the GER. Page said the language is confusing, that it is the assessment of the GER, not the student. Helpser said that it is important for us know if the objectives that were set for the course are being met. Discussion included other comments such as: 1) asking faculty if their course is addressing the objectives for the GenEd objectives, 2) faculty may balk at the extra paper work 3) faculty may not take the form seriously and/or understand the difference between assessing the student's coursework and assessing the learning of the objectives. Benson discussed the objectives for Human Behavior, Social Processes and Institutions (SS). Her concern was that she understood Helpser to be saying that we needed to assess with direct questions whether the students were meeting each of these objectives or not. She said to do that in Psychology would require probing for personal information from the student--the personal application of the concepts of the course--and that would be an invasion of privacy.

Helpser noted that the NCA requires direct measure of learning. Some suggestions to measure learning included asking the faculty member to ask one question on an exam paper that focused on the objective or to do a sampling of classes. Soderberg noted that the objective in the syllabus is usually related to the GER. Benson pointed out a standard principal of assessment: that to have measurable objectives, one must make one's objective very narrow, concrete and specific. That way, the objectives will be achievable in a way that can be measured directly. The problem is that "The Liberal Arts" are not narrow by definition. That's part of the meaning of "liberal." This is a real contradiction between what we are being asked to do in assessment and what our basic mission is.

Page discussed the Meta grading used in Education. She said that there are 10 standards of effective practice in

Minnesota to get licensed, and that the educational requirements of the course are aligned to the 10 standards and these are used as assessment criteria. This makes it easier for assessment, knowing that the requirements are being met.

O'Keefe noted that we have met 3 out of the 14 components of the General Education Requirements in the NCA Report of 2000 and that we should get assessment in place for all Disciplines and have a reasonable report in 2005.

Lopez said we would continue discussion of the NCA report at the next meeting.

Helsper discussed the UMM survey working group with the committee. She said that they have met once, and will meet again on February 11. She said this committee is looking at all the National surveys UMM is doing, checking to see if the surveys are on schedule, and to make sure surveys are not be duplicated.

Helsper said that the GenEd Senior Survey is scheduled for February, and that two new questions have been sent to the Twin Cities. She questioned if the \$5.00 bookstore coupon should be offered as an incentive to complete the survey. O'Keefe said that the \$5.00 for each student (cleared for graduation) should be offered. Helsper said that we would have to get the list from the Registrar's office of all seniors cleared for graduation and the student ID number. Helsper said that the Registrar's office requested that the confirmation page not be brought to them, but that it should be taken to the bookstore to receive the coupon. Helsper noted that in the past they had problems with students doing the survey more than once, but the Twin Cities now has a way to prevent this from happening.

Rujira Rojjanaprayon said that he has a list of assessment terminology that he thinks would be helpful for committee members, and asked that copies be made and sent to members. Pederson will send the URL link for this document to all committee members.

Meeting adjourned at 9:17 AM.

Next meeting is scheduled for February 14, 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM in the Prairie Lounge.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Pederson

URL: <http://www.morris.umn.edu/committees/asl/minutes.01.24.03.html>