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Assessment of Student Learning Minutes
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DATE: Friday, March 5, 2004
SUBJECT: Assessment of Student Learning Committee Minutes
PRESENT: Katherine Benson (Chair), Nancy Helsper, Paul Myers, Tim Lindberg, and Michael O'Reilly
ABSENT: James Hall, Stephen Burks, Dwight Purdy, Ray Sibul, and Jessie Hass

Benson called the meeting to order at 9:45 AM in the Prairie Lounge, noting that there is not a quorum, but a few more members will be arriving later. There were no announcements.

Benson asked for corrections, additions, or approval of the ASL Minutes 1/30/04. Helsper noted a few changes to be made. Corrections were noted. Motion to approve the minutes as amended (Lindberg/Myers). Minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

Discipline Assessment Subcommittee (Benson)

This report has been deferred until a later date

GRE Report on UMM Student Scores (Helsper)

Copies of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Report on UMM Student Scores 1991-2003 were distributed to members. Helsper said that the GRE report has been revised a couple of times, the reports are done in 5-year intervals. Helsper said that the Evaluation Team report expressed disappointment that the GRE scores were never reported back to the faculty; this was a serious oversight.

Helsper discussed with members the GRE Report, noting that this is only a portion of the report. Members viewed the GRE Test Scores by Major, 1991-2003. Helsper said that all the average scores, except for Verbal, are above the National GRE Scores. She said we might want to pay close attention to the verbal area. Helsper also noted that some disciplines have more students taking the GRE than others do, and we must take this into consideration when we are comparing scores. Benson said that faculty should encourage their students to take the GRE and to check the box to report the scores back to UMM. Helsper told the committee that the Major categorizes the students, and if they were taking more than one Major, they were counted more than once. Helsper asked if the committee was interested in plotting scores of each GRE by GPA in each category. Benson noted that some students have talents that are not measured by the GRE. A member commented that the GRE is not measuring their talent, but that their talent is reflected in their grade. Members discussed the Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytical GRE scores. Benson noted that Verbal and the new Analytical Writing score are areas the campus could work on, but the Quantitative and Analytical scores seem to be good. Benson said it would be good to compare UMM scores with National data, but said that we have only the most recent report and the report from 1995-1999. Helsper said that we ordered the first report in 2000-01, the reports only go back 4 years. Members discussed the various graphs included in the report. Helsper said that Kill had told her that not all students need to take the GRE to get into grad school. She also said that this report should be distributed across the campus, along with a message from the ASL committee. Benson asked if we receive the MCAT and LSAT scores from students applying to Medical and Law school. Benson will contact the Dean about requesting the MCAT and LSAT scores.

Members viewed and discussed the number of GRE Subject–Test takers by UMM Major, 1991–2003. Helsper noted the information indicated the UMM Major and the subject tested. It was also noted that the Major does not necessarily indicate what type of test the student will take. Discussion followed. Helsper said the remainder of the report, (which was not printed) showed a scattergram by Majors. She asked if there was any additional information needed besides the Subject–Test scores, and asked what we should do with it next. Helsper also noted that the NCA visiting team believed

we were lacking in assessment because the GRE results were not given back to the Faculty. Helsper read a section from the NCA report (pg. 35) to the committee regarding that statement. Helsper will work on a Table next week and share it with the committee. It was agreed that after Helsper has completed this Table, a note will be sent to the Faculty with the link to the report. Members discussed if the report should be password protected.

O'Reilly arrived at the meeting. Benson shared with O'Reilly what had been discussed up to this point. O'Reilly said that he understands that there is a committee being formed for Writing Across the Curriculum, and said it was very detrimental when they lost the "small w" writing courses.

Members discussed what should be included in the memo to faculty. 1) GRE Data are on the web, note decrease in verbal scores, and ask disciplines for commitment to writing, 2) encourage faculty to ask students who take the GRE to report scores back to UMM. Helsper commented that the Dean said that some Universities require all students to take the GRE before graduation. Helsper said that she is waiting to hear from Bowers about how to password protect the report. Members discussed if faculty would be discouraged from looking at the report if it was password protected. Benson commented that so many things are password protected now, that this should not be a problem. Helsper said Granger looked at the report and said that we could exclude results if less than 5 from the major took the GRE. One member commented that it would be interesting for disciplines to see how many took the test and how they did. Lindberg suggested that we might get higher scores if the GRE is analyzed by Division and not Majors, we would get a higher sampling by Divisions instead of Disciplines. O'Reilly agreed that it would be helpful to have it by Divisions. Myers asked if it is our actions that are improving the GRE scores or is it Admissions? Helsper said she had requested from COPLAC advice about comparing entering ACT scores to exiting GRE Scores and was told it was not a good idea because GRE tests general intelligence not knowledge. Helsper said that not all students are taking the GRE, it would have to be required. Helsper was afraid it would demoralize students if the GRE were required, if they did not plan to attend graduate school. O'Reilly commented that he thinks it is an internal decision to do something about improving student writing.

Benson asked the committee if we could brainstorm ways to show the "value added" to student performances after attendance at UMM. Discussion included 1) General Knowledge entrance and exit exam, 2) O'Reilly said that Unit Assessment plans show this. Benson said that very few disciplines have pre and post exams; not all disciplines have a placement test. Benson said some faculty have a strong reaction about the use of pre & posttests, believing that this can terrify students. Benson said that many Faculty recommend against pre & post tests. O'Reilly questioned what percentage of students takes the GRE. Helsper replied that we do not know the percentage, we only receive the results from students who click the box to send us their scores.

Benson will check into getting the MCAT and LSAT reports. Benson will compose a cover letter from the committee to be sent to faculty with the link to the GRE report. The report will be linked from the Assessment Web page, and will be password protected. Helsper will gather additional information for the report. It was agreed that the brief report would include: 1) general information, 2) National Averages by Discipline, by Divisions, 3) Campus by Divisions, 4) charts for campus as a whole for 3 years, and 4) a Subject-Test Scores Table. Helsper will share the completed reports with the committee before they are sent out, may be able to go out in the next two weeks.

Pederson will send copies of the GRE data to members not in attendance at today's meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 24 in the Humanities Conference Room # 112 from 3:00-4:30 PM. [Meeting was cancelled due to Benson's surgery.] Items on the agenda will include 1) Review discipline reports, make sure all disciplines have updated reports, 2) Look at the assessment plans and see if their programs have improved as a result of their assessment plans. Helsper said that if a discipline doesn't have an assessment plan, help them form a workable plan that they can accomplish. She also noted that some disciplines are doing a wonderful job of assessment, and feedback would be useful.

Meeting adjourned at 11:32 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Pederson

URL: <http://www.morris.umn.edu/committees/asl/minutes.03.05.04.html>