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Assessment of Student Learning Minutes
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DATE: April 4, 2005

SUBJECT: Assessment of Student Learning Committee Minutes

PRESENT: Katherine Benson (Chair), Janet Schrunk Ericksen, Michael O'Reilly, Nancy Helsper, Donna Chollett and Paul Myers

ABSENT: Dwight Purdy, James Hall, Jessica Meinenger and Eric Christenson

The meeting began at 2:00 PM in the Moccasin Flower Room.

Benson asked for discussion or approval of the ASL Minutes dated 3/21/05. After a brief discussion, a motion by (O'Reilly, Helsper) to approve the minutes as read; unanimously approved.

Subcommittee Reports

GenEd Report (Nancy Helsper, Janet Schrunk-Ericksen and Paul Myers)

Helsper reported the committee met on Friday, April 1 to review the preliminary results from the 2005 Gen Ed Survey, discussed future survey plans, and talked about general education items that should be included in the interim report to the NCA. Helsper said the committee decided to wait until next year to discuss the future of the GenEd survey. She said at that point they would have a complete report on the 2005 survey and would be in a better position to decide if they should reduce the survey to 20 questions or to offer it in alternating years.

A copy of *General Education Survey Means: Average Scores Across all Categories* was distributed to the committee for discussion. (The graph included 4 years, 2002-2005; and indicates the average score across all categories for achievement and importance) Ericksen said that overall, the means in both achievement and the importance were slightly up in 2005, but because the means for importance continue to fall below those for achievement they are suggesting that the advisors need to be educating the students about the reasons why general education courses are important. Discussion included: 1) encourage advisors to stress GenEd, 2) ask instructor to add GenEd to the syllabus, and 3) FYS – stress the value of GenEd. Dean Schwaller did ask the Fall 2005 FYS instructors to include information on the importance of the Liberal Arts, Benson noted. A memo will be sent to faculty teaching GenEd courses about the importance of General Education, and asking them to emphasize this to students."

Helsper reported on general education items for the NCA report due in June 2005. She said the Assessment Committee has been conducting surveys of graduating seniors since 1998. Helsper said that since the conversion to semesters, we have 4 years of GenEd survey results 2002-2005 to compare. Helsper said that a subcommittee has analyzed the results and made recommendations to the group for improving student learning in general education. She noted that since 2002, the ASL has sent three memos to the Curriculum committee with recommendations regarding the assessment of general education. Helsper summarized the memos and reactions of the Curriculum Committee.

The committee discussed offering a GenEd survey with the "importance" questions to freshmen and with both "achievement" and "importance" questions to seniors to measure their change of attitude with Gen Ed Courses. Discussion also included:

- when the surveys would be given
- Twenty Question survey for seniors – do this on a cycle to insure the same students are included that took the pretest.
- Give complete survey every year to include the same students that took the pretest; not all students are done in 4 years.

Helsper said the ASL received a charge from the Curriculum Committee a few years ago in the form of a memo from the Dean to the then current Chair of the ASL Committee, to set up a pre-test to evaluate the importance of a Liberal Arts Education. Benson replied that she was not informed that there was such a memo sent privately, and asked if a subcommittee should be set up to develop the instrument. Members discussed developing the survey instrument, asking 20 questions the 1st year, 20 questions the 2nd year, etc; "how important is General Education?" Benson said the language would have to be adjusted to the question. It was suggested that the survey be put on a 5-point scale, a means for correlation. Helsper said that we would ask the Curriculum Committee for permission to do the pre-test for incoming students; it may also go to Assembly. Helsper has agreed to prepare a draft of a Pre-test for the next ASL Meeting, April 18.

Helsper noted that Dean Schwaller worked with John Bowers and Matt Senger to implement a pilot software program for faculty to assess whether each student met the expectation for the GenEd component of the course. Helsper said the Pilot Software program was completed last spring; the results will be included in the June report.

NCA Accreditation Toolkit Report (Michael O'Reilly)

O'Reilly reported the committee has not met. After reviewing the Toolkit, his conclusion was:

- Most important when used for a specific purpose, not as overall
- Writing specific – it helped to identify low number of papers in writing
- Best used in conjunction with other surveys
- Specific aim to use this toolkit is to show improvement
- We have the information we need – future use of the toolkit should be more sporadic
- Only advantage of doing it next year (2006), it would catch the 2002 freshmen
- No questions on music, performance or attendance
- Referenced research with faculty, but no reference to undergraduate research.

Helsper said that because the means are shifting, we should get on a cycle with other COPLAC institutions and stick with it. O'Reilly said he would like to see a question asking the student if he/she would recommend this institution to a prospective student rather than asking if the student would choose UMM again. The committee discussed if the toolkit would be valuable for the NCA report; what has changed and the improvements made. It was noted that the toolkit covers a lot with engagement but not achievement, it gives a comparison, but accreditation cannot be based on it. O'Reilly said we should use the toolkit when we have a specific question in mind and should have a specific objective in mind why we are using the survey and use in conjunction with NSSE.

Discipline Assessment Report (Katherine Benson, Donna Chollett, and Dwight Purdy)

A copy of *UMM Assessment Results (Special: Capstone Examples)* was distributed to the committee. Benson reported she met with Chollett on March 30. Benson said the memo discussed in the last meeting was not sent to the Dean in order to discuss this option further with the ASL Committee first. Other items of discussion included:

- Ask Disciplines for a clear set of items to be updated, what changes have been made?
- Request disciplines to submit a report of changes they have made based on assessment.
- Report from disciplines should be done yearly
- NCA wants data points for individual students

ASL Meeting is scheduled for April 18, 2:00 – 3:30 PM in the Moccasin Flower Room.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM.

Submitted by:

Linda Pederson