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Minutes of a Meeting of the Assessment of Student Learning Committee

Time, date, and place: 8:00-9:00 am, February 28, 2008, Prairie Lounge

Members present: Nancy Helsper, Hsing-Wen Hu, Tom Johnson, Michael O'Reilly, Jim Togeas (Chair)

Members absent: Mary Elizabeth Bezanson, Therese Buchmiller, Donna Chollet, Abby Swafford, Chris Vinderslev

1. Minutes of the October 11 meeting. Approved.

2. Letter from the Higher Learning Commission dated February 7 2008. In this letter an HLC staff member evaluated UMM's report of November 1 2007 on the assessment of its academic programs and general education. Although the HLC evaluation acknowledged that UMM had "succeeded in implementing a decentralized, program-based assessment program," and although the HLC requires no additional reports on assessment, members noted that the HLC seems to regard our efforts as incomplete. Analysis of assessment results, the letter says, "would indicate the priorities for planning, for remediation, for budgeting, for investment and for a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the University as a whole." One member noted that this seems to be more akin to the work of the Campus Planning and Resources Committee than to that of the ASLC, and perhaps the HLC letter should go to the CRPC for consideration. Another member expressed reservations about linking assessment and budgetary decisions. There was a discussion of the positive values of the discipline reviews that were instituted early in the 1990s and discontinued when UMM made the transition from quarters to semesters: perhaps the HLC letter could galvanize the reinstitution of those reviews.

3. The Chair's description of his meeting with the Interim VCAA & Dean, and Division Chairs. Togeas said that during this half-hour meeting, which he requested, there was a discussion of instituting campus-wide learning outcomes and of "regularizing" assessment, perhaps in the form of an assessment cycle. Togeas thought these would be important undertakings for the ASLC, but wondered how far to pursue them until the new VCAA & Dean begins her duties this summer. His thought was that the Committee could make some tentative proposals for the consideration of the new Dean. His sense of the meeting was that this would be appropriate.

4-5. Campus-wide learning outcomes. Members noted the existence of the seven "Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes" adopted by the University Senate and wondered about the history of this initiative. The meeting ended at this point.

Submitted by Jim Togeas