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Assessment of Student Learning

University of Minnesota, Morris

DATE: November 19, 2002

SUBJECT: Assessment of Student Learning Committee Minutes

PRESENT: Dian Lopez (Chair), Katherine Benson, Stephen Burks, Nancy Helsper, Rujira Rojjanaprayon, Tim Soderberg, Sarah Black, and Chris Huether

GUEST: John Schwaller

ABSENT: Michelle Page

Lopez called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM in the Humanities Conference Room #112.

Lopez asked for comments or approval of the ASL minutes dated 10/31/02. Two minor corrections were noted. Motion: (Benson, Huether) to approve the minutes as amended. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Lopez asked for approval or additions to the agenda. The agenda was accepted as stands.

Lopez welcomed Fritz Schwaller to the meeting. Lopez distributed a copy of the Discipline Assessment Plans Memo dated 4/28/99 to the committee for discussion. Lopez said she has been invited by the Division of Humanities to speak with all coordinators about assessment. Lopez also distributed a copy of data (April 2000) for a self-study for the years 1989-1999 for review and discussion. Lopez said the meetings with the Discipline coordinators will help with the assessment process. Helsper noted that the NCA report must include changes that the Disciplines have made to their courses based on assessment. Soderberg mentioned that changes are made to some courses in regards to what works or what doesn't work in a class, but he said that it is not necessarily documented. Soderberg said that if these changes are documented daily, this information could be used for the assessment report. Huether questioned if the committee could create a specific form for the Disciplines to use as documentation. Lopez replied that the sub-committee is creating a model form, and it will help people do some assessment especially for the capstone/research/portfolio class.

Lopez said Ahern had contacted her about a report indicating student concerns with diversity issues, noting a comment, "*class experience was unproductive because of race*". Lopez said the plan was to have Pareena Lawrence attend a meeting to obtain an assessment of the problem. Burks questioned how big the problem was, and suggested to take steps to measure the size of the problem. Schwaller commented if a problem is presented to the Administration, specifics are asked, and it is actively pursued. Lopez questioned if Lawrence should be invited to the next meeting to discuss the type of problems or should we turn it over to the Faculty Development Committee. Schwaller replied it should be turned over to the Faculty Development Committee. Schwaller said that the number of complaints that come informally to him or the Division chairs is 2-3 courses per semester. It was noted that subject matter also creates an atmosphere of discomfort. Schwaller said that an environment should be maintained in which all students feel comfortable, all points of view are respected, and the discussion is open and honest in its approach to the subject. Schwaller said the NCA report should focus on what the students are learning, not the classroom environment. Schwaller noted that he would be trained as an NCA evaluator in March.

It was discussed if the Assessment Committee should itself be doing assessment surveys, as we did for the General

Education Assessment, or is our charge to support others who are doing the surveys. It was noted that assessment instruments are the domain of the ASL Committee, and that the committee should report the results and recommendations to the Curriculum Committee for our General Education Assessment. Burks suggested highlighting what the report shows and what may need to be evaluated further. It is then up to the faculty to resolve any perceived problems with their General Education course.

Sub-Committee Reports

General Education (Helsper, Benson, Burks, Black)

Helsper distributed a copy of the Recommendations from the General Education Subcommittee dated 11/19/02 for discussion. Listed are the recommendations for the survey.

1. The Gen Ed survey be conducted every year through 2005, in February rather than later in spring semester. The survey instrument remains fixed through 2005, except for minor additions/changes.
2. One question be added to the survey at the beginning of the section on the foreign language (FL) requirement.
3. Choice available under the "People and the Environment (Envt)" category, question #59, be made more clear.
4. Request that the Curriculum Committee inform us whether they intend to conduct the Gen Survey themselves in the future or want the ASL Committee to continue doing so.

After discussion of the recommendations, a motion by (Burks/Benson) to change the #4 recommendation to read: We recommend that the ASL Committee continue to conduct the Gen Ed survey.

The recommendations for the survey results are:

1. Recommend that the ASL Committee forward the 2002 Gen Ed Survey results to the Curriculum Committee, but not forward the 2001 results.
2. Recommend that the breakdown of 2002 results by the Division of the major be forwarded to the Curriculum Committee.
3. Recommend that the Curriculum Committee consider whether the campus should be doing more to explain and promote general education as a component of the liberal arts.

A motion was made and unanimously approved to accept the amended recommendation from the Gen Ed Subcommittee.

Schwaller said that the ASL Committee should have ownership of the assessment instrument, make changes to questions, and to make recommendations to the Curriculum Committee.

Lopez questioned if assessment tools have been developed for special services such as Advising, Computing Services, First Year Seminar, and the Library. Schwaller said there is a special assessment tool for FYS. Schwaller suggested inviting Bowers, Dean, and Boleman to discuss assessment tools used in their areas and if they are not using assessment tools ask if they would consider doing it. Schwaller said that if they do have an assessment tool in place, ask them to share the information with the committee, or if they do not have an assessment tool, the committee could offer to help create an assessment tool for their program.

A motion by (Burks/Benson) to request a copy of the complete 2000 NCA Team Report from the Chancellor's Office. Unanimously approved.

Discipline Assessment (Soderberg, Lopez, Page, Rojjanaprayon, Huether)

Soderberg reported that the sub-committee had met twice since the last ASL meeting. He reported that Lopez had sent out a memo last year to the Discipline Coordinators requesting information about their types of Capstone projects. He said this memo will be sent out in the beginning of spring semester 2003 and will include open-ended questions, asking what are the goals and the type of assessment. He said that a re-minder would be included stating that assessment should be ongoing and that they will be asked again in the spring for results, and any changes they will make as a result

of their assessment data. Lopez will send out sample instruments that can be used to help assess their capstone projects. Lopez said she received a good response from the capstone projects, noting that some Disciplines are doing some good things and this should be included in the report. Lopez said that she would send out another memo to the Discipline Coordinators that she did not receive a response from last year, and ask them to send it to her. Burks noted that changes were made to the Curriculum Catalog this year, and suggested linking the assessment tool to the specific changes that each Discipline had made. After discussion, the committee decided to request from each Discipline the goals that effected the changes that they made to their curriculum. This information will be requested by December 1. It was suggested that next semester a note should be sent to each Discipline and copied to the Division Chairs requesting that Lopez and Helsper be invited to their first Division meeting to discuss assessment if they have not responded to our requests for assessment data.

Web Page Sub-committee (Helsper, Pederson)

No report.

A copy of the spring semester schedule was distributed to the committee members for review. After review and discussion, it was decided that the meetings would be held on Friday mornings, 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM. Lopez said that this time should be kept open on our calendar for these meetings. Benson requested that the Prairie Lounge be reserved for these meetings.

The next meeting will be Thursday, December 12 in the Moccasin Flower Room from 4:00 - 5:30 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Pederson

URL: <http://www.morris.umn.edu/committees/asl/minutes.11.19.02.html>