College Assessment Committee

Monday 4/18/2016 - 3:00 – 4:00 15-155

MEETING SUMMARY

Present: Madeleine Murphy, Kevin Sinarle, LK Sengupta, Jane Jackson, Tabitha Conway, Graciela Mascereno

Absent: David Locke, Lilya Vorobey, Denaya Dailey, John Stewart (PRIE), Teresa Morris (COI), Theresa Martin (PD)

Note-taker: Madeleine

Meeting began at 3:05.

1. Approval of the agenda – agenda approved. However we couldn't look at the new Tracdat pages together, because the internet was down. (Jane said she had entered some data, and that she had emailed some questions, but overall the pages were MUCH easier to navigate.)

2. Approval of minutes March 21, 2016: Minutes approved. Thanks to Kevin who took the notes.

3. Brief updates

   GE SLO assessment group (Quantitative Reasoning) meets Thurs May 5. Last meeting Madeleine shared the report from the first group (on Effective Communication). (Jane expressed interest in joining the QR group, since this was the only current GE SLO that music classes might reasonably support. We noted however that there is room for a new GE-SLO: we should add one on creativity.)

   Notes from ACCJC-sponsored workshop: Fundamentals of Assessment. – Madeleine reported from a day-long workshop on the previous Friday (4/15/2016). The workshop was given by Amy Driscoll, an assessment expert not affiliated with ACCJC; ACCJC was sponsoring the workshop, however, and one official was present to answer some compliance-related questions.
   Much of the workshop focused on things we know (at least, we on the committee know): how to write good SLOs, what assessments work best – also there was a longish section on rubrics. There were some important take-aways for our college assessment program, however.

   ➢ ONE: It was clear that the person giving the workshop (Amy Driscoll) did not consider that "program assessment" required some separate, different process from course-level SLO assessment. In response to Madeleine's question (how do you assess students who come & go, few of whom will actually take your degree, and who mostly won't do a capstone course or assignment), Driscoll characterized program assessment as a *meeting* rather than a student task – namely, the meeting where faculty come together to look at their course-level SLOs as a whole, **and** any other relevant information, and asks, "How's my program doing?" Since most faculty report great difficulty in coming up with meaningful tasks for program assessment, this is a big relief.

➢ TWO: There was a strong emphasis on *qualitative* rather than *quantitative* assessment. That is, while we do need to conduct plentiful SLO assessments, the emphasis appears to be on the discussion and the collaboration between faculty. Evidence does not need to meet the standards of epidemiological research! In other words, while we try to get as much and as good evidence as possible, we should focus more on having useful conversations than on worrying about data management.

➢ THREE: SLOs are intended to be broken-down grades. That is how ACCJC sees them (this from the lips of the ACCJC official present, Jack Pond). They do not need to be alternative to grades – they can be assessed by embedded assignments (this is apparently the norm). Nor should only passing students be assessed; the preamble ("Successful students are able to…") isn't intended to exclude anyone – SLO assessments should be as representative as possible.

4. Tracdat: How it's shaping up: Couldn't demonstrate the new look & feel, due to internet crash! But Madeleine said that the revised Tracdat was hopefully going to be much clearer, and *minimal* – rather than load it with features that people don't understand, we're starting with the minimum of features, and we can build it out as we develop our assessment cycle.

5. Draft Assessment Report – comments and revisions:

➢ Program SLOs: As noted above – this needn't be a separate *assessment,* just a separate review of the results we've got – course-level SLOs, but anything else that matters too. In fact, this is really Program Review, isn't it? We should clarify the relationship between Program Review and the assessment calendar.

➢ Why can't we use grades to review our programs? – There have been rumblings in the world of assessment specialists that perhaps grade *would* make an acceptable alternative to SLO assessments. This would be greeted with great relief, we agreed, since most of us thought that grades were already our way of declaring what knowledge, skills or abilities students had demonstrated. But it was pointed out that grades *are* more general (what pattern of abilities does a B+ demonstrate?), and that students can fail for reasons other than good performance (ie, non attendance) so SLOs are maybe more precise.

➢ Recommendations got supportive response. What sort of timeline should we recommend in an assessment cycle – should we do course SLOs every semester, every year, every two years? Overall feeling was that SLO assessment works best when it's part of grading. SLO outcomes are grades broken down, so it makes sense to capture them like grades, for everyone all the time. If we assess annually, we'll only ever know how fall students do (or spring, or whatever) whenw we might want to contrast. Also, it's easy to forget about SLOs when we do them infrequently.

➢ Ideas for assessment: In sequenced courses where an exit quiz is appropriate (ie, content courses), how about using the post-test of the first level as the pre-test of the second? It would show patterns of preparedness. This is what they do in accounting. And it could be standard across disciplines. Indeed, standardized assessments should be encouraged: embedded

WebAccess or Canvas quizzes that ask some basic questions for basic scoring (associated with the G#, too, so the results can be disaggregated), and that can be administered to all students without the instructor having to reinvent the wheel. Where this doesn't work, faculty can data-tag assignments – maybe share a rubric? This would also take the burden off SLO coordinators in each department, who must now hassle part-timers for their results, sometimes to no avail; also to part-timers, who don't necessarily know what sort of quizzes to administer and are unfamiliar with assessment.

➢ If we're moving towards a course-based, grading-style SLO assessment, then we really SHOULD PUSH for them to be recorded, like grades, in WebSmart. It's crazy to have this separate system designed to generate reports, just for SLOs. Even data-tagging in WebAccess or Canvas won't get as much compliance, since not everyone uses those – but *everyone* uses WebSmart and everyone enters grades.

➢ The semesterly "assessment" flex day sounds like a good idea – though do we need a whole day?.... However, big concern: If we allocate a flex day to something called "assessment," still less "SLOs," will anyone go? SLOs are box-office poison. And many faculty don't need to attend flex days; they've already met their annual requirement for professional development by October. Suggestion: Align the date with program review, maybe? Identify a day, maybe a month before program review, for faculty to look at program & course-level SLOs. That would make it more useful for faculty, and would give them some important time to think about PR.

Meeting ended at 4:01.