

**The University of Southern Mississippi
University Assessment Committee Minutes
January 22, 2014**

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) met at 12:00 p.m. on January 22, 2014, in the International Center, Room 318, with Kelly Lester, Chair of the UAC, presiding.

The following voting members were present: Ramesh Bettagere, Susan Hart, Dawn Higdon, Ann Marie Kinnell, Michael L. King, Joohee Lee, Kelly Lester, Sarah Mangrum, Doug Masterson, Kathy Pendergras, Joe Peyrefitte, Avonelle Pugh, Jennifer Regan, Yen To, and Ellen Weinauer

The following non-voting members were present: Kathryn Lowery and Bill Powell

The following guests were present: Julie Howdeshell

1.0 Call to Order, Adoption of the Agenda, and Review of the Minutes

Kelly Lester, Chair of the UAC, called the meeting to order. Ms. Lester presented the agenda for the meeting and the minutes from the last meeting. Item 3 listed under “New Business” (UAC Policy Regarding Academic Programs’ Participation in the University-Wide Assessment Process – Page 7 of Assessment Showcase Booklet) will be moved to the February meeting agenda. The modified agenda and the minutes were approved by the UAC.

2.0 Committee Liaison Reports

Academic Council – The next meeting will be held in February. The President and Provost will be at the meeting to discuss retention and student success recommendations. The council will also be discussing the academic integrity policy.

QEP - Julie Howdeshell reported that the QEP Topic Selection Task Force met January 15. The Task Force received over 600 responses during the Call for Topics phase. The Call for Proposals is underway and will run through Feb. 26.

3.0 Old Business -Continued Discussion of Administrative Unit Assessment Policies

The UAC continued its discussion and review of policies related to administrative support services, educational support services, research, and community/public service. Revised working drafts of policies were provided based on discussions at the last UAC meeting.

General Counsel and Executive Assistant to the President for External Affairs are now included as administrative support services.

Educational Support Services now includes “professionally staffed” educational support units identified on the organizational chart. Student bodies identified on the organizational chart are assessed by their advising unit. In addition to Provost units and Student Affairs units, the Special Assistant to the President for Military and Veterans Student Affairs is included in this category.

Kathryn Lowery reported that she and Associate Provost Bill Powell met with Dr. Gordon Cannon, Vice President for Research to clarify the definition of research units as relates to the SACSCOC standard. Four research centers and institutes report to the VP for Research and will be included as research units under the policy: National Center for Sports Safety and Security (NCS4), Institute for Disability Studies, Center for Logistics, Trade and Transportation (CLTT), and the MS Polymer Institute (MPI). The Accelerator is a center and will also be included.

Dr. Josh Duplantis, Director of Community and Civic Engagement, was assigned CS 3.3.1.5. as a member of the SACS Audit Task Force. His response regarding the definition of community/public

service units as relates to the SACSCOC standard was evaluated. The response included detailed assessment data on three community/public service units: Center for Community and Civic Engagement, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and the Institute for Disability Studies. UAC members were provided a list of other units that may have some community or public service component. Members discussed whether these units should assess separately or as a part of their parent unit. Some members noted that it would be challenging to develop a universal template for these units. It was also discussed that the units listed for this, and the other categories, should have the given area (research, community/public service, etc.) as their **primary** function.

The members agreed to approve the wording. Kathryn Lowery will make the minor edits discussed at the meeting and bring back to the UAC for further review.

4.0 *New Business*

Revision to Academic Plan Guidelines to include SLO progression among degree levels

Currently, the Assessment Showcase Booklet states that “student learning outcomes should show progressive distinction between degree levels (BA, MA, PhD) in the same academic unit.” In order to ensure distinctions, it is recommended that “should” be changed to “must” and that the statement be included in the Plan Guidelines. UAC voted to approve the recommendation.

Administrative Assessment Phase III

Administrative reviews are due February 3, 2014. Administrative members should also check Dropbox for additional reports to be reviewed.

Clarification of “Retention” and “Graduation Rates”

Academic units are now required to include at least four student learning outcomes and at least one student achievement outcome in their academic assessment plan and report. Student achievement can include a number of measures, including retention and graduation rates. Associate Provost Bill Powell was asked to clarify the terms “retention” and “graduation rates” and share how programs can get that information. Dr. Powell shared charts prepared by the Office of Institutional Research (IR) showing how such data is captured and noting whether the student was not retained, retained in the original academic program, switched to another academic program, granted a degree in the original program, or granted a degree in another program. IR maintains retention and graduation rate data by department and degree program. This data is available through the “Campus Access” link on the IR website.

The term “retention” applies to first time full time students to the second year. “Persistence” is used in tracking all the way through graduation.

Dr. Powell also noted that the Student Success Steering Committee recommended that academic departments develop and publish retention guidelines for each major (Recommendation 37).

In terms of setting targets, departments can maintain levels or increase them. Action plans might include increased student activities, internships, etc.

6.0 Meeting Adjourned

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Upcoming meetings are scheduled as follows from noon to 1 p.m.: February 19 – Speaking Center (Cook Library 117), March 19 – International Center (IC) 318, April 23 – Thad Cochran TBA (Assessment Showcase)