

The University of Southern Mississippi
University Assessment Committee Minutes
January 23, 2013

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) met at 12:00 p.m. on January 23, 2013 in the Liberal Arts Building, Room 209, with Kelly Lester, Chair of the UAC, presiding.

The following voting members were present: Jewel Adams, Bret Becton, Phil Carlan, Diane Fisher, Stacy Reischman Fletcher, Pam Gibbs, Anne Marie Kinnell, Joohee Lee, Kelly Lester, Sarah Mangrum, Wanda Naylor, Laurie Nellis, Lisa Nored, Gwen Pate, Avonelle Pugh, Chuck Tardy, Donna Valestro, Ellen Weinauer, Ursula Whitehead

The following non-voting members were present: Kathryn Lowery, William Powell

The following guests were present: Julie Howdeshell

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

The meeting was called to order by Kelly Lester, Chair of the UAC. Ms. Lester presented the agenda for the meeting and the minutes from the last meeting held December 5, 2012 (previously sent via e-mail). Both were approved by the UAC.

2.0 *Committee Liaison Reports - None.*

3.0 *New Business*

Kathryn Lowery opened discussion regarding the assessment of stand-alone minors and, in particular, how programs without specifically required courses could best accomplish assessment requirements. She provided committee members information regarding these programs, including the number of minors awarded by each stand-alone minor in 2011, courses that are specifically required by all students for the minor, and additional requirements in which students could choose from a list of course options. (As noted in the UAC Assessment Policies, stand-alone minors are programs of study without a parent degree. Minors with parent majors are not required to report separately, per UAC guidelines.)

Suggestions included putting a hold on awarding the minor until exit assessments have been met by the student. Additionally, it was noted that some of the programs might have parent programs and would thus not be required to submit separate reports.

Ms. Lowery will send a list of the minors that might fall into the stand-alone minor category to chairs and directors for review and provide a list of possibilities for programs to consider for assisting with meeting assessment requirements.

4.0 *Old Business*

At the last meeting, there was discussion of making continued improvements to rubrics and the review process. Paper copies of the rubric were provided for members to take with them to make notes and edits and return to Kathryn.

The last meeting also included discussion of meeting SACS Federal Requirement (FR) 4.1. Federal Requirement 4.1 - Student Achievement requires the institution to "evaluate success with respect to student achievement" and "criteria may include enrollment data, retention, graduation, course completion and job placement rates; state licensing examinations; student portfolios; or other means of demonstrating achievement of goals." Several programs have a "Career or Graduate School" type of outcome and associated job placement, graduate school

placement, and career development measures. These measures were pulled for the SACS Fifth-Year report to support FR 4.1. Some outcomes are labeled O/O and others as SLO. Some are included within the minimum of five student learning outcomes. To decide in the spring semester: 1.) How should these “career or graduate school” outcomes be labeled? 2.) Should the Guidelines be amended to “minimum of five outcomes; four must be student learning outcomes?” 3.) Should an annual report field be added to capture discussion on criteria listed in FR 4.1? Programs could also capture this data as the “5th” outcome (or 6th, etc.)

Based on input of committee members at the last meeting, Kathryn Lowery provided possible wording of *Plan Guidelines* and *Report Guidelines* for further discussion. The goal is to meet the needs of FR 4.1 without adding more assessment requirements for programs.

PLAN GUIDELINES:

6. Program-level Assessment Plans have a minimum of five ~~student learning~~ outcomes; four must be student learning outcomes. Program objectives related to enrollment, retention, graduation, job placement, licensing, and certification may also be included in the assessment plan.

REPORT GUIDELINES:

3. Analysis

A: 4. Program Summary

5. Continuous Improvement Initiatives

6. Closing the Loop

7. Student Achievement – programs are asked to evaluate program effectiveness related to enrollment, retention, graduation, job placement, licensing, and certification

B: Include “student achievement” in the directions for the current fields: Program Summary, Continuous Improvement Initiatives (Additional Action Plans) and Closing the Loop (Action Plan Tracking).

In the meeting discussion, members noted the following:

- It is important for programs to review enrollment, retention, etc., and many are doing so as part of college-level efforts.
- Wherever reporting related to FR 4.1 is required, it should include all the needed elements (benchmarking, rationale, etc.)
- It could be encouraged, but not required.
- If programs are not required to include it, many will not.
- It might be helpful to encourage it the first year, and require it the second year.
- Keep the number of learning outcomes at 5, but one must address 4.1.

Based on discussion today, Kathryn Lowery will reword and provide an updated draft for consideration. Members can review materials in the UAC Dropbox related to FR 4.1 and are encouraged to send additional feedback to Ms. Lowery.

5.0 *Administrative Assessment*

Ms. Lowery thanked administrative assessment members for their continued work. Reports for administrative units in the calendar year cycle are due January 31.

6.0 *Meeting Adjourned*

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 pm. The next meeting will be February 27, 2013 in the Liberal Arts Building, Room 209. All meetings are held on Wednesdays from 12:00 – 1:00.