

The University of Southern Mississippi
University Assessment Committee Minutes
February 19, 2014

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) met at 12:00 p.m. on February 19, 2014, in the Speaking Center, Cook Library, Room 117, with Kelly Lester, Chair of the UAC, presiding.

The following voting members were present: Deborah Booth, Elizabeth Haynes, Ann Marie Kinnell, Joohee Lee, Kelly Lester, Sarah Mangrum, Doug Masterson, Peggy McArthur, Gwen Pate, Kathy Pendergras, Joe Peyrefitte, Avonelle Pugh, Jennifer Regan, Charles Tardy, Yen To, Donna Valestro, Ellen Weinauer, and Ursula Whitehead

The following non-voting members were present: Kathryn Lowery (Director of Institutional Effectiveness) and Bill Powell (Associate Provost)

The following guests were present: Julie Howdeshell (Director of Quality Enhancement)

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 reminded members that next month's meeting includes the election of a new chair. This is her second, consecutive year to serve and she is not eligible to serve as chair next year. If members have questions about the role of chair, please feel free to contact her. Ms. Lester also presented the agenda for the meeting and the minutes from the last meeting. One modification was noted for the minutes (Recommendation 37 should be 3.7) and the minutes were approved.

2.0 Committee Liaison Reports

Academic Council – Dr. Doug Masterson reported that Academic Council is having two meetings this month due to the large number of proposals. President Bennett and Provost Wiesenburg shared information with the Council February 10 regarding the student success and retention needs and recommendations for improvement. Some of the recommendations require Academic Council action and Associate Provost Bill Powell has outlined those for review by Academic Council.

Faculty Senate – Student success and retention are being emphasized at the Faculty Senate meetings.

QEP - The Call for Proposals is underway and will run through Feb. 26. The QEP Topic Selection Task Force met and discussed recommendations by its sub-committees regarding the evaluation of the proposals and ways to receive feedback on the proposals.

Staff Council: Dr. Peggy McArthur reported that Staff Council is holding two fundraisers.

3.0 Old Business -Continued Discussion of Administrative Unit Assessment Policies

Kathryn Lowery distributed working drafts of the Administrative Unit Assessment Policies. Sections A-D have already been approved; however, there are a few edits that have been recommended:

1. Change "SACS" to "SACSCOC" (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools)
2. Change "policy" to "Principles of Accreditation"
3. Delete wording in italics. (This was present as a descriptor while the specific wording was being developed.)
4. Since some units may overlap categories, units will be categorized based on primary function

5. Delete “all” under Research since the Institute of Disability Studies reports to the VP Research but is categorized as a community/public service unit
6. Delete the term “campus” when referring to Gulf Coast.
7. Section F will be edited to read “Educational Support Units include Provost units (including similar Gulf Coast units), Vice President for Student Affairs units, units reporting to the VP Gulf Park, and Special Assistant to the President for Military and Veterans Students Affairs.”

Dr. Powell suggested that the wording of the policies allow for changes in the organizational chart where feasible.

The UAC voted to approve the changes. Kathryn Lowery will send policies to the respective Vice President for review.

4.0 *New Business*

Kathryn Lowery shared the results of the UAC Program-level Assessment Reviews. Despite a trend in the reduction of programs with a “Does not support or No report” rating, the percentage in this category rose from 9% to 19% this year. Thirteen of the 17 not submitting a report were from the same college and had historically had assessment participation. Also, one department with a large number of programs (in another college) developed assessment plans independent of guidance from Institutional Effectiveness and their assessment plans were not written in a way that could yield strong assessment reports.

There were eighteen departments with at least one program receiving a rating of Inadequate, Does not support, or No Report two years in a row (2011-12 and 2012-13) out of 47 departments. Five of those departments have had meetings with Institutional Effectiveness this academic year.)

Associate Provost Bill Powell stated that failure to submit a report or submitting reports that do not support guidelines is unacceptable. UAC members discussed reasons for the change in results and what actions could be taken to make improvements. Reasons for the change may stem from inclusion of certificate programs, more stringent reviews (as evidenced by some programs consistently at the commended or adequate levels moving to inadequate), and changes of leadership in some departments and colleges. Recommendations included separating degree programs and certificates, establishing a consequence like the General Education Curriculum Assessment Committee (GECAC) has in considering inadequate assessment in the hearing of proposals, requiring training, using the “remediation” terminology and process used by the GECAC, clarifying the responsibility of deans and chairs in ensuring assessment, and sending communication from the UAC to the University’s leadership. The Provost, deans, and chairs already receive a summary of the ratings by college. At the time of the establishment of the UAC policy regarding academic program participation, the UAC also recommended future consideration of (1) inclusion of the UAC process in the prioritization process used by the University Priorities Committee, and (2) incorporation of successful completion of assessment documentation in performance evaluations of those department chairs and program coordinators responsible and of their respective deans.

After much discussion, Ms. Lester asked the members to come to the next meeting with recommendations as to how to improve the results of the reviews.

5.0 *Meeting Adjourned*

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Upcoming meetings are scheduled as follows from noon to 1 p.m.: March 19 – International Center (IC) 318, April 23 – Thad Cochran TBA (Assessment Showcase). The March meeting will include the election of the new UAC chair.