

**The University of Southern Mississippi**  
**University Assessment Committee Minutes**  
**September 25, 2013**

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) met at 12:00 p.m. on September 25, 2013 in the Speaking Center in Cook Library, with Kelly Lester, Chair of the UAC, presiding.

The following voting members were present: Deborah Booth, Phil Carlan, Kenny Christensen, Elizabeth Haynes, Dawn Higdon, Ann Marie Kinnell, Michael King, Joohee Lee, Jim Lambers, Kelly Lester, Sarah Mangrum, Peggy McArthur, Gwen Pate, Kathy Pendergras, Joe Peyrefitte, Jennifer Regan, Chuck Tardy, Yen To, Donna Valestro, and Ellen Weinauer, Ursula Whitehead

The following non-voting members were present: Kathryn Lowery

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 at noon. Ms. Lester presented the agenda for the meeting and the minutes from the last meeting held March 27. Both were approved by the UAC.

*2.0 Committee Liaison Reports*

QEP – Julie Howdeshell

The QEP Topic Selection Task Force held its first meeting September 4 and will be developing the process for the selection of the next Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as part of University's reaffirmation of accreditation slated for 2016.

Staff Council – Peggy McArthur

The Staff Council has set up an endowment for scholarships and is working on a project to support needy families in the community.

*3.0 Old Business*

Update on Program Level Student Achievement Outcomes

Last year, the UAC voted to approve new guidelines requiring 4 learning outcomes and one program objective instead of 5 learning outcomes. The change is due, in part, to SACS requirement 4.1 regarding student achievement. The new guideline was announced at the Assessment Showcase. Some questions have emerged since that time, such as how to define graduation rates or retention/persistence. In the coming months, these will be more defined to reflect university-wide definitions/formulas. In reviewing the reports you may see that some of them have already incorporated the new guidelines. For this year, it is acceptable to have five student learning outcomes or 4 student learning outcomes plus 1 program objective. A reminder will be sent for units to update their plans to meet the new guidelines.

*4.0 New Business*

Kathryn Lowery shared that SACS has updated the Resource Manual. Members are encouraged to read Comprehensive Standards 3.3.1 thoroughly. The standard is broken into categories, such as educational programs, administrative support services, academic and student support services, research within mission, and community/public service within mission.

### Administrative Unit Assessment Report Review Schedule and Assignments

Administrative assessment reports are due September 30 and will be posted October 8 for review. Administrative assessment will be in the Info Center by VP area. The review rubric is also posted in Info Center and units are encouraged to use the review rubric to self-assess their reports prior to submission. Also listed are relevant standards that are required in the University's Compliance Certification due in September 2015.

Kathryn Lowery will send an email to UAC administrative members regarding their assignments on October 9. Specific instructions and the rubric are in each administrative member's folder.

### Academic Program Assessment Report Review Schedule and Assignments

Based on feedback of the membership, the rubric now has the score and comments box at the far right and a text box for comments. There are also more distinctions between scoring levels for the annual report. For those of you who are new to the committee, you are also to provide an overall evaluation of the report. For an assessment report to be commended, it must be a "shining example." Commended reports are posted online.

Academic reports are due September 30. On October 1, the reports will be downloaded from Weave, put into Word documents, and added to Dropbox. Reviews are due November 6.

Academic assessment uses a 2-phase review system. In the first phase, members will review programs outside their area. In the second phase, members will review programs within their areas. (Administrative assessment uses a one-phase review given the number of units involved.)

A UAC member asked about action plans given the reporting cycle. Since this year 1, reports do not have to have action plans for this year and should not be penalized for not having action plans.

### Plans for the Coming Year

One of the projects for the UAC for this academic year is to further define the areas of SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1: educational programs, administrative support services, academic and student support services, research, and community/public service.

### Additional Questions – Certificates and Minors

Ann Marie Kinnell asked about the status of certificates and minors. Kathryn Lowery responded that reports are due for certificates and minors for the 2013-14 year.

## 6.0 Meeting Adjourned

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Upcoming meetings are scheduled as follows:

November 6 – International Center (IC) 318  
December 4 – International Center (IC) 318  
January 22 – International Center (IC) 318  
February 19 – Speaking Center (Cook Library 117)  
March 19 – International Center (IC) 318  
April 23 – Thad Cochran TBA (Assessment Showcase)