University Assessment Committee Report
May 2, 2023

Committee members: 2022-2023
- *Faculty*: Jenice Winowiecki, Lisa Meny, Heather Pavletic, Greg Wellman, Michelle Weemaes, Lillian Kalaczinski, Katie M Kalata (Chair)
- *Ex officio*: Mandy R Seiferlein (AA), Stoney Hart, Victor Piercey (Gen. Ed.), Nicholas Campau, Megan Biller (ending March 4)

Committee's activity summary for 2022-23.

Major activities:
- *Policies and Procedures:* The handbook and operating manuals were both updated at the end of Spring 2022, allowing the committee to start implementation of the process in Fall 2023. The policies and procedures in the handbook and operating manual were reviewed in Fall/Spring. The UAC did not recommend any changes in the Spring, as they are waiting to see what happens with the new UAS (University Assessment Software) selection.
- *Schedule:* In the previous year, the UAC met every other week on Wednesdays 9:00 -1:00 via Zoom. This year the UAC committee met weekly, this year with most of the Fall meetings spent reviewing UCC proposals.
- *Committee Activities*: In the Fall, the UAC developed and implemented an internal process using SharePoint and Microsoft Forms to collect data on Form B consults.
- *Mid-APR Reviews:* In the Spring expanded a similar internal process to the mid-APR pilot reviews. Collecting review data using Forms, improved the turnaround time for the committee. The UAC reviews the 4-column course assessment, 4-column program assessment and curriculum map and makes recommendation on actions to improve assessment before the program begins the process of APR. Closing the loop shows that we are 'improving' student learning!
- *Web Site:* The new web site was created and populated with assessment information, including information on the expectations and standards for course and program assessment, based on best practices defined in the operating manual.
- *UAC Forms:* The transition from using UCC to UAC documentation required additional assistance over the first two months, as proposals carried over from 2022 and new proposals did not use the UAC forms. Proposals that did not use the UAC forms often had learning outcomes that were clear, and used appropriate action verbs and measurable. However, most of these proposals were completely missing the assessment methods, criterion for success and assessment schedule and also course mapping for program proposals. The UAC publicized the new forms and worked with the UCC worked to include the forms in the UCC web site as well as on the UAC web site. By implementing the UAC forms, the UAC saw a quick turnaround, with programs having all four items implemented in course and program assessment.

- *Budget*: There is no budget allocation for this committee. The current Chair is given ¼ release time, which while adequate for the current year. However, the committee members recommended and voted that the release time should be set at ½ release time, as there is no administrative support for this committee and the expectation is that the reviews in the following years will increase, as well as the need for additional support with mid-APR consultations, and support with the new UAS. Assessment at the unit level can be very different as accreditation requirements vary greatly. The committee work goes well beyond the UAC meetings as the Chair and committee members also act as the face of assessment within their units and colleges, where they communicate with faculty, publicize the UAC activities and procedures, and advocate for assessment best practices. Often transitioning to a university-wide assessment policy and process can be difficult in a large, public university. At Ferris State University, it is due to the work of the committee members that the UAC has been successful in implementation of a university-wide policy on assessment as well as the support of the academic units, UCC/APR and Academic Affairs.
- *Awards*: While there was an assessment award, no one was nominated for the award, despite the extended time. As the UAC would be evaluating the awards, it would be biased and awkward if the UAC/Chair would nominate individuals/units. The UAC recognizes that many individuals and units are doing phenomenal work with assessment of their courses and programs. With the new UAS, the committee will be able to 'pull data' from the system to help provide information that can help in the nomination of individuals and units for the award next year.
- *Collaboration with Programs:* The UAC Chair has worked collaboratively with academic programs consulting with them on getting ready for the assessment portion of the APR. The UAC would encourage programs to work with the UAC as they develop proposals and get ready for the assessment portions within the APR.

The Assessment Software Replacement
- The University Assessment System (assessment software) is Nuventive Improve. The software is outdated for the demands of today's academic environment and the training in the software is from 2010. Faculty have challenges using the software as they change roles, and new faculty are brought on board. This license expires in the fall.
- Academic Affairs under the leadership of Mandy Seiferlein, an Assessment Software Committee was established with membership representation from many academic as well as non-academic areas throughout the university. There are 4 UAC committee members participating on this committee.
- RFPs were posted, and 7 proposals received from a number of vendors. With extensive discussions throughout the university and with this committee, scorecards were developed and used by the committee to review the proposals. Based on the scorecards and discussions, the committee selected vendors to present their products to the campus in open meetings in March.

The entire campus was invited and included to these meetings. Four assessment software vendors provided 1 ½ hour demonstrations of their assessment software products to the campus over Zoom. Feedback from attendees was collected and will be reviewed. The software vendors demonstrated provided a variety of different features which included not only course and program assessment, but also varying levels of other features and support for general education, accreditation, and more. Vendors discussed their ability to collect, impot/export, analyze and report data in meaningful ways using dashboards and tools, aggregating data and disaggregating data using demographics and other characteristics, as well as the ability to integrate with Banner, Canvas and other systems.

- Now that all the vendors have presented, the Assessment Software Committee and Academic Affairs will be moving forward to the next steps, including selection, configuration and implementation of the system and other related activities.
- Improve continues to be the University Assessment System used by the UAC to review program and course assessments until the new system is implemented.

Discussion:

- As mentioned, the challenges of implementation of the UAC Assessment Plan Forms, were quickly overcome as the UAC and UCC worked collaboratively and the UAC worked to get the information out to use the new forms. This has improved the completion of the Assessment Plans on proposals, which is necessary and important for beginning the process of documentation of course and program assessment and communication of the plan to program faculty, especially for faculty teaching the courses. Many of the questions the UAC receives are about getting help with upcoming APR reviews (within 1 year or less). Currently, the UAC is working on pre-reviews 3 years before APR.

- While the bulk of the committee has chosen to remain on the committee, most of the faculty on the UAC are not interested in the leadership role, as the workload is too heavy on top of their own workload. The UAC faculty committee members are highly experienced on academic assessments and accreditations. While APR currently has a heavier load on reviewing APR reports, much of that report is assessment. This position should be at the same level as APR.

- With the growing concerns of how to collect, improve and report assessment data within APR, assessment criteria should be clarified and a path to improve assessment in APR process. When changes and criteria are used, the UAC and APR need to work together to provide a common set of criteria and expectations.

- The Chair and UAC members are one of the ways to share assessment best practices with the academic and non-academic units. While the companies provide training, many of them are train-the-trainer. The Chair and UAC should be trained the new system as this will have many more features and capabilities. They can be the point of contact for questions from the units and programs. Our faculty need to know how to use the tools in both effective and efficient

ways for their units based on their needs which can be accomplished with the vendor. For example, some accreditation, general education and others may need specific configuration within the system as they will need to use the system in different ways.

- Faculty also need to know how to use the tools for the assessment reporting which can be used ongoing for assessment as well as for APR and to document improvement of student learning. When the UAC identified criteria for the mid-APR reviews, there were approved rubrics for assessment within the APR documentation. This year APR began the process of developing a rubric. Having different rubrics and expectations is going to be a challenge for faculty and programs. Faculty and programs will need time, to adapt their current teaching and assessment practices to whatever procedures and rubrics are in place.

- While assessment of assessment, 'could' be something performed within Academic Affairs, that process would be more challenging as the expertise on the assessment within the units and their needs, lie within the faculty that teach the courses and programs. The Academic Senate values the input and collaboration with academic and non-academic areas, and Academic Affairs.

Recommendations:

- The UAC committee will continue to meet on Wednesday mornings (9:00 – 10:00).

- The UAC is continuing to review UCC Form B consults to ensure all new proposals have adequate and complete Assessment Plans, as well as conduct pre-APR reviews.

- The UAC will be working next year on updating their standards, policies and procedures and discovering ways faculty can use these tools to help improve assessment planning and reporting to help units improve assessment before they go up through APR and the additional changes that might result from having a new UAS as there will be new opportunities.

- The APR schedule, needs for APR extensions and program closing changes, make it a challenge to plan for the effective use of the committee and chair's time. The UAC will continue to work with APR and UCC to coordinate efforts to identify the correct schedule each term.

- The UAC committee members recommended that the chair should be a .5 release time which would help improve university wide assessment:
  a. This would allow the Chair more time for activities outside of the normal scope such as working with APR & UCC and to take advantage of the training and opportunities with the new UAS system.
  b. The UAC would like to work with the APR to have a common set of criteria and guidelines for assessment. This will help delineate the expectations of assessment portions on the UAC Pre-APR reviews and the APR final reviews.

c. The UAC and APR should continue to work together to identify consistent ways to use the use the Assessment software with the new reports, and develop consistent criteria to improve course learning, and the "assessment of assessment of student learning".

d. All of this will require substantive understanding and training on the new assessment software for the UAC members and Chair.

Respectfully submitted,

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