University-Wide Assessment Committee
Student Learning
May 2, 2012
2:00 p.m., EHFA 164

Members Present: John Beard (Chair), Ellen Arnold, Teresa Burns, Kristal Curry, Judy Engelhard, Dodi Hodges, Michael Latta, Jim Luken, Vivian McCain, John Steen, Deborah Vrooman

Members Absent: Tom Hoffman, Chris Mee, Carol Osborne, Brianne Parker, Nelljean Rice, Barbara Ritter, Josh Vossler, Dennis Wiseman

Guests: Frances Richmond (for Brianne Parker)

I. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

John Beard, Chair, convened the meeting at 2:00 p.m. in EHFA 164 and welcomed all present to the last committee meeting of the 2011-12 academic year. The minutes from the meeting on April 4, 2012 were part of the packet distributed to all attendees. The Chair asked if any modifications to the minutes were recommended. A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was offered by Deborah Vrooman, seconded by Mike Latta, and approved by the committee.

II. Overview of Assessment Practices in Graduate Programs

- Dr. Jim Luken, Associate Provost and Director of Graduate Studies

As Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Luken was tasked with reviewing assessment reports for all graduate programs across all colleges. Today’s presentation began with a high level overview and discussion of the major data gathering instruments used by each program.

College of Business/MBA: All graduates of this program are required to take the MBA major field test. Six areas of competence are tested using this tool. Last year major revisions occurred in the MBA program in response to the data gathered through the major field test.

College of Education/M.Ed. Educational Leadership: All graduates of the program take the Praxis II exam. This exam is required for graduates to be licensed to teach. The department uses the results for assessment.

College of Education/M.Ed. Learning and Teaching: The Action Research Project Capstone is used in order to identify program strengths and weaknesses. A standardized rubric is used in the assessment process.

College of Education/MAT: Multiple measures are used for assessing this program; specifically the Summative Internship Observation and the Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT). Students are required to pass the PLT prior to graduation.

College of Humanities/MA Writing: Due to the newness of the program, not much assessment
information is available. The major is part of the English department and all assessment is done by English faculty. In lieu of a thesis, all candidates are enrolled in the major writing project class (6 credits). In addition, a writing portfolio is required and undergoes a prescribed assessment process.

College of Science/M.S. Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies: Students of this program are required to write a thesis, the defense of which is assessed. A variety of learning outcomes are assessed as they relate to the thesis.

As a result of examining the assessment process across all programs several conclusions were reached and issues identified. In terms of defining student learning outcomes and developing assessment tools, the process runs smoother if the major is associated with one department (English/MA Writing) as opposed to several (Biology & Marine Science/Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies).

Additional issues concerning graduate programs that have yet to be resolved include:

- Structuring each program and deciding whether they will be managed by coordinators, directors or chairs. There are inconsistencies between most programs.
- Faculty roles in assessment are not clearly defined and compensation for taking on these roles has yet to be determined.
- Use of assessment results.

III. Discussion of Possible Committee Recommendations

Included with the meeting materials was a list of recommendations as submitted by the committee members. This list served as the basis for discussing the direction of the committee for the 2012-2013 academic year. Suggestions included:

- Integrate curricula between majors, minors and concentrations
- Identify the need for developing common skills (reading, critical thinking) across all curricula
- Develop a mechanism for identifying programs that are models for assessment
- Discuss modifications (tweaks) to the existing TEAL Online program and/or changes to current deadlines
- Get to the heart of student learning. Identify how we “make the leap” and improve what we do in order to insure our students are learning.

IV. Announcements or for the Good of the Order

None

V. Adjourn

Committee members were encouraged to consider the recommendations discussed today and send additional input to Chair Beard within the next week. With no further agenda items to address, the meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.