University-Wide Assessment Committee
Student Learning
December 7, 2011
2:00 p.m., 120 Arcadia Hall

Members Present: John Beard (Chair), Ellen Arnold, Teresa Burns, Judy Engelhard, Dodi Hodges, Tom Hoffman, Michael Latta, Jim Luken, Vivian McCain, Chris Mee, Carol Osborne, Brianne Parker, Nelljean Rice, Barbara Ritter, John Steen

Members Absent: Josh Vossler, Deborah Vrooman

I. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

John Beard, Chair, convened the meeting at 2:05 p.m. in 120 Arcadia Hall and welcomed all present.

Meeting Minutes:

The minutes from the meeting on November 2, 2011, 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 Teresa Burns, seconded by Carol Osborne, and approved by the committee.

II. Responses to Distributed Rubric Evaluations – Packets from all colleges were sent to committee members. Individual college representatives (Deans, Assistant/Associate Deans, and Department Chairs) received results for their college only. These results will hopefully be beneficial as individuals review their own assessment plans and may make use of the feedback provided. Chairman Beard discussed the consistency of the rubrics within and between colleges and shared this is something that would have been better if the individual committees had more time to discuss and consolidate their feedback. The feedback, however, was still deemed helpful and was submitted “as is.”

A. What Was the Response in Your Own Area? – Chairman Beard shared that he had not personally received input after the feedback was distributed. Michael Latta indicated the feedback he received was that of faculty dismay, and he indicated that the lack of a “culture of assessment” may be a factor in the less-than-favorable evaluation of his college’s assessment reports. Barbara Ritter concurred and indicated there is such a focus with AACSB accreditation, alone, that the SACS focus is sometimes lost. Chris Mee pointed out that without SACS reaffirmation, it doesn’t matter if we have other accreditations. Teresa Burns received informal feedback regarding the assessment timeline of the yearly assessment plans and reports, and how it is sometimes difficult to incorporate the feedback in a useful and timely way. It was agreed that being successfully accredited is paramount, but assessment activities should be viewed as processes that are always being engaged in despite the accreditation schedules. The College of Science has discussed moving up deadlines internally in order to facilitate discussion and decrease the practice of making the Chairs solely responsible for all assessment activities. The College of Humanities’ committee results were similar to the internal assessment results of the college.

B. Review Sheet of Typical Comments – A worksheet compiled by Chairman Beard was included as part of the packet. In creating this sheet, he was looking for frequency of similar comments and feedback that departments could actually use in future assessment efforts. Over time, there has been confusion regarding certain aspects of the assessment plans, such as who is responsible for the data collection and assessment (chairs and/or others?) as well as how the data is reported (percentages or averages?). It was agreed a model of an exemplary report would be helpful. It was also agreed that the Analysis of Results section most frequently elicited feedback, and it was apparent that many are still unclear as to how to perform the analysis and detail was often lacking. Use of results was lacking substance in many cases with reports indicating “all goals met” repeatedly with no further explanation or the setting of any new goals.
C. Timing of Feedback – Despite the tight deadline, this committee did well in providing meaningful input to departments prior to Thanksgiving thus giving them time to consider the feedback prior to the midpoint of the academic year.

III. Updates Concerning SACS Response to CCU’s Self-Study

A. Reported Non-Compliance of Standard 3.3.1 – The Report of the Reaffirmation Committee included in the packet did not include an excess of standards needing further explanation and/or evidence; however, one standard (Standard 3.3.1.1 – Educational Programs) is of particular concern to this committee. The report indicated instances of lack of evidence, poorly explained evidence, and unavailable files that were not found or could not be opened. It is the University’s responsibility to address the items discussed in this report. Chris Mee in the Office of Institutional Research is primarily responsible for collecting additional evidence where required and answering the points outlined in the report. Our SACS Liaison indicated all points must be addressed. Chris indicated that the line “The institution has not demonstrated that it uses the results of assessment for improvement in all its academic programs” is of particular concern.

B. Responses to Non-Compliance of Standard 3.3.1 - Actions taken in the use of results for continuous improvement by all academic departments must be explained. As this information is not available for some areas, the University may end up having to submit a monitoring report for the academic areas. A monitoring report may consist of annual reports to SACS outlining progress in the areas of concern. We have four appropriate departmental examples that will be included in our response; however, we simply don’t have evidence of change in more than a few academic programs. A discussion ensued concerning change made outside of the context of assessment goals identified through TEAL Online. Some change is effected that deals more with program goals than with student learning outcomes, and it was questioned whether these changes could be used to support our case. Although program goals are important, it was stated that the focus remains on student learning outcomes. The evaluation rubrics completed by this committee will be included in our response in order to bolster our case that action is being taken. Lastly, Chris Mee and Dodi Hodges are going to put together a schedule to include training sessions that will provide faculty the opportunity to become better skilled in assessment activities. The response is due to the committee on or before January 10, 2012.

C. On-Campus SACS Visit in March – The SACS Reaffirmation Committee will be on campus March 6-8, 2012. This team is not the same group who read our self-study report. The interview schedule will be available after the first of the year, and Chris Mee will work with those on the list and conduct mock interviews in preparation for the visit.

IV. Upcoming Due Dates – Several upcoming dates were brought to the committee’s attention.

A. Executive Summary (Deans) Due January 30, 2012

B. 2012-13 Assessment Plans Due March 15, 2012

V. Adjourn

With no further agenda items to address, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. The next committee meeting is scheduled for January 4, 2012.