

Meeting Notes
Accreditation Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, October 10, 2013, 2 pm, MTC Ballroom

Participants: David Baker (*External Affairs*), Matt Bauer (*College of Science*), Ralph Brill (*Chicago-Kent*), Siva Balasubramanian (Chair, *Stuart School of Business*), Carol Emmons (*Director of Assessment*), Noreen Kozak (Office of the Provost), Jamshid Mohammadi (*Graduate College*), John Kallend (*Armour College of Engineering*), Alan Mead (*Lewis College of Human Sciences*), Phil Troyk (*Armour College of Engineering*), John Twombly (*Stuart School of Business*), Charles Uth (*Galvin Library*), Alan Cramb (*Provost*).

1. Approval of Meeting Notes from 9/12/13 Meeting

Siva Balasubramanian opened the meeting by asking for approval of the meeting notes from the last meeting on September 12. A voice vote was taken, and all those present voted in favor of approving the version of the meeting notes distributed by Siva prior to the meeting.

2. Meeting with the new IIT Liaison at HLC.

Siva described his October 2 meeting with the new HLC liaison for IIT (Dr. Sunil Ahuja) who also recently assumed the role of VP of Accreditation at HLC.

Dr. Ahuja requested a summary presentation on IIT's current status with regard to assessment and other activities. After this presentation, he advised us to keep the assessment process very simple, especially at IIT schools/colleges that are new to this process.

At Siva's invitation, Dr. Ahuja agreed to visit with our Committee soon. He also agreed to review the latest draft version of the Quality Improvement Initiative document.

3. Assessment related discussions.

Following spirited discussion about assessment at the last Committee meeting, it was recommended that each School/College should have a Chief Assessment Coordinator to manage timely implementation of all assessment activities (evidence/data collection, analyses and continuous program improvement to improve learning outcomes). It was also recommended that each Program Assessment Coordinator in every School/College must attend Carol's Assessment workshop.

Since then, Siva has worked with the Deans to implement these recommendations.

Provost Cramb noted that an important accomplishment thus far was to establish a process for assessment. He also agreed with Dr. Ahuja's suggestion that it is very useful to keep the assessment process as simple as we can. Deans should understand the timelines, have appropriate people in place to manage the assessment process at their College.

Provost Cramb noted that there are parts of campus that are not engaged in assessment at all (for example, ABET is focused only on undergraduate programs, some programs within Lewis College were not being assessed).

Siva mentioned that the Committee also discussed extending the assessment focus to co-curricular (professional) activities. Provost Cramb suggested that we work with Dean Stetz, student leadership, and student clubs to develop appropriate learning objectives, instruments, rubrics etc.

4. Report of the Assessment Subcommittee:

Carol Emmons has conducted 16 sessions of the Assessment workshop since July. 23 faculty have participated thus far.

Based on the data available thus far on 141 programs, 60% of those programs stated that they had learning goals, but 70% of those submitted goals.

Carol has determined that only 28 of the 141 programs have learning goals that meet expectations.

Since the above data are from the survey conducted last spring, Siva asked whether the quantity/quality of learning goals improved after faculty attendance at assessment workshops that were offered since then. Carol mentioned that this improvement was observed in a few areas, notably Biology. With respect to all other programs, she is awaiting feedback/new data from the Chief Assessment Coordinators at each School/College.

With respect to curriculum maps, Carol noted that 8% of programs had submitted maps that met expectations. John Kallend asked Carol to define curriculum maps, and then noted that ABET had a different label for it. Jamshid observed that ABET required a matrix approach to determine that learning goals were achieved over the entire curriculum.

Matt observed that engineering programs are thinking they are doing everything right. The criteria for HLC may be different. He requested Carol to provide detailed feedback on the materials submitted by each program.

At Provost Cramb's request, Carol agreed to provide a list of all assessment coordinators who have not attended assessment workshops, along with names of coordinators who have not submitted their revised program learning goals and curriculum maps. This list will be sent back to Deans so they could get the information we need quickly.

Committee members noted that Carol provides opportunity to develop learning goals at her workshop. Have workshop participants submitted the goals they developed in the workshop, because that may improve the figures about assessment performance that Carol described earlier?

Carol clarified that participants have not submitted those goals to her. Siva asked whether, for all the goals that were submitted, do we know if the faculty from a particular school/College offering a particular program were involved in developing the learning goals? This was important because,

HLC has observed that learning goals constructed by one or few faculty (without widespread faculty involvement) could lead to longer term problems.

Jamshid noted that there has to be a formal process of approval of program goals. HLC says a typical problem is that faculty approvals are sometimes not in place, and it takes a year to sort this out. Carol will work with the Chief Assessment Coordinators to ensure that this problem does not arise.

The discussion then focused on vendors who provide assessment systems. The assessment subcommittee is developing a short list of vendors. Jim Meyer is currently discussing with vendors. Provost Cramb noted that any recommendations should be given to him as early as possible, given the current stage of the budget cycle. He also asked us to keep in mind that assessment process should be simple, so the assessment system should not be too costly or complicated.

John Kallend and Matt Bauer requested information on experiences of other institutions (comparable to IIT) who were currently using similar assessment systems. John Kallend noted that any assessment system implementation, from a timeframe perspective, may be too late for the ABET visit next fall.

5. Report of the Quality Improvement Initiative Subcommittee:

Charles noted that his subcommittee attempted to resolve the discrepancies between the two proposal versions, mainly in wording. He provided a summary description of the two proposals previously considered. The first proposal focused on using Degree Works to provide students guidance on sequence of courses, with the goal of improving retention and graduation rates.

The second proposal was designed to enhance student experience by moving IPROs into first year, and supplementing that experience with ITPs. The narrative in this proposal emphasized (a) problem-solving approach to learning, and (b) leveraging technology to improve student learning/performance and graduation rates.

As previously stated, Siva has agreed to forward a copy of the revised QII proposal document to Dr. Ahuja.

Anijo noted that it may be useful to convey a pictorial representation of the work completed thus far.

6. Report of the Administrative Criteria Subcommittee:

David noted that the Strategic Plan was blessed by the Board of Trustees with some minor changes.

David asked about HLC's Assurance System, and if it was accessible. Siva responded that HLC was addressing some glitches at this point. They were introducing this system for the first time, and given their lack of experience at doing this, they are being very careful with its release. Although Siva registered for the initial online training event, he has not been given access to this system yet despite repeated follow up. We expect that 15 folks on each campus will be given

access eventually, and each of them has to go through the online training exercise. Let us stay tuned.

Carol noted that HLC imposed a 35000 word limit for the final report to be submitted to HLC. There was discussion on whether we should impose word limits for each section of the final report document.

Siva noted that the 35000 word limit may not be a big constraint after all, because the Assurance system allows us to link to any number of external docs, so that is one way to convey a richer story without being limited to 35000 words to narrate our story.

7. Resource needs of the committee:

Siva presented a list of items that required resource support from Provost Cramb. First, the Assessment system (cost estimates to be worked out in conjunction with Jim Meyer). Provost Cramb asked Siva to forward the final estimate/chosen vendor, as a result of Committee deliberations.

Siva mentioned that all committee documents and deliberations should be made available at a IIT webpage, following the practice at universities that recently went through the NCA accreditation process. Matt asked if this should be a public website. Siva stated that the institutions he is familiar with all provided public/transparent access to the main documents, if not all documents. Alan suggested that Siva should discuss our requirements/expectations with Jeanie Hartig.

Siva noted Phil's recommendation at the last meeting to invite individuals familiar with the assessment process/assessment system? The motivation was to gain feedback from developers/institutions that have experience with the assurance system. Ralph felt that law school faculty will respond better to assessment if they heard from external experts on this topic. Ralph supported this idea, but other committee members felt that this may not be as advantageous.

Matt felt that, at a fundamental level, our faculty need to see the benefit from assessment.

Carol observed that we need to move from a culture of compliance with assessment requirements to a culture that embraces assessment enthusiastically. She had witnessed the latter at her recent visit to Marquette University. HLC says it will take couple of years of data collection/review for us to get to that tipping point.

David wanted to know when the assessment data collection be launched? Siva and Carol indicated that this will be done as soon as possible. The deans have been provided a timeline to get this done.

Matt appreciated that Carol had developed a rubric to assess the quality of assessment process itself (the program goals, the measurement items and rubrics). Matt felt that Carol's evaluation of assessment instruments with a rubric is a very useful beginning, even if the outcomes look bad, it is a great starting point. In response to Ralph's earlier comment, Carol offered to visit the law school to offer a customized assessment workshop there.

Provost Cramb observed that it is was an effective approach to visit each School/College to work with faculty and program assessment coordinators there.

Carol observed that Marquette University has a great structure in place to promote faculty involvement in assessment. They have an assessment process that is driven by Deans. They also have a well established calendar of assessment events.

Matt asked if they published their success stories because that may be very important to promote faculty involvement. John Kallend suggested that in his experience, it was very useful to ask faculty to think about what happened in each semester and make a verbal report the next semester. The faculty learned a great deal and were excited by this simple process.

8. Other items:

Anijo asked if NCA is it bothered about the quality of assessment, as much as about the quantity of assessment.

Carol noted that NCA's focus is on best practices, and for us to demonstrate that we are improving student learning through assessment.

As previously discussed, they are also looking for simplicity in assessment.

Siva noted Dr. Ahuja's observation that during NCA visits, the teams always discover that there is heterogeneity in the sophistication level of the assessment process. That is, some programs are doing an excellent job on assessment, and others are a rudimentary level of development. Dr. Ahuja mentioned that this heterogeneity is better than having even one program on campus that is not involved at all in the assessment process.

Carol felt that a good enough version of assessment implementation is desirable. We do not need have the perfect implementation, but we need to demonstrate that we are on a path to improvement.

Alan Mead observed that no one talks about improving teaching at national conferences because all presenters are so focused on research. John Kallend observed that in mentoring exercises at Engineering schools, there is undue emphasis on research and not on teaching. These biases may not be conducive to student learning, or to faculty enthusiasm toward assessment activities. Carol felt that IIT should hopefully establish a teaching and learning center in the future.

Anijo felt that it may be useful to prepare video segments of faculty talking about assessment in enthusiastic terms. We could showcase these videos to highlight differences in assessment activities at different Colleges/Schools. Anijo felt that video/graphical representation may reduce complexity, and that is aligned with what HLC wants.

Meeting adjourned.