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Meeting Notes
Institutional Assessment Discussion Group
Two Meetings

October 6, 2006, 10:00 AM

-or-

October 13, 2006, 8:30 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT

October 6:

Carr, Becky
Farnsworth, Charles
Haisler, Walter E.
Loudder, Marty
Meyer, Paul
Perry, Bill
Phillips, Loraine
Rogers, Kenita

October 13:

Feigenbaum, Leslie
Gilreath, Charles
Kirkpatrick, Sam
Kubena, Karen (Sent a substitute)
Matthews, Pamela
Meyer, Paul
Perry, Bill
Phillips, Loraine
Schielack, Jane

Both meetings were called to order by Dr. Paul Meyer.

An overview of Institutional Assessment that has been reviewed by the Deans was presented to both groups. This document can be found at http://assessment.tamu.edu/asmt/asmt_overview.pdf. Dr. Perry stressed adherence to the “Constitution” or “Executive Summary” and that this document serves as a non-negotiable.

A key element in assessment is that it must be faculty driven. The Texas A&M University Preparation for SACS Accreditation: Executive Summary is the seminal document (constitution) for framing action. A key sentence in the Executive Summary comes from the first bullet on page 3 – “Every academic program would articulate program and student learning outcomes developed by faculty in the program and approved by the department and college”. This process and reporting should be systematic.

The service role of the Office of Institutional Assessment (OIA) was discussed as a way to support faculty in the work of assessment.

The Discussion Group was also provided Assessment Plan Reports from 1). The University of Central Florida Molecular Biology & Microbiology, 2). Oklahoma State University Departments of English and History, and 3). an Assessment Matrix from the University of Virginia. These examples demonstrate 1).

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Statement of program mission, 2). Identification of student learning outcomes, 3). Description of assessment method, 4). Data results, 5). Description of how results are used to improve the program.

Marty Loudder explored program definitions. What is a Program? How do we frame the description of a degree – BBA, not BBA in Accounting? To what extent is there duplication of effort/work between professional and SACS accreditation? How does the Core Curriculum relate to Program descriptions?

Charles Farnsworth noted bullet 3, page 3 of the Executive Summary – “Assessment reports would do a more thorough job of documenting how assessment is used to improve the quality of academic programs”. Assessment (in the more general sense) could encompass undergraduate, professional, and graduate programs and regardless should compliment Program Reviews.

Marty Loudder expressed that the list of competencies for TAMU students needs to be made available for external constituents. The QEP matches well with these competencies.

Sam Kirkpatrick voiced the idea that assessment reporting needs a “format”. SACS is looking for program changes. There may some advantages in developing a “common” format for reporting these program changes. Colleges must use some form of reporting and work through a “cycle” of evaluation to demonstrate the University has a systematic process for assessment. It would be helpful for the Institution to provide a “handbook”, with examples.

Pam Matthews submitted to the Group that the Mission should come first and wherever possible, “baby steps” might make the whole assessment process less onerous to faculty.

Sam Kirkpatrick emphasized that the whole assessment process begs the question about “cycles” and suggested the importance of faculty attitude and institution pervasiveness.