Minutes
Assessment Oversight Committee
November 13, 2006

Present: Carol Sue Butts (Provost), Shane Drefcinski (Assessment coordinator, Undergraduate Curriculum Commission), Mohaninder Gill (EMS), Peter Hadorn (LAE), Annie Kinwa-Muzinga (BILSA), Tom Lo Guidice (LAE), Amanda Trewin (BILSA, APC Representative), Qi Yang (EMS)

Guests: Paula Nelson

Absent: Carlos Wiley (Student Affairs Representative), (Faculty Senate Representative), (Student Senate Representative)

1. Approval of October 23, 2006 Minutes.
   Need to change time of adjournment to 5:10 P.M.
   Move to approve minutes as modified by Peter Hadorn. Seconded by Mohan Gill.

2. Announcements
   Mark Miu is the new Institutional Researcher. Mark can assist with student exit survey-analysis of results. Shane agreed to work with Mark to get some analysis up and on website before HLC visit (December 4, 2006)

3. History Program
   Paula Nelson, Department of Social Sciences Chair presented the Assessment Review for History. The Assessment Review provides status of their assessment plan. Learning outcomes are closely related to one another. This is because they are closely integrated with one another (don’t stand alone). Proposed solutions for all three outcomes are identified, but these too overlap as the learning outcomes are so integrated.

   Core of knowledge not applicable for history. Students complete varied curriculum. The student’s understanding of methodology more important. The goal is to get the student to understand the past on its own terms.

   Carol Sue Butts expressed concern that assessment loop not closed (i.e. it isn’t clear how teaching will be modified based on assessment outcome). Will proposed solutions be applied the next semester.

   Tom Lo Guidice comments that endeavor of teaching/learning history cannot be taken apart and make sense. Assessment forced on us by HLC. No evidence to indicate that this analysis followed by changes improves learning. Process of measuring/assessing learning outcome can provide insight.
Peter Hadorn commented that students learn how to approach study of history by completing history curriculum (not historical facts).

Paula Nelson agreed and stated that history is the study of what it means to be human in a different time and place. Through study of history, students gain “wisdom” that cannot easily be learned otherwise.

Peter Hadorn comments that assignments may actually have no effect. He stated that one professor’s teaching style could be inspirational and that it is this that makes the student pay attention and therefore learn. Assessment has now way to measure this factor.

Paula agrees and states that assignments are chosen because faculty thinks that the assignment will attract the students’ attention and the assignment will therefore enhance learning. Assignments also facilitate practice and repeated practice helps students master concepts. Teaching though is in part an art. Some elements of teaching can be learned. The history faculty try to work through issues.

Carol Sue Butts questioned how program will know five years down the road if students are meeting learning outcomes.

Shane Drefcinski suggested the use of departmental rubric. This may allow faculty to see trends over time. A narrative explaining individual characteristics of a class should be added to the report.

Shane Drefcinski also suggested possibly using student electronic portfolios to assess progress as move through curriculum.

Motion to receive history assessment document by Tom Lo Guidice.

4. Higher Learning Commission Visit: December 4-6
Report by Shane Drefcinski.
HLC visit will be December 4-6. The visit will be from an 8-member team.

Shane Drefcinski provided some background information.
HLC accreditation is important, in part, because without it our students would be ineligible for federal loans. During their visit, HLC will focus on five criterion, as stated in the distributed HLC document.

There will be an open-forum for the HLC team to meet with faculty on Tuesday, December 5 at 4:00 P.M. in the Student Center. Faculty, representing various government groups (including Assessment Oversight Committee), are encouraged to attend.
At the conclusion of the HLC visit, the team will provide a preliminary exit report. They will make recommendations concerning accreditation/non-accreditation.

Shane stresses that a lot has changed since the last HLC visit. At the level of the HLC, their focus on assessment is new. At UWP, 80% of faculty have been on campus less than ten years.

5. Adjournment.
   Peter Hadorn motions to adjourn.
   Meeting adjourns at 5:10 P.M.