Assessment Oversight Committee
Minutes
February 25, 2008
4:15 p.m. 1510 Ullsvik Hall

Present: Carol Sue Butts (Provost), Ben Collins (Faculty Senate Representative), Shane Drefcinski (Assessment coordinator, Undergraduate Curriculum Commission Representative), Mohan Gill (EMS), Peter Hadorn (LAE), Marge Karsten (BILSA), Matthew Roberts (EMS), Amanda Trewin (BILSA, APC Representative), and Carlos Wiley (Student Affairs Representative),

Absent: Tom Lo Guidice (LAE), (Student Senate Representative)

Guests: Dennis Ciesielski (will replace Peter starting next meeting due to schedule conflict, Stephanie Branson (English)

1. Approve minutes of 2/11/08
   Approved

2. English
   The English Assessment Report was prepared and presented by Stephanie Branson and Peter Hadorn. This review had been delayed from a previously schedule review last year. They indicated that preparing this assessment report has been a learning process which has enabled the English faculty to reevaluate what it is that they do.

   They use a variety of assessment methods in English. English has found that assessment methods that ask for student or alumni feedback after the fact are difficult to gather. On the other hand, they have found that students aren’t always aware of what they may have learned before experiencing the “real” world. For these reasons, it is important to include several diverse assessment tools in the assessment process.

   One assessment method that has worked well is the requirement of a Portfolio for all English majors. The Portfolio is due at the beginning of the junior year. The student chooses sample work to be incorporated into the portfolio. While these samples are taken from previous work in classes, the copies are clean and another faculty reads and provides feedback. The students either pass or fail. If they fail, they would have required to redo the Portfolio.

   Through use of this tool, it is thought that the English program is quite strong. Most students pass with their first submission. The grading rubric should allow English to see trends over time. English faculty discussed whether the Portfolio could and should be used to assess other student learning outcomes. They decided no because it could become too cumbersome and would require a reorganization of what is included. Although student now only learned if they passed or failed, AOC members encouraged English to provide written feedback to the students to help the students recognize their strengths as well as their weakness, so that students could continue to work on improving their writing.

   Marge moved to receive the report. Matt seconded the motion.
3. Assessment Activity Fund

Document proposing criterion for the Assessment Activity Fund was distributed. Mohan moved to approve the criterion. Carlos seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

Earlier this academic year, we voted to set aside these funds to be used with CIF funds for the development of courses that would meet general education requirements. One idea was to make money available for the development of new interdisciplinary courses that will count toward general education. CIF applications went out as usual and were due on 2/11/08 even though they had also agreed to use the funds as described above. The primary focus of the CIF applications was to be writing across the curriculum or integrating technology into teaching and learning.

There was some discussion about the coordination of the analysis and choosing of recipients if the funds were from both AOC and Improvement of Learning. One possibility could include the formation of an ad hoc committee that consisted of at least three individuals from each committee.

When the proposal to combine funds was made, it was thought that the General Education Task Force would have recommendations for a General Education Model by now. While they are making progress, they have not made recommendations yet, and that is likely a ways off. The question of whether or not we should hold some funds (carry over money) until next year to help fund this initiative was raised.

The question of “Why are we giving assessment funds toward development of courses?” was also raised. When the proposal was accepted, it was with the understanding that the assessment would be built in during the planning stages of course development.

While we need a committee decision because applications for the Assessment Activity Fund should be due on 4/25/08, the motion was tabled.

4. Adjournment