

Academic Assessment Council (AAC)

Meeting Notes
February 2, 2021

In attendance: Dr. Victor Brown, Jane MacKillop, Don Sutherland, Devrim Yavuz (via Zoom)

The meeting started at 2:00 PM

Welcome & Updates:

The Council was welcomed back for the Spring 2021 semester.

Assessment Management System (AMS):

- The Provost had accepted that Watermark's *Planning & Self-Study* become the new AMS following Nuventive's withdrawal from the process.
- The procurement process had been initiated earlier in the day.
- It is hoped that the procurement process will be smoother and *Planning & Self-Study* could be put in place at some point during the fall.

Assessment Plan Update:

To date, 87% of AES units and 90% of academic departments had submitted assessment plans. Assessment in all of those areas is proceeding.

Brown Bag Lunch:

A brown bag lunch was held over Zoom on January 29, 2021. Attendance was 15, possibly on account of the event's coinciding with the start of Spring classes.

The event focused on improving assessment. Faculty comments and insights were helpful. A perceptual issue concerning multi-year assessment arose. Below are the faculty concerns that were expressed.

One department had wanted to assess online learning vs. traditional in-person learning; however, it was concerned that this would not be possible, as this assessment idea was not connected to the program's major goals.

There was concern that multi-year assessment tied strictly to goals is overly rigid, not useful, and becomes more of a compliance exercise. Questions were raised about the sustainability of assessment where faculty see it as a "chore" or compliance exercise.

One department also wanted to assess General Education outcomes for its students. As General Education falls outside the program's central goals, that department worried that such assessment would not be possible under the existing framework.

These are issues more of perception than structure. They indicate that an opportunity exists for clearer guidance concerning assessment expectations.

Associate Provost Brown noted that Program Review affords programs/departments opportunities for inquiry that goes beyond regular assessment. At the same time, Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) need to be assessed on a regular basis.

In addition, MSCHE Standard III notes that common student learning expectations exist regardless of modality. Thus, if a program is assessing a learning goal, assessment of differences between traditional in-person outcomes and those from online instruction could be assessed within the context of PLOs. Such assessment could be particularly useful considering the COVID-19 transition to remote learning.

Going forward the Academic Assessment Fellow and Assessment Manager will work with Deans to participate in a Leadership Meeting to further discuss assessment and accreditation expectations. Associate Provost Brown will also be available at a brown bag lunch to discuss assessment and accreditation expectations with faculty.

The meeting adjourned at 2:36 pm.

Don Sutherland, Acting Secretary