

Report from the Gaps and Trends Committee 5/5/11

Executive summary

The Gaps and Trends Committee met primarily to discuss assessment documents from the various divisions.

Recommendations regarding the balanced scorecard included encouragement to move the process into TaskStream for next year, and ensuring that information is captured about how the information was used for program improvement.

Recommendations regarding the Academic Assessment Committee report included the need for additional efforts in assessment next year, particularly in interdisciplinary programs including liberal education.

Recommendations regarding the assessment efforts in Finance and Administration included the need for training and the development of a framework revolving around the key work in each area, measures of how effectively that work is done, and then using that information for further improvement.

In general, it is recommended that, in order to advance the assessment culture on campus, the academic leaders on campus need to emphasize the importance of assessment, and ensure that resource decisions consider the currency and adequacy of assessment efforts in programs.

Details

The Balanced Scorecard for 09-10 from Student Development and Enrollment was reviewed first. Lisa Erwin mentioned that this is a very condensed document that summarizes information from a number annual reports and five year reviews from a couple of areas. The focus of the balanced scorecard is to report measures and data that indicates progress in terms of outcomes or measures, and it is based on the Student Development and Enrollment J-Plan.

The division plans to use the template in TaskStream to do the annual reports and other assessment work next year. Some of this work this past year was sidetracked due to the recalibration process.

There was discussion about including, in future reports, explanations of how the collected data was used for program improvement. There were also comments about the usefulness of the balanced scorecard in allowing for a straight-forward, at-a-glance-view of data collection within the division.

The annual assessment plan from 2010-2011 from the Academic Assessment Committee was introduced by Patrick Guilfoile. There were indications of good progress in some areas, with a high proportion of programs using TaskStream. In addition, most programs slated to complete program or departmental self-studies during this academic year have done so. Nearly 80% of

programs had completed mission statements and student learning outcomes. However, only about 60% of programs have currently completed curriculum maps, and only 24% have completed assessment plans.

Another area of concern was liberal education and other interdisciplinary programs. So far, relatively little progress has been made in those areas. These areas will likely be among the foci for the upcoming assessment academy at HLC. Substantial emphasis will need to be placed on moving assessment efforts forward in these areas next year.

There was also discussion about clear communication about the importance of assessment on campus, both from academic leaders, as well as in decisions about resource allocations. That is a critical for the campus to consider as we move forward this next year.

Other items discussed included making sure our assessment process ties in well with the HLC template for program review, once that is fully developed, and in whether Academic Affairs should consider subscribing, along with Student Development and Enrollment, in Student Voice. This is a service that provides survey tool (including course evaluations), assistance from consultants, and access to projects that other institutions have developed. The cost would likely be from \$16,000 to \$18,000, and the committee felt this was worth further investigation and discussion.

It was also suggested that members of the Gaps and Trends Committee have view access to all TaskStream workspaces on campus, so different areas can learn from one another.

Bill Maki presented information about assessment work from the Finance and Administration area. He described the struggle in doing assessment in this area. This was manifest in drafting the recalibration documents, where some directors had a clear understanding of assessment, and others did not.

Bill described the two main areas within Finance and Administration as compliance (which is primarily focused on accountability) and Customer Service (broadly defined). He described this area as very much focusing on service to students, faculty, staff, and others.

Within those two areas, compliance is relatively easy to assess. The degree to which the institution is in compliance is a clear metric for performance. The Customer Service side is an area where metrics would need to be developed. Discussion focused on developing assessment in the various areas within Finance and Administration, based on the common themes of “what does the area do”, “how can the area measure how effectively it does those things”, and “how is the information used for further improvement in that area”.

It was also suggested that Student Voice might be helpful to some areas within Finance and Administration.

There was also discussion about the importance of training within Finance and Administration, meeting people where they are in terms of understanding assessment, considering whether some Lean Management approaches might have merit within the division (or elsewhere). There was

also discussion about developing some sources of funding to facilitate and improve assessment across all units. There was also mention of the role of the CPD in serving as a source of Professional Development in relation to assessment.

The final topic of discussion was current and ongoing institution-wide assessments.

Doug Olney presented information from the Proficiency Profile, which was administered to freshmen this fall. Among the more striking findings was that none of the 239 students sampled were considered proficient in critical thinking, and only 4% were considered to be marginally proficient. Doug indicated that 75 seniors were tested this spring, and results from a comparison will be available in the fall. An additional group of seniors will be tested this next spring (likely working with instructors to test entire classes) to get the 200 seniors needed to include the results in the VSA. Doug also mentioned that the NSSE had a reasonable good 28% response rate from students, and that the results will also be available this fall. Committee members felt it would be helpful to have a University-wide forum to disseminate the results of these assessments this coming fall.