ASCC Assessment Panel

Approved Minutes

Friday January 18, 2018 10:30am-12:00pm

110 Denney Hall

ATTENDEES: Crocetta, Giusti, Harrod, Hawkins, Jenkins, Lam, Oldroyd, Vaessin, Vasey

1. Approval of 11-9-18 minutes

* Lam, Vaessin, **unanimously approved**

1. Philosophy departmental report

* The department submitted reports that were not requested. The panel asked for two assessment plans and sent reminders regarding two new GE courses. The department submitted reports for all courses offered in the 2017-18 academic year.
* The Panel accepted the reports for the two new GE courses (2455 and 2340) with the suggestion that the department include the full assessment plan, including rubrics, and a syllabus with any future submissions.
  + The sections for these courses included complete data and methods of assessment appropriate for the course level and the GE ELOs.
* The Panel noted that there was a wide range of quality from the submitted reports. 2455, 2340 and 2850 were aligned with the Panel’s expectations while other reports, had they been requested, would not have been accepted.
  + If reports for these courses are requested in the future, please follow the format of the courses submitted above.
  + The panel recommends having one author for a GE assessment report. It was clear from the difference in detail that assessment was interpreted differently by each faculty member handling assessment for their course.
  + Additionally, the report did not include important elements such as assessment plans, syllabi, rubrics for evaluating ELOs, and specific information regarding improvements made the GE courses.
  + Philosophy 2367 does not include the correct learning outcomes.

1. Discussion: How to improve the GE assessment process

* Should the Panel have suggestions for best practices and present examples for departments to follow?
  + Best practices are different for every department, depending on the number of GE courses they have and the leadership in the department. The role the director of undergraduate studies plays in assessment, for example, will be very different in History (with many GE courses) and Physics (with comparatively fewer).
  + We could work to make general suggestions for how to handle GE assessment.
  + Julia and Shelby will work to come up suggestions and bring them to the Panel.
* The report on the English Writing Program sparked conversation at the last ASCC meeting.
  + The report demonstrated that the department benefited from doing GE assessment, and that the department made changes based on their findings. We want to be able to show other departments how beneficial GE assessment can be.
  + The department had dedicated, trained staff who followed a clear model for evaluating assignments.
    - The department had funding for this, which other departments would not be able to receive.
    - There could be support for this under the new GE.
    - The report could be used to demonstrate the need for funding in GE assessment.
    - Using this report as a model might be discouraging to departments because of its detail. Departments would not be able to replicate these results without funding.
  + UCAT works with departments on major assessment already. It might be time to work with UCAT as a resource for helping departments with GE assessment as well.
  + We could ask English faculty involved in the crafting the report to meet with the Panel. Having more information on their process could help the Panel make the case for assessment in teacher training, the need for assessment funding, and assist in developing assessment materials.
* There seems to be support for emphasizing assessment under the new GE model
  + It is unclear who would have oversight of the GE in general under the new GE, so it is also unclear who would do assessment. It needs to be made clear who will assess the foundations as well as the themes.
    - Other colleges should have a say, as they do now, in approval and assessment of the GE, but where will oversight happen?
    - Who has oversight will determine who assesses the GE.
  + There should be a mechanism for recertifying courses for their GE categories.
* In order to approve the quality of GE assessment, we need to change the conversation around assessment. Right now, departments feel like it is happening to them rather than something that will help departments. Assessment can be a mechanism for improving courses and the student experience. How do we make GE assessment something that departments see as useful?
  + Faculty can get funding to redesign their courses and to do training. How do we get assessment to be part of this process? Both major and GE assessment are important enough to the process of improving teaching and courses that they deserve funding.
    - There are videos in faculty training modules. A well-produced video on GE assessment could be included as well.
  + The university is valuing improvements to teaching through funding. Assessment should be part of this too. It should be considered part of the financial impact of the new GE. Assessment is currently unfunded, but including funding would highlight its value.
  + We need to make it clear to faculty that the main driver of assessment is accreditation. The university could not demonstrate to our accrediting body that the university had an effective GE program, resulting in a push for GE assessment. Explaining this usually decreases resistance to assessment.
    - Units who do accreditation for their programs are generally more open to GE assessment.
    - We can make the case to departments that if they need to do it for accreditation, they might as well do assessment in a way that is beneficial to their programs. We do not want departments just doing through the motions of assessment; we want assessment to be part of the teaching culture.
* There needs to be someone who can work more as a resource for departments doing assessment as well as advocating for assessment within the college.
  + It would be difficult for one singular person to do this, since the challenges of assessment are different depending on the divisions.
* Would it be possible to have an orientation for people on the assessment panel? There is always a learning curve when joining any new committee or panel, but having supporting materials or an orientation session would help relieve this problem.
  + Could create a guide for new members to show best practices and what to look for in GE assessment plans and reports.
    - This guide could also be helpful for curriculum panels.
    - Creating an assessment guide would likely demonstrate that what we accept for GE assessment is largely inadequate. Assessment needs multiple methods to eliminate errors.
  + There used to be a day-long retreat of training for people on curriculum and assessment committees. Doing this would benefit the entire curriculum committee. All panels would be on the same page regarding GE assessment and other curriculum matters.
    - We could do a workshop or similar retreat.
  + Panel chairs could meet to discuss how to improve the review of assessment plans.
  + Panels need to discuss how to handle the influx of GE courses and assessment plans during the GE revision. We need to get GE assessment right under the new GE, regardless of how we handle GE assessment now.
    - We could stipulate under the GE transition plan that every department wishing to offer GE courses meet to discuss expectations of GE assessment.
  + We should have good models of GE plans and reports to send to departments.
    - Office of Curriculum and Assessment Services is already working to compile these materials.
  + We could form an assessment steering committee with representatives from all the panels to decide what the standard for assessment plans and assessment reports is.
    - ASCC essentially plays this role already.
  + Curriculum panels sometimes refer departments to the assessment panel for help with improving plans after approving the course. The panels could formalize this mechanism and have the assessment panel directly review plans that are repeatedly sent back to the department.
    - This would slow down the curriculum approval process, which could make departments more resistant to assessment.
    - We could review plans via email to expedite the process.
    - This could occur on a trial basis to see how many departments are really struggling with crafting assessment plans.
    - Plans could be pushed to assessment panel by the chair or by ASCCAS if there are issues before being reviewed by curriculum panel.