DEPARTMENT   Student Support Services   DATE December 12, 2011

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW Eric E. Johnson, Joan Ilene Hawthorne

1. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- Were any goals referenced?   YES__**X**_   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N ___
- If so, were goals well articulated?   YES____   NO__**X**_   QUALIFIED Y/N ___
- Do goals address student learning?   YES____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N _**X**_

Comments:

There does not appear to be a posted assessment plan for Student Support Services, although the TRIO program within that office is included in the list (provided to the Assessment Committee by the Vice-President for Student Services) of student services programs which have goals for student learning and should be included within the assessment review process.

In its FY2011 annual report, Student Support Services lists the following goals: "[1] By the time students complete their general education courses, they should be able to acquire knowledge over a broad spectrum of subject areas. [2] As a result of their total University of North Dakota experience, graduates will exhibit a highly developed ability to work as competent professionals in or outside their major field(s) of study."

The breadth and vagueness of these goals may make them resistant to meaningful assessment. Moreover, the scope of these goals goes beyond Student Support Services to embrace educational activity done far outside the unit. Thus, these goals seem not well suited to being the foundation of an assessment of the particular efficacy of Student Support Services in yielding student-learning gains.

In addition to Program goals, please also consider UND's Institutional and Essential Studies goals for student learning (shown in alignment within parentheses). Identify UND/Essential Studies goals which are similar to the referenced program goals.
_____ 1 Communication – written or oral ("able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience")
_____ 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or "be intellectually curious"; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)
_____ 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or "be intellectually creative"; explore, discover, engage)
_____ 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning ("apply empirical data…analyze graphical information")
_____ 5 Information literacy ("be able to access and evaluate…for effective, efficient, and ethical use")
_____ 6 Diversity ("demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding…")
_____ 7 Lifelong learning ("commit themselves to lifelong learning")
_____ 8 Service/citizenship ("share responsibility both for their communities and for the world")

Comments regarding departmental goals and alignment of program goals with institutional and Essential Studies goals:
No information about alignment between Student Support Services goals and ES/institutional goals is provided.

2. ASSESSMENT METHODS

Were any specific assessment methods referenced?   YES____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N _**X**_
- If so, were specifically chosen assessment methods appropriately aligned with individual goals?   YES_____   NO____   QUALIFIED Y/N _**X**_
- Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a "multiple measures" approach?   YES_____   NO__**X**_   QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:

According to the Student Support Services FY2011 annual report: "Student Support Services does not conduct an assessment of student learning[.]"

However, the annual report also states: "Student Support Services measures this assessment of student learning as follows: 55% of students persist toward graduation (assessment of graduation is conducted by collection, review, and analysis of students graduating by entering cohort group in six years)."

It is unclear what is meant by "measur[ing] this assessment," but the report appears be using persistence toward graduation as the means of gauging programmatic success. However, the persistence-to-graduation measure would seem to be only tentatively connected with the student learning goals.

Additionally, the annual report states, "Both of these classes are approved for credit by the College of Arts and Sciences, and assessment of student learning in these courses is conducted in accordance with the College of Arts and Sciences assessment procedures." In this passage, it is unclear what "these" classes are.

Separately, the annual report states that an end-of-year survey of students is conducted as part of an effort to assess the program as a whole. There is, however, nothing indicating that this end-of-year survey is connected in connection with an assessment of student learning, per se.

It is difficult to understand the program context with this limited information, but it might be worth exploring whether Student Support Services does indeed have learning as an important program outcome and should, therefore, be engaged in assessment.

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Were any assessment results reported?	YES____	NO **X**	QUALIFIED Y/N ____
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals?	YES____	NO **X**	QUALIFIED Y/N ____
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement?	YES____	NO **X**	QUALIFIED Y/N ____
• Were the results tied to goals for student learning?	YES____	NO **X**	QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:

The portion of the annual report relevant to assessment results contained an "N/A" notation.

In addition to program goals, some assessment results may be applicable to institutional and Essential Studies goals. Please identify those results which are applicable to institutional/Essential Studies goal achievement. For indicated items, please describe findings below. .

_____ 1 Communication – written or oral ("able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience")
_____ 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or "be intellectually curious"; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)
_____ 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or "be intellectually creative"; explore, discover, engage)
_____ 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning ("apply empirical data…analyze graphical information")
_____ 5 Information literacy ("be able to access and evaluate…for effective, efficient, and ethical use")
_____ 6 Diversity ("demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding…")
_____ 7 Lifelong learning ("commit themselves to lifelong learning")
_____ 8 Service/citizenship ("share responsibility both for their communities and for the world")

Comments regarding results and the application of results to programmatic, institutional and Essential Studies goals:

4. CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment
results reported?   YES_____ NO__**X**_ QUALIFIED Y/N ____
- If so, do curricular or other improvements/
  changes arising from assessment results
  directly address goals for student learning?   YES_____ NO__**X**_ QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:

The portion of the annual report relevant to closing the loop contained an "N/A" notation.

It may be noted that the annual report states that the end-of-year student survey is used to determine possible modifications to the program, but there is no indication that this survey is connected with student learning goals. Regardless, no specific loop-closing activity is disclosed.

SUMMARY

Strengths	*Areas for Improvement*
____ A specific plan for assessment is in place.	_**X**_ No specific plan for assessment is in place.
____Student learning goals are well-articulated.	_**X**_ Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
____Assessment methods are clearly described.	____ Assessment methods are not clearly described.
____Assessment methods are appropriately selected.	____ Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
____Assessment methods are well-implemented.	____ Assessment methods are not well-implemented.
____Direct and indirect methods are implemented.	_**X**_ A single type of assessment methods predominates.
____Results are reported.	_**X**_ No results are reported.
____Results are tied to closing the loop.	_**X**_ Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
(Decision-making is tied to evidence.)	(Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Student Support Services does not provide evidence of an assessment program that would indicate its contribution to student learning goals.

It is noted that Student Support Services is subject to external evaluation, tied to its grant funding. It may be that the external evaluation comprises a means to measure contribution to student learning goals; however, such a means is not described in the annual report.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

__**X**_ Annual report	_____ Assessment plan (as posted)
_____ Appendices (cited in annual report)	__**X**_ Previous assessment review
_____ Other (please describe)	

Reviewer(s): Name   **Eric E. Johnson**   **Joan Hawthorne**
            Department   **Law**   **Academic Affairs**
            Phone Number **701-777-2264**   **701-777-4684**
            e-mail   **ejohnson@law.und.edu**   **joan.hawthorne@email.und.edu**

Section 1: __**?**__   Section 2: __**?**__   Section 3: __**N**__   Section 4: __**N**__

Coding Key:
      Y   = yes, this is done appropriately and well
      N   = no, this is not done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student learning
     NA = no information available

?   = action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that this is completely and appropriately done