TO: Members of the Senate  
FROM: Secretary of the Senate  
SUBJECT: Senate Meeting on October 2, 2014  
DATE: September 24, 2014

The October meeting of the University Senate will be held on Thursday, October 2, 2014 at 4:05 p.m. in Room 113, Education.

AGENDA

1) Announcements

2) Minutes of the previous meeting and business arising from the minutes.

3) Question period

CONSENT CALENDAR:

4) Annual report of the Senate University Assessment Committee, Deborah Worley, Chair, University Assessment Committee (attachment #1)

BUSINESS CALENDAR:

5) Curriculum Committee report, Leslie Martin, Chair, Curriculum Committee (handout at meeting)
Senate University Assessment Committee
Annual Report for
Academic Year 2013-2014

The Senate University Assessment Committee (UAC) provides faculty guidance and oversight to the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost in developing and implementing the University Assessment Plan. In addition, the committee analyzes and interprets assessment results, develops appropriate reports, and disseminates assessment results to the Office of Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, the University Senate, and the community.

The University Assessment Committee was able to accomplish the tasks and responsibilities charged to it by the University Senate, in part due to the support provided by Joan Hawthorne, Director of Assessment & Regional Accreditation. The Committee is grateful for her continued support and expertise.

Much of the work of assessment has been, and is, conducted outside the University Assessment Committee. The UAC wishes to thank the Essential Studies Committee, the Office of Institutional Research (OIR), and the University community for their assessment efforts. Every contribution is vital to the assessment process at the University of North Dakota. Special thanks are also offered to Carmen Williams and Nancy Krom who willingly shared their research expertise and UAC experience with the University Assessment Committee on an ongoing basis.

The Senate University Assessment Committee for the 2013-2014 academic year consisted of the following individuals:

Mary Askim-Lovseth (BPA)
Kevin Buettner (Nursing & Professional Disciplines)
Paul Drechsel (JDO)
Devon Hanson (A&S)
Joan Hawthorne (Director of Assessment & Regional Accreditation)
Sukhvash Jerath (CEM)
Brett Johnson (Undergraduate Student Representative)
Nancy Krom (Recorder; Institutional Research)
Bradley Myers (Law)
Shari Nelson (VPSA Designee)
C. Casey Ozaki (Graduate Studies Designee)
Kenneth Ruit (MED)
Tom Steen (Director, Essential Studies)
Kyle Thorson (Graduate Student Representative)
Carmen Williams (VPAA Designee; Institutional Research)
Deborah Worley, Chair (EHD)

Functions and Responsibilities of the University Assessment Committee
The University Senate has identified six areas of responsibility for the University Assessment Committee. The responsibilities of the Committee and its accomplishments during the 2013-2014 academic year are addressed as follows:

I. Address all issues regarding assessment of student achievement and development.

*The University Assessment Plan recognizes the role of the Academic Curriculum (implicit and explicit) in student learning and development. Through a review process of departmental annual reports, assessment plans, previous assessment reviews, and departmental documents, the assessment activities of departments and programs within the College of Arts & Sciences were reviewed in 2013-2014. The results were communicated to the department chairs through the Assessment Director.*

*The University Assessment Committee also conducted reviews of eight non-academic units including: Career Services, Chester Fritz Library, Continuing Education, International Center, Memorial Union, *
Student Health Services, University Children’s Center, and the Wellness Center. The Committee recognizes their contributions in the achievement of Institutional, Essential Studies, and Program goals relative to student learning and development.

Finally, the committee reviewed six OIR (Office of Institutional Research) tools regularly used by various University stakeholders. These tools include: the Advising survey, the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE), the College Senior Survey (CSS), the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshmen survey, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and the EduCause Center for Applied Research (ECAR) Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology.

Finally, members of the Assessment Committee volunteered to assist with Essential Studies assessment initiatives. Further details of this activity are available on the Essential Studies website: http://und.edu/academics/essential-studies/

II. Develop, review, and evaluate the University Assessment Plan in conjunction with the Assessment Director.

This document is to be reviewed every other year. The University Assessment Plan was reviewed in fall 2013. Minimal revisions were made to the document at that time. The plan should be reviewed again in fall 2015. To access the University Assessment Plan, please visit: http://und.edu/university-senate/committees/assessment/_files/docs/uni-asmt-plan.pdf

III. Oversee and evaluate the implementation of the University Assessment Plan, evaluate assessment activities and the interpretation of assessment results, and evaluate the overall effectiveness of the Plan.

Assessment of Student Learning and Development: Program Level

As previously indicated, the UAC reviewed the assessment documents for the departments and programs within the College of Arts & Sciences in Spring 2014. The committee reviewed assessment plans for 47 programs within the College, including certificate, undergraduate, and graduate degree programs. Findings were documented and forwarded to departments through the Assessment Director.

The Assessment Director and the UAC continue to provide guidance to departments as they develop, implement, and make use of their assessment plans. Taken collectively, the reviews help determine the state of assessment for the University as a whole. In general, departments and programs have specific plans for assessment in place, and there are many programs where student learning goals are well-articulated in those assessment plans. Moreover, appropriate methods of assessment are implemented. However, the committee reviewed several programs where assessment methods need further description. A small number of programs did not include any assessment results in their annual reports or the results that were included were not clearly linked to the student learning goals for the program.

Assessment of Student Learning and Development: Institutional Level

The University has many assessment tools at its disposal. As noted in section I, six tools were reviewed in the 2013-2014 academic year.

Some of the tools that are administered by the Office of Institutional Research are mandated by the North Dakota University System (NDUS), such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Others have been developed by UND for internal purposes, such as the Advising Survey. Many of the surveys do not directly measure student learning; they do address the infrastructures, conditions, and environmental components that promote and enhance student learning. Thus, even though survey findings are of special importance to administration, academic departments may also find results noteworthy in further understanding student learning.

Full reports of the OIR tools were directed to the Office of Institutional Research. UAC reviews were also forwarded to the respective administrative or academic departments via the Assessment Director and/or the Office of Institutional Research. Departmental chairs and individual faculty are encouraged to access survey results at http://und.edu/research/institutional-research/survey-timelines.cfm or by contacting the Assessment Director or the Office of Institutional Research.
In addition, information specifically for students about the findings of the surveys is available online: http://und.edu/university-senate/committees/assessment/for-students.cfm

Assessment of Non-Academic Units
It is recognized that many non-academic units have a direct involvement in student learning and development. As noted in section I, eight non-academic units were reviewed during the 2013-2014 academic year. UAC committee members noted that non-academic programs do have assessment plans in place, and some programs include student learning goals in their plans. There is, however, room for improvement. For many programs, a single type of assessment method predominates and there is no evidence that results included in annual reports are not directly tied to decision-making within the unit. UAC reviews were forwarded to the respective units via the Assessment Director.

IV. Make recommendations regarding how to address any deficiencies that are revealed by assessment activities.

A process for providing feedback from the Committee to administrators and departments continues to be provided by the institution’s Assessment Director. Changes in the process continue as appropriate.

Additionally, a luncheon for Chairs and the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences was held in May 2014. Many members of the Assessment Committee attended and provided general comments about the assessment plans that were reviewed. The Assessment Director moderated a series of brief presentations by departments who have developed and maintained successful assessment systems.

V. Review University Accreditation Report when issued and advise the Senate regarding the Report and its implications.

With guidance from the Assessment Director, members of the Assessment Committee reviewed the self-study report in preparation for the HLC visit that occurred in fall 2013. Committee members specifically reviewed Chapter 5, Criterion 4: Teaching & Learning: Evaluation and Improvement as this part of the self-study specifically discussed the committee’s work. A special meeting time was set aside during the HLC visit for reviewers to meet with the Assessment Committee. The meeting was cancelled by the reviewers, however, just prior to the actual meeting day.

VI. Work with Institutional Research to keep the Assessment Committee’s website current.

The Office of Institutional Research continues to maintain the Assessment Committee’s website. Several key features of the site include: a section on the basic steps of writing an assessment plan, a section for students that describes key findings from OIR tools, resources for campus constituents about assessment, and resources for committee members who conduct reviews of assessment plans, including posting of the most up to date assessment review templates (revised in fall 2013). In addition, the assessment plans of academic departments and non-academic units that attend to student learning and development are available to the campus and to the public on the Assessment Committee website. For more information, please visit: http://und.edu/university-senate/committees/assessment/

Summary: During 2013-2014, the University Assessment Committee fulfilled its purpose, function and responsibilities including annual reviews of academic and non-academic assessment activities, and OIR (Office of Instruction Research) tools, and a review of templates for assessment reviews.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Worley
Chair, University Assessment Committee

September 2014