LAC Minutes – Final

Friday, 5/11/2018, CLIMB 202/203

Attendance:

Voting Members		Voting Members, cont.		Non-Voting Members	
Chris Brooks, Chair	X	Beth Manhat	X	Kendra Cawley	X
Marc Goodman		Linda Paulson		Sally Earll	X
Allison Gross		Davina Ramirez		Susan Wilson, recorder	X
Dana Harker		Julianne Sandlin	X		
Wayne Hooke	X	Torie Scott	X	**Today's Guests**	
Troy Jesse		Thomas Songer	X	None	
Jamee Kristen	X	Nora Stevens, Vice Chair	X		
Matt Levy		Ann Su	X		
Hannah Love	X	Jacki Williams	X		

ACTION ITEMS (none)

- (Chris): Schedule peer review training
- (Chris): Contact SAC chairs about changes to peer review process
- (Kendra): Draft statement about the purpose of peer review and the limitations in place on administrative use of peer review feedback

BUSINESS UPDATES

Upcoming Meeting

Everyone should have received an invitation to a joint meeting of the **Curriculum Committee**, **Degrees & Certificates Committee**, and the **LAC**, on Friday, June 8, 10:00 to 12:30, at CLIMB. After an overview of the operations of each committee, the agenda will focus on coming up with a streamlined process for handling Gen Ed course approval requests next year.

This announcement precipitated a discussion about sample assignments and assignment design (hereinafter referred to as AD), summarized in the following section.

DISCUSSION

Collecting Sample Assignments

The members expressed a variety of opinions and concerns, and had questions on the topic of whether the Gen Ed approval process should require submission of sample assignment(s):

Reasons to require assignments as part of the Gen Ed course approval process

- Avoids having to approve a course solely on the basis of the CCOG and a department's promise to develop/use assignments that align with its respective rubric
- Requires SACs to put some thought into *how* they will assess their Gen Ed courses
- Allows the College to build a repository of sample assignments that can serve as a resource for faculty who don't know how to approach AD
- Serves the dual purpose of encouraging SACs to have solid assignments to share with their PT faculty

Reasons to not require assignments as part of the Gen Ed course approval process

- Logistically impossible to collect assignments from every single instructor
- Proposed Framework for General Education doesn't specifically state that course approval will be dependent on the assignment(s) to be used
- Open question of how the assignments would be evaluated, and by whom. Who has the expertise to verify a given assignment's suitability for scoring?

Questions about the process

- Using PHL 191 as an example, Hannah said 10 instructors might teach the course any given term. Would the SAC have to submit all 10 assignments, or just one? What if different faculty taught the class the following term? The early consensus is that each department would have to submit only one representative assignment sample.
- Nora asked the purpose of assignment approval, noting that even after assignments are created, more will be developed and others will be revised after the initial approval process. Will spot checks be conducted down the road?

Kendra noted that the LAC always has avoided being the ‘police’ and there’s no reason to change that now. Where assignments are concerned, there needs to be clear guidelines in place for AD, and there needs to be an enforcement body of some sort, outside the realm of the LAC. Further, she said the rubric development committees, meeting again in early June, are planning to address this issue, too, and they may come up with ways to streamline the process. At any rate, she said the Gen Ed timeline has a whole year built in for this.

Chris summarized this thread noting that the Council appears to have reached a consensus that assignments will be included in the approval process, with ongoing structural support in AD provided for the SACs. Sample assignments are not only appropriate but necessary as part of the process, although the process itself is obviously still in development.

<u>Assignment Design (AD)</u>

The council then turned its attention to the related issue of AD:

- Jamee suggested a template for AD is essential. Drawing from Hannah’s earlier example, it would be impossible to track 10 unique assignments one term, and 8 new ones the next
- Professional development, in the form of AD workshops and consultants, need to be available (Jamee)
- Wayne advocated for using the assessment coaches to coach AD; Jamee suggested the DSAC members (Disciplinary Studies Areas Committees) would make the best coaches
- Nora proposed that once the templates/assignments/system are in the place, that it be a routine practice for FDCs to discuss this important element with, and provide sample assignments to, all new hires

<u>Multi-Year Plans</u>

Chris and Nora met with Kendra on May 9 to discuss multi-year assessment plans, primarily as they apply to CTE programs. Kendra, they learned, had carried out an audit and found the CTE SACs aren’t always completing the Summary Data Report (SDR). In a nutshell, CTE SACs are expected to assess all degree and certificate outcomes on a two- or three-year cycle, and any outcomes not assessed via TSAs (Technical Skills Attainment tests—an annual assessment required of Perkins’-funded programs) must be summarized in an SDR.

SDRs will not be critiqued this year as part of the Peer Review. Instead, they will be evaluated at the Academic Affairs level with new forms.

For all SACs, LDC and CTE alike, with a few exceptions, the MYPs are understandably out of date. How can SACs forecast assessments if they don’t know what outcomes might be in place in two years?

Jamee suggested requiring a two-year *proposa*l as an alternative to the two-year (CTE) or six-year (LDC) plans of the past. The new form could have structured fields with clear prompts.

Wayne said it would be helpful to see who has assessed and *re*assessed—who has actually closed the loop? Beth cautioned that reassessment can be a misnomer. Sometimes, a SAC’s end-of-year report will say it is a reassessment, but instead of changing anything on the instructional side, they have changed only the assessment instrument or the rubric. In that case, the subsequent assessment is really an initial assessment. In follow-up to Wayne's statement, Susan said she prepared a report for Kendra this past winter that details which outcomes SACs have assessed/reassessed in recent years. Chris said this definitely is something we need to track every year.

Nora said the multi-year proposal or plan might be more meaningful if SACs were asked to list the things they wanted to find out. Then, each fall they could pick one of those things to focus on in that year's assessment. Assuming the EAC endorses the proposed Gen Ed framework, and acknowledging that the next accreditation visit isn't until 2021-22, Kendra offered that we might not need to push core outcomes next year. Instead, she said implementing Nora's idea next year might be a good way to go. Jamee agreed, saying continuing with the same old routine isn't genuine if we know things are changing.

Chris said we still need to define what is acceptable for assessment. What about SACs that want to retool? Or those that reach only for the low-hanging fruit and end up with less-than-meaningful assessments? Course outcomes might be the surest way to go, Wayne suggested. Jamee added that this is another opportunity to rope in the coaches.

Chris believes some SACs are under the impression that annual SAC assessments are going away when college-wide assessment begins. Similarly, faculty have asked Kendra if college-wide assessment will have any meaning at the SAC level, and the answer is no at the SAC level, because there won't be enough qualified students in every section to make it meaningful.

(Note from Chris afterwards): that being noted, the aggregate results can still be made useful for faculty by using them to inform professional development.

There is, it seems, an awful lot to cover at this year's *SAC Chairs and Friends* during inservice week. This would be a great time to tell the SACs they don't need to assess a core outcome, and to give them their other options. Kendra is thinking of shortening the general session and going with longer breakouts—one for CTE and one for LDC-DE. She will drop the session for new SAC chairs, so they can attend the targeted breakouts, too.

<u>Administrative Access to Peer Review</u>

At the last meeting, the group helped Chris edit an announcement to SAC chairs regarding changes in peer review (PR) distribution, but he was reticent to send it out before getting a little more information about the administrative access piece. Who among the administrators wants access to the peer review feedback? Why might a dean want to look at it?

Kendra said it's the administrative liaisons, the DOIs, and, occasionally, a division dean who asks for access. If a program struggles for five years and gets dinged for its assessment efforts at the time of its program review, the administrative liaison typically says, "I would have helped the SAC, but I had no idea they were struggling." It's true that the SAC's annual reports are publicly posted, but looking at the reports in isolation isn't informative, because there is no context. As an example, Kendra said PR feedback might tell a SAC three years in a row "Use a bigger sample," but the administrative liaison who doesn't see that continual feedback might skim through the SAC's report and think nothing's amiss. When Katy Ho assumed her current position, she was surprised to learn that the liaisons didn't have access to the feedback.

Torie commented that elimination of the numeric scores on the PR critique form this year is a big deal, and with constructive feedback, it takes some of the fear out of it. Still, could a very small SAC with one full-time instructor feel more vulnerable if PR feedback is released? To assuage this concern, Kendra said we can add language to the feedback document that delineates how the feedback is to be used (or not used). Jamee is afraid a statement alone wouldn't carry a lot of weight if a manager has ulterior motives. If a review became public, she suggested SACs should have a chance to write a rebuttal. Or, instead of making the feedback available to the masses, can we control access?

Susan explained the current system for distributing PR feedback: The Google Docs are converted to PDFs and Susan posts each at the respective SAC page in Spaces. The feedback is available by login only, and the administrative assistants in each division are responsible for keeping the faculty permissions up to date. If the 2018 feedback is to be dean-accessible, it makes more sense to give controlled access to deans who need it, rather than to create a whole new set of pages at Spaces to separate the old numerically-scored feedback from the new, non-numeric feedback. Kendra proposes that the deans go through Susan to get copies of the PDFs. Jamee feels the deans should be able to ask the SAC for it directly, and the requests should start there.

Circling back to his draft memo, Chris wanted to be explicit about who would have access to the feedback, and Kendra said "DOIs and division deans." Torie asked if Susan could "cc" the SAC chairs at the time the feedback is shared with a dean, and the group liked this idea. Chris suggested releasing a statement about the purpose of PR: one document that explains "here's what we do, and here are the limitations." Jamee reminded Kendra of the letter she wrote in 2014-15, when PCC joined the Multi-State Collaborative. In two paragraphs, Kendra thanked the faculty for their participation and explained that the project was in no way an evaluation of their individual performance. A copy of each letter was placed in the respective faculty member's file in Human Resources. Jamee said that letter could be used as a template for the PR statement.

<u>Peer Review 2018</u>

Chris thanked the folks who have volunteered to be (expert) peer reviewers this summer. Because the group is much smaller this year, only one day of training will be held. If there's anyone who can't make it on the day selected, Chris will meet with them personally.

On the screen, Chris projected the newest PR feedback form. Rather than have CTE and LDC-DE versions, there will be one generic form for ARFs (Assessment Report Forms) and one generic form for RRFs (Re-Assessment Report Forms).

The members debated the best wording of the question: "Did the reassessment include an attempt to improve student achievement of the outcome?" There are certain practices the council would like to discourage:

- Calling a project a reassessment when the rubric was the only thing that was changed between assessments (Sally), not pedagogy (Nora)
- Lowering a benchmark to improve student achievement (Beth)
- Repeating an assessment and calling it a reassessment when the *initial project* had no meaning or value (Wayne)
- Cycling through the outcomes on a six-year rotation (appropriate for LDC-DE) and calling the new assessment of a repeated outcome a reassessment

This topic had come up earlier in the discussion about Multi-Year Plans. Clearly, reassessment needs to be explained, Jamee said. It means tweaking curriculum. Reassessing just for the sake of reassessing doesn't make sense. If an assessment produces ideal results the first time—great; move on and don't reassess.

Tori asked about the reports where the data reveals a drop in student performance. Shouldn't we look at what the SAC is learning and whether they're acting on those results?

Thomas reflected on how the current cycle isn't nearly long enough for all SACs. His own SAC needs time to think about the results, implement changes, and then reassess. Two years isn't enough time for this approach.

Torie concurred, adding that the existing system encourages SACs to gather data every year, but it doesn't build in time for meaningful analysis or application of that data.

Wayne took one last crack at rewording the question under debate: "Did the reassessment reflect an attempt to improve student achievement of the outcome through instructor-added changes?"

When Chris asked, the group agreed that the questions looked good. In answer to Ann's question about this year’s timeline for PR, Chris explained that training will occur in late June and the actual review will begin after the Fourth of July.

Adjournment

Chris adjourned the meeting at 2:20.