

LAC Minutes -- Final

Friday, 11/03/2017, CLIMB 306, 1:00 to 3:00

Attendance:

Voting Members		Voting Members, cont.		Non-Voting Members	
Chris Brooks, Chair	x	Linda Paulson *		Kendra Cawley (arrived later)	x
Elizabeth Cole		Davina Ramirez	x	Sally Earll	
Marc Goodman	x	Julianne Sandlin	x	Susan Wilson, Recorder	x
Allison Gross		Torie Scott	x		
Dana Harker		Thomas Songer		Today's Guests	
Wayne Hooke	x	Nora Stevens, Vice Chair		Rhonda Collier (EC)	x
Troy Jesse		Ann Su	x	Lori Conover (OST)	x
Jamee Kristen	x	Ralf Youtz	x	Meredith Farkas (LIB)	x
Matt Levy	x			Juan Maldonado (CAS-WT)	x
Hannah Love	x			Michael Meagher (HE)	x
				Jane Zunkel (WR/ENG)	x

ACTION ITEMS

- Susan: Research the number of reports that have been peer-reviewed in recent years.

SACs AT THE TABLE

Today's Guests

Several SACs accepted chair Chris Brook's invitation to come to today's meeting to chat about assessment. The following representatives were present: Rhonda Collier (EC), Lori Conover (OST), Meredith Farkas (LIB), Juan Maldonado (CAS-WT), Michael Meagher (HE), and Jane Zunkel (WR/ENG).

In case some SACs had questions about the ongoing General Education inquiry and what it might look like if PCC moves toward a pay-to-play model of Gen Ed, Chris provided a quick overview of what it might look like in terms of assessment.

Each visiting SAC chair had an opportunity to ask questions. For easier conveyance, they're listed below in Q&A format. Items that spurred discussion will follow the Q&A.

SAC Chair Q&A

Q: In the new Gen Ed model, can individual instructors use their own assignments?

A: Yes. Each course or section can use a unique assignment as long as it aligns with the adopted rubric. Sociology has done this successfully the past couple of years.

Q: In the new model, must instructors attend an assignment design workshop, or will some entity (LAC? Academic Affairs?) simply distribute the rubric and say we must align to it?

A: The latter. SACs will be expected to assess to the adopted outcome/rubric and make their artifacts available upon demand. Chris anticipates that Academic Affairs will offer

annual assignment design workshops as a resource. (Michael suggested making these available in video format.)

Q: When one year's assessment prompts a small SAC to do a major curriculum redesign the following year, how can they also close the loop?

A: It is difficult, for smaller SACs especially, to carry out a reassessment when they need to devote their energies to a curriculum overhaul. In the past few years, Chris explained that a handful of SACs have requested a year off from assessment for this purpose. Such exceptions are approved case-by-case.

Q: Is it accurate to say that the new (Gen Ed) system would move assessment from the SAC level to the course level?

A: No. Gen Ed SACs would continue teaching to their adopted (core) outcomes and would submit artifacts upon request for internal scoring. However, because they would be responsible for fewer core outcomes than they currently are, and because they would be freed up from having to score and analyze these 'surrender-able' artifacts, they could spend their own resources looking at course outcomes.

Q: In the new model, will there be a schedule of college-wide assessment so SACs will know which outcome is to be assessed each year?

A: Yes, presumably, although the details are to be determined. In fact, all of the logistics of the process are in active development this year and many things remain to be decided.

Q: Last winter, there were workshops held where faculty were asked to choose outcomes. Are we part of that?

A: Yes. This is all inter-related.

SAC Chair Discussion

Compensation

The lack of funding for assessment is an ongoing concern of the Comp/Lit SAC. Jane said her SAC recently agreed to continue doing assessments, but voted to discontinue reporting on them until part-time (PT) faculty could be compensated adequately. At the same meeting, a contingent of PT faculty said they didn't want the FT members to automatically assume they would not participate in meetings and assessment activities if they couldn't be paid. Jane added that everything she was sharing today already was in the public SAC minutes. LAC member Matt Levy, also of the Comp/Lit SAC, said Jane summarized their SAC's sentiments accurately.

The college is inconsistent in its funding practices, so adjunct faculty are paid to participate in some activities but not others. Jane commented that the administration needs to decide what it will pay for (prioritize).

Chris said his personal philosophy is that we cannot require something new and additional without taking something away. The stance of the LAC, he said, is that when a

large percentage of classes are taught by PT instructors, and there is insufficient budget to pay for their participation in assessment, there's a problem. We have no reason to hide the gaps, he said; the accreditors need to know these issues exist.

Ann Su said it might be helpful to track how much time SACs are spending on assessment, and Torie Scott suggested we use the ARF/RRF templates to capture that information.

The bottom line, Jamee Kristen pointed out, is that assessment needs to be done. If the adjunct members cannot do it, then it falls on the shoulders of the full-time faculty. If the FT members can't get it done, are we running the risk of having it outsourced? Ralf observed that it all boils down to funding. PT faculty are asked to do it without pay, and anything over 35 hours is unpaid for FT faculty.

Picking up on that, Marc Goodman asked if standardized testing is seen as an alternative. Chris's take is that the accreditors probably see less value in standardized testing these days. Either way, Marc said, the 'stick' is that if you don't want to do assessment, then you can't be on the Gen Ed list.

Multi-State Collaborative

Chris announced that the Multi-State Collaborative, as we know it, has ended. It lives on as the VALUE Institute and will be housed at Indiana University. Colleges must now pay to participate and most, if not all, of the Oregon institutions have pulled out.

Value to Students?

Ralf Youtz posed a question to the visiting SAC chairs: *In the years you have been doing assessment, have you found resulting value for your students?*

Michael Meager, Health Studies – The instructors learn a little more every year, including how to design better assessment tools. Is it turning out better students or benefiting them? He's not sure.

Rhonda Collier, Economics – This might be the first year that assessment could instigate curriculum changes. Whether it will be meaningful, she is uncertain. EC has tried to use the same assignment across all assessed sections, but it's not the strongest tool.

Meredith Farkas, Library – The LIB SAC implemented some significant changes this year based on what they learned from prior assessments.

Jane Zunkel, Comp/Lit – Assessment has had a trickle-down effect. Jane's colleagues have done some very meaningful assessments of outcomes, and hearing what they've learned has impacted her own work and, ultimately, her students. Participation in the SAC is key, she said, to staying abreast of what is going on.

Lori Conover, Occupational Skills Training – Lori is a relatively new manager of a worksite-

based CTE program, and last year's assessment was her first. OST doesn't fit the traditional CTE model, but her first assessment effort was a good learning experience.

Juan Maldonado, Computer Applications Systems & Web Technology – New to PCC in the last two years, Juan's initiation to PCC and to his SAC came in the form of numerous curriculum changes informed by previous assessments. Last year was tough in terms of workload, but the students *are* benefiting.

Other observations

Chris commented that colleges that have an Office of Assessment do have the advantage of having forms available ahead of time. They serve as a resource rather than in a supervisory capacity. Jamee thinks a dedicated office staffed with assessment specialists would be good for PCC.

The danger of an Office of Assessment, however, is that administrators who have little or nothing to do with actual teaching may be empowered to pass judgments and demand concessions on the part of faculty based on assessments. Chris has the impression that this is not how Oregon institutions with those offices operate, but it's a big reason that PCC has stuck to the faculty-led model.

To avoid burn-out, Jane said it would be nice to have an assessment cycle that alternates between a year of work and a year of communication.

Michael voiced his appreciation of the LAC's faculty-led structure. He said his SAC will be proposing some HE courses for the Gen Ed list.

When someone mentioned the science SACs' concern that the Community and Environmental Responsibility (C&ER) core outcome could go away because it didn't rise to the surface when the faculty selected their top outcomes last winter, Jamee took a few minutes to explain how the lists of outcomes were derived by the three Gen Ed groups. 'Owning' outcomes would give SACs responsibility for assessing particular outcomes in their Gen Ed courses, but it would not preclude them from covering additional content, such as C&ER, and assessing it independently.

Wayne Hooke noted that PCC's new Cultural Literacy rubric can be used by SACs wishing to assess the core outcome Cultural Awareness.

Marc said he and Wayne attended an NWCCU conference, and it made him wonder if we would need the Learning Assessment Council if we go with a pay-to-play assessment model. Chris said we would, especially since the CTE SACs would continue assessing their degree and certificate outcomes. As costs go, the LAC is fairly inexpensive. Its modest budget covers assessment coaching, summer peer review, and funds for part-time members to attend meetings. You can't do assessment any cheaper, he noted.

Hannah Love, Davina Ramirez, and Jamee said the slide show that the SAC chairs were asked to share on SAC Day didn't go too well in their SACs. To those who had some context, the prospect of pinning down the outcomes and creating rubrics generated some excitement and enthusiasm, but to those who had no idea of what's been happening in this area, the upcoming tasks seemed monumental. Davina said the ESOL faculty misinterpreted 'owning' outcomes as the need to use a common assignment. They feel they're being told how to teach and assess.

Even after all these years, Wayne says assessment still is developing. When we roll out the new system, it surely will have its kinks. It is difficult to design a one-size-fits-all system, so we must expect some necessary tweaking. He is confident, though, that we can fine-tune it and reach a comfort level in a short period of time.

Jane is struggling with the concept of 'owning' outcomes because it implies that you can assess at a fixed point. Using Cultural Awareness as an example, she said a course focused on non-"western" content might seem to have "cultural literacy" written all over it, but if it's taught from a Euro perspective or if students process the content with a Euro lens, then it really isn't advancing cultural literacy.

With less than an hour to go, Chris brought the discussion to a close. He thanked the SAC chairs for coming today and called for a quick break before commencing the business portion of the meeting.

LAC DISCUSSION

Expert Peer Review

Chris briefly reviewed last month's meeting, where LAC members proposed moving to an expert peer review system. In other words, using a cadre of trained experts to review assessment reports rather than recruiting a new group of reviewers every year.

Currently, we use 24 peer reviewers, 12 for CTE and 12 for LDC-DE. Susan offered to research the number of reports that have been reviewed in the past couple of years.

Could reviewers be cross-trained to review both CTE and LDC-DE reports? Marc votes for non-'agnostic' reviewers, saying it is ideal if CTE reports are reviewed by only CTE faculty.

Davina suggested mixed review teams—pairing CTE and LDC-DE reviewers. The committee reacted favorably to this idea.

Staggering terms would ensure that the team always had some experienced reviewers who could coach new reviewers. The initial thought is to have three-year terms, but that's not to say that folks couldn't serve longer. Due to the number of LAC members expressing interest in being reviewers, the initial team might be heavily weighted that way. Kendra sees no issue with peer reviewers also serving as scorers for the internal assessment, but she would like to cast a wider net for scorers for the college-wide assessment.

How will the role of coaches change with college-wide assessment and with expert peer reviewers? Coaches will be needed for the formative assessments that will continue and to help with the use of rubrics.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:00.