Assessment Council

Oct. 18, 2019

9AM

HMSU 407

Attendance: Shelley Arvin, Brian Stone, Nathan Myers, Eric Hampton, Malea Crosby, Edie Wittenmyer, Cary Burch, Greg Bierly, Laura Froelicher, Bailey Bridgewater, Ellen Malito, Maggie Dalrymple, Alyce Hopple, Chris Fischer, Whitney Nesser, Elijah Davis, Hung Ha, Deanna Fry, Kelley Woods-Johnson

Chair’s Report: Shelley Arvin will act as chair for the coming academic year until February, when she goes on sabbatical. Brian Stone will serve as vice-chair and Nathan Myers will serve as secretary. Arvin notes that there was a close election for the vice chair position. .

Coordinator’s Report: Kelley Woods-Johnson sent around a sign-In sheet to collect contact information for assessment council members. Student learning assessment reports are due on Oct. 15. The purpose of the reports is to collect information on student learning assessment and provide feedback on whether best practices are used. Kelley and Deanna are in process of inventorying the reports, which includes organizing them. They are starting the evaluative process, which includes going through the reports, rating them, and providing feedback. Kelley plans to have the reports back before Thanksgiving for those that submitted them on time. Kelley will reach out to the programs that have not submitted a report. She will provide help to faculty with questions. Kelley indicated she can’t report a rate of return. The College of Education is 100% complete.

Kelley is also working on updating the assessment web site with current information. Most of the information is 4-5 years old and has not been updated. Her goal is to finish the updates this semester. Some programs have been heavily revised and need to start from scratch.

The Learning Connections Summit is coming up, which will provide a variety of presentations, including a keynote speaker. People can choose what they want to attend. Kelley indicated she doesn’t know how many to expect, but encourages RSVP’s. There is no penalty for backing out, they just want to have a sense of how many to expect. There was a phenomenal response to the request for proposals. Janie Szabo will be the keynote speaker, presenting on Universal Design for Learning. There will also be a case study competition. Teams were sought from all five colleges and the library. Currently only the Library and College of Education are competing. The case is provided on Monday and faculty have a week to plan a response. Teams will provide a 10 minute oral response on Friday at 2 PM. The prize will be awarded by Provost. Greg Bierly, Linda Maule, Denise Collins, Michelle Minzer, Kelley, and an audience vote. The winning team will a 3-D printed trophy.

An assessment institute was held Monday and Tuesday in Indianapolis. IUPUI is well-known for assessment. The institute brings in people from all over the world. The authors on a book on trends in assessment attended. Good information was provided.

Chris Fischer also attended the institute. He said it was a very eclectic group. One of the panels he attended was on capstones.

Kelley noted that a big topic was whether assessments are equitable. There is a growing consensus that assessments need to reflect diverse experiences of learning and life at ISU. This needs to apply to diversity and analysis. One question is how do we change practices to reflect diversity while not reinforcing old practices.

Shelley asked for reports from members. Shelley met with library personnel and encouraged criticism about the current assessment process. They threw out ideas about new assessments and wanted to see the process changes so it is tied to activities, not outcomes. There was concern about overextending in terms of assessment. Shelley provided feedback on library assessment report, but submitted as it was.

Whitney Nesser from the College of Health and Human Services noted that her college was dealing with undergraduate review, student learning, and accreditation of different programs. Report and assessment are bad words. The College wants to see alignment between assessment and graduate reports. They are working with Kelley to streamline the process. Expectations need to be clarified. Once the process is worked out there will be less hostility. The college is trying to establish an assessment committee.

Brian Stone met with Associate Dean Fischer. They discussed writing assessment and composition assessment. Portfolios are used as a form of continuous assessment. Literature program reorganized the concentration. The program currently assesses capstones, but there is no capstone for creative writing. The perception among faculty is that there is currently an explosion of assessment. There is little in terms of a feedback loop. Assessment disappears into the ether. People don’t make curricular adjustments. Doing something meaningful with data opens up conversations.

Edie reported that her program uses a capstone focused on project management. Faculty uses her rubric on capstone, but waited until the last minute to request data. They are confused about what data is needed. The department asked that Edie be copied on reports to help with feedback. Reviewing comments with the authors is valuable.

Fischer noted that capstones should be designed with assessment in mind, rather than retrofitting to make the capstone fit with assessment.

Edie reported working with Tradara Mclaurine on career readiness.

Fischer asked if capstones are designed to get out certain things or just focusing on bits and pieces.

Edie noted that data doesn’t have to come from capstone, but could come from the freshman major course and others. Faculty complaints about being busy in regard to doing assessment work.

Eric said that education faculty would like Increased integration with accreditors in terms of assessment. They also want to see work on program coordinators reduced. There is a desire for a FAD (Faculty Activity Database) for assessment. The goal is that information goes in once and administrators can extract information on their own.

Kelley reported that a new product that could meet that need is available.

Edie spoke with Joe Harder about embedded assessments in Blackboard.

Whitney indicated that she would also like to be copied on assessment reports for the College of Health and Human Services.

Kelley reported on the process to investigate a new learning management system. The university is exploring alternatives to Blackboard. The contract is expiring, and Blackboard is phasing out development support. One option would be moving to Blackboard Ultra. The version of Blackboard the university currently uses will soon be defunct. There is a committee to talk about what we need in a new system. Surveys will be coming out to get feedback on a new learning management system. The survey has options and open-ended. It is long, but will collect a lot of information. It will be used to determine what would be useful or a hurtle. There will also be sessions in November and a follow-up survey with students. The committee is trying to determine an appropriate length. The survey will ask: What is important to students? What makes it easy to use? The goal is to pick a system that will suit learner needs. Canvass, Moodle, Desire to Learn are options. The university will take proposals and give community opportunity for feedback. Change can be stressful, trying to prevent stress.

HLC Updates-Greg Bierly reported on Criterion 1. The group is trying to put report in its final form. The information assembled and co-chairs will work on editing.

For Criterion 5 the Institution Research group is working on refining the text and length.

In regard to Criteria 3 and 4, addressing Learning and Success, a lot of data comes in together. The group is working on a coversheet for the project. It is trying to decide what data to use and to determine what is needed for evidence. Deanna will take coversheets and evidence put them in the places it needs to be.

A final topic of conversation was the Excellence in Assessment Designation. It is an award process with an application. The process involves a self-study and an external review. Institutions are provided with feedback. Kelley attended panel with winners of the designation. Winners applied to gain more information about their programs. It is a free external review, whether you win or not. Applications are rated on best practice standards. Questions that could be addressed are: What are priorities? What are we doing that is out of date? What are we not considering? How can we bring practices up to highest standards? The designation is about continuing progress. Is this something we could use or want to use? It could work in tandem with the HLC process. ISU’s assessment process is often cited for improvement. EIA designation application could help to advance our practice.

Whitney noted that her colleagues in HHS are happy with Kelley as assessment coordinator, describing her as calm, accessible, and pleasant.