

University Assessment Council
Minutes of the November 2, 2010 Meeting

Present: Meredith Bryk (for Ellen Byrne), Anne Chandler, Jan Chlebowski, Jeff Delafuente, Delores Dungee-Anderson, Herschell Emery, Sally Hunnicutt, Kim Isringhausen, Kathy Kreutzer, Christina Lindholm, James Mays, Susan McKelvey, Carolyn Norman, K. Stone (for Sherry Sandkam), Seth Sykes, Gaurav Gupta, Kathy Ingram, Scott Oates. Guest: Joe Marolla.

Minutes from October 5, 2010

- The minutes were approved.

Announcements (Scott Oates)

- Council of Deans Update on QEP, SCHEV, and NSSE. Scott summarized the report he provided this morning to the Council of Deans about NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement). He also distributed two handouts that he gave to the deans.
 - ❑ Scott emphasized that NSSE is administered to baccalaureate students (1st-year undergraduate students and students identified by credits as being seniors).
 - ❑ Although NSSE is not administered to post-baccalaureate students, NSSE can serve as a tool for helping us to think about engagement for those students. Refer to the five NSSE benchmarks/constructs (Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Supportive Campus Environment, Enriching Educational Experiences) (see Handout #1). The survey instrument is posted on NSSE's website.
 - ❑ Scott invited the deans to contact him if they need guidance about engagement.
 - ❑ Scott summarized what Vice Provost Joe Marolla told the deans about expectations for the school/college QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan): The deans should submit by December 1 a plan for what they will do or are doing to enhance student engagement.
 - ❑ Scott outlined the plans for administering NSSE at VCU (see Handout #2):
 - NSSE will be administered in Spring 2011. All first-year students and all seniors will be invited to participate. Scott is proposing to administer NSSE every 2-3 years.
 - If student participation rates are high, we can run analyses to disaggregate the data by school or program. The disaggregated data can be useful for school and department assessment work related to the QEP and the Virginia (SCHEV) Competencies.
 - NSSE imposes no burden on teaching faculty. We provide the student population file, and NSSE sends out invitations and reminders directly to students. All contact with students is web-based.
 - For first-year students, the University College helps to ensure high rates of participation. For seniors, we need help to encourage participation.

- Incentives will be offered in Spring 2011: entry in a drawing to win one of several iPod Touches and Xboxes.
- Action: Scott will send Council members the criteria for how VCU defines first-year students and seniors.
- Action: Scott would like to meet with department chairs to discuss encouraging student participation in NSSE. Scott will follow up with Assessment Council members to ask them to connect Scott with their department chairs.

Discussion: Mission Statement for University Assessment Council

- Scott invited discussion of the draft mission statement for the University Assessment Council. He noted that we also can develop a finer grained elaboration that clarifies and contextualizes the mission statement.
- A discussion followed about “assessment literacy” of Council members and the fact that some members were appointed to the Council without having had any prior training in assessment. Scott expressed a willingness to provide assistance and invited the Council to decide what would be most helpful.
- The discussion was suspended when Vice Provost Joe Marolla arrived at the meeting to discuss the QEP.

School/College QEP (Joe Marolla)

- Vice Provost Marolla provided a brief overview of what he has requested the deans to provide for the school/college QEP. He emphasized that each school/college should describe what it is doing to increase student engagement. (The key is to provide a description/plan; data need not be submitted now.) In addition, Joe stated that:
 - ❑ Although the original deadline for the school/college QEP was December 1, it will be fine to submit the plans by December 15. If an additional extension is needed, the dean should contact Joe.
 - ❑ Joe has a limited amount of funding to distribute to schools/college/departments for initiatives related to the QEP.
 - ❑ Joe will pay for NSSE administration for any post-baccalaureate program that would like the survey to be administered to its students, as long as the program agrees to help encourage a high rate of student participation.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, December 7
9:00-10:30
Sanger Hall, 1-038