

Program Review and Assessment Committee

Minutes

Thursday, May 14, 2015

1:30pm – 3:00pm

CE 268

Attendees: K. Alfrey; P. Altenburger; S. Baker; T. Banta; K. Black; W. Crabtree; T. Davis; J. Gregory; M. Hansen; L. Houser; S. Hundley; K. Johnson; S. Kahn; S. Lowe; L. Maxwell; H. Mzumara; C. Nielsen; B. Orme; M. Pistilli; C. Schuck; S. Scott; M. Urtel; K. Wills; and Z. Wood.

1. Welcome and approval of April minutes – Stephen Hundley

New PRAC member: Zeb Wood, School of Informatics

Minutes approved as circulated

2. AAC&U Calibration Training Update and Discussion – Sarah Baker and Kathy Johnson

Fifteen representatives from IUPUI (the largest cohort participating) attended a VALUE rubrics training session in February in Kansas City, MO.

- Overarching goals of the AAC&U VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) rubrics (downloadable from AAC&U website at <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics>):
 - Accountability of higher education
 - Answer the call for comparison of student performance
 - Alternative to a national test with a single score
- Purpose of this “train the trainer session”: calibration/norming on how to use rubrics (critical thinking, quantitative literacy, written communication)
 - Participants looked at samples of student work provided by members of the AAC&U Multi-State Collaboratives project
 - Each scorer read/scored 75-80 student work products
 - Scorers were instructed to score work “without preference for, interest in, bias toward, or agreement or disagreement with either topic or subject a student pursues or length of the work” – just consider the characteristics laid out in the rubric that are or are not contained in the sample
 - All work was entered into Taskstream, which the participants found easy to use: work could be viewed and scored directly in Taskstream
- Notes from participants:
 - VALUE rubrics start with the highest level (4) – what students should know at the “capstone” level – and go down; Bill Orme notes that this prompts evaluators to consider first whether work meets all the criteria of the capstone level, and if not, which is the highest lower-level category it fits into
 - Work samples submitted for each category were diverse in content and length
 - Written communication samples varied from 500 words to 30 pages and included a diversity of assignment types including lab reports, literature analysis, argumentative essays, etc.

- At least one Critical Thinking artifact was purely numerical/equations, with no text describing thought processes, thus was marked “ungradeable”
 - Some Quantitative Literacy samples were actually literature reviews of technical literature rather than actual quantitative work; these also were classified as “ungradeable”
 - The focus of these rubrics is “higher-order concerns” and attainment of “essential learning outcomes” – for example, Katherine Wills noted that the Written Communication rubric does not address low-level mechanics like comma use and subject/verb agreement, so she had to ignore those issues and focus on the higher-order aspects of the work (organization, content, etc.)
- Next steps:
 - Now that we have a cohort of experts on campus, the goal is to use this process as a foundation for assessing the Gen Ed core
 - There will be a pilot starting this summer to apply the VALUE rubrics to student work in Speech (oral communications rubric) and Psychology (critical thinking rubric)

3. Assessment: Reflections and Needs Analysis – Stephen Hundley

In small groups, PRAC members discussed the following three questions:

- What are some promising assessment practices you have implemented, maintained, or improved during AY 2014-15?
- What are some assessment-related needs you (and your unit/department/division) have that you would like to see potentially addressed during a PRAC meeting in AY 2015-16?
- What additional suggestions or recommendations do you have to make PRAC meetings more informative and beneficial for you (and your unit/department/division)?

Some common themes emerging from the report-out included interest in learning more about the assessment capabilities of Taskstream, as well as about how to ensure the validity and reliability of assessment instruments. Responses will inform the agenda of future PRAC meetings.

4. PRAC Report Guidelines – Susan Kahn

After several years of using an Annual Report Review Rubric to provide feedback on annual reports, Susan Kahn and Susan Scott are updating the PRAC Report Guidelines to better reflect best practices in putting together these reports. Several points are of particular note:

- The main focus of these reports is:
 - assessment of student learning outcomes
 - program changes implemented as a result of assessment data revealing an area for improvement
 - evidence indicating whether previous changes have made any difference in the outcome they were meant to target
- Programs/units may also report on assessment of supporting services (e.g. advising), as appropriate – but it is not a requirement
- Units with a large number of degree programs need not report extensively on the assessment of every program in every year; rather, reporting on a subset of programs over a 3- or 4-year cycle will help keep the reports to a manageable length while ensuring every program gets regular attention

- The previously-recommended assessment table format, with columns representing “What outcome are we seeking?”, “How will we know it if we see it?”, etc., while providing a nice framework for thinking about outcomes assessment, can produce reports that are very difficult to read – particularly if long narratives are inserted into very narrow columns spanning several pages. Programs that have been using the table might consider moving to an outline or narrative format, or a hybrid format that combines smaller tables with longer narrative sections outside the table – whatever structure provides both clarity of process and ease of reading.

5. Philosophy of Assessment Document – Stephen Hundley

This document will be shared at a future PRAC meeting.