**UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT PANEL**
**November 15, 2019**
**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Altgeld 315**
**MINUTES**

**Present:** Arado, Ballantine, Brain, Comber, Douglass, Ferdowsi, Gipson, Hathaway, Hughes, Jones, Joung, Lagana, Santuzzi, Setterstrom, Subramony, Zack

**Guests** Carl Campbell, Chair, Department of Economics; Virginia Wilcox, Assistant Chair, Department of Economics.

1. **Announcements**
    a. Everyone went around the room for introductions and stated their name and department.
    b. Carolinda Douglass gave a brief overview of the rubric's purpose.

2. **Review of Assessment Plans and Status Reports**
    a. B.A./B.S. in Economics – Assessment Plan and Status Report
        i. Carl Campbell, Chair, Department of Economics, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Virginia Wilcox, Professor, Undergraduate Director and Assistant Chair, Department of Economics, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences attended to discuss the report.
        ii. Douglass opened the conversation on the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).
            1. This was a very useful exercise completing the template.
                a. Douglass commented that it shows in the report. It is very reflective.
            2. Preferred the older SLOs. They clarified a little more what you are looking for exactly.
                a. For example with SLO 2, it looks like you are measuring a qualitative and quantitative evaluation. You can parse this out in the SLOs though. When looking for ways to improve areas of your program, it helps to identify where in the curriculum you need improvements by parsing out the data.
                    i. For example with SLO 1, this is not setting a high bar. You are doing more than just identifying. You want to see how these factors contribute to the economic factors you are analyzing and want students to master. There are multiple ways to parse this out.
            3. Douglass asked what they want the students to learn.
                a. The SLOs were reformatted recently.
            4. With SLO 3, writing this paper is an outcome. What goes into this though? You are not just asking them to write a paper. This is all reflected in the rubric. Bring this into the SLOs.
            5. Carrie Zack commented that some of the rubric addresses SLO 1 and 2. SLO 3 seemed like the last two areas of the rubric. If this is truly what you mean here, you can have another SLO that specifically speaks to this writing in economics.

6. The SLOs seemed narrow compared to what is learned in the major. It seems to be missing the breadth of knowledge.
    a. We think you are doing more than what is being communicated in the SLOs.
7. The SLOS do seem unique to the program, which is really clear.
8. Looking at other universities' economics program is helpful as well.
9. The curricular map is very reflective. This work is very appreciated.
10. Ritu Subramony emphasized that some parts are done extremely well.

iii. Douglass directed the conversation to the methods.
1. The senior theses seems to be the main tool to look at their writing. Are there other areas as well for their writing? Consider these other writing opportunities especially earlier in the program.
2. There is a large transfer student population. Some students as well are ones that did not meet the criteria for the College of Business.
3. It was surprising there was not an alignment with intercultural opportunities. This is apparent with the growing conversations on equity gaps.
    a. The representatives were not quite sure what to add at this part.
4. Some anomalies were happening in 2017. In the assessment methods, is there any way to build in a "Plan B" if there are ways you can go back and assess what is maybe going on there? It helps to identify plans and interventions along the way.
5. Subramony commented on the survey results. This was well done.

iv. Douglass directed the conversation to the results.
1. Gipson said there might be some other perspectives here, such as alumni and employers.
2. It is important to assess if we are teaching students the right thing as well. There are surveys from graduating seniors, but sometimes, they do not know what they are expected to know entering the work force.
3. Subramony encouraged the department to work with Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation (AAE) to develop this area.
4. Does the department have an advisory board?
    a. They hardly ever meet. They tried it a few years ago, but people would not respond to the emails.
    b. This is a great internal function.
5. They have an active undergraduate student advisory board.
6. It helps to discuss with students the importance of their feedback in the surveys, such as creating new courses students ask for.
7. Zack said it was nicely done, but the number of students involved of each of these are not included in the tables. This is nice to see them by the charts to know how to interpret them.
    a. Subramony suggested disaggregating the data, such as by the B.A. and B.S., or whatever categories are of interest to the program.
8. Are you asking students to identify personal information about themselves on the survey?

a. They know which students do the survey each semester, but their name is not associated with it.

9. Maybe have them identify what particular track they are in.
10. Gipson said comparing the data with the two different methods in regards to students' writing was good.
    a. In our department, we are not known for having the best writers. Sometimes the rubrics are more so about being able to communicate economic results rather than strong written communication skills itself.

v. Douglass directed the conversation to the user results.

1. Douglass commented on the holistic approach. The department considered in the report maybe they needed to change the assessment methods themselves. It is a great thought process.
2. Subramony commented that it was well done. It was good to see as well that they are using the data.
3. Do your students do internships?
    a. A small number do an internship where they actually register for credit.
    b. There are more that do the internships for Career Services.
    c. This would kill two birds with one stone. They are expected to develop a deliverable from their internship through Career Services as a portfolio. There are opportunities for another assessment method there. It is also an opportunity for external feedback by contracting internship supervisors.
    d. Career Services collects all this data for you, all you have to do here is ask for it.
4. Subramony said you have a well-developed system. They strongly recommend if there are things they are able to share with the other faculty members in the department, this would be helpful. Communicating this and the results you are getting is useful.

b. M.A. in Economics – Assessment Plan and Status Report

i. Carl Campbell, Chair, Department of Economics, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Virginia Wilcox, Professor, Undergraduate Director and Assistant Chair, Department of Economics, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences attended to discuss the report.

ii. Douglass opened the conversation on the SLOs.

1. Douglass said there is a similar comment to the undergraduate program with SLO 3. This could be broken out into additional outcomes. There are probably a few skill sets here.
2. Zack said the rubric provided great language.
3. Zack appreciated the introduction as well.
4. You should cut out "students will demonstrate the ability to" in the beginning of the SLOs. It would give you concise, stronger language.
5. Since this is at the master's level, is basic economic theory then? Should this be basic or worded differently?
    a. Douglass commented that for the Ph.D. it is advanced, so this will make this difficult.

b. Maybe intermediate?
c. Subramony commented it is about your understanding and applicability of the knowledge.
d. Zack agreed the term usage was vague, but the rubric had some language that could be used to clarify.

6. What is the distinction between economic metrics and data analysis?
   a. These are pretty similar. The metrics involves running the equations and data analysis includes more of a hypothesis testing.
7. Reverting back to basic, this means basic economic theory. Some students come into this program and do not have an economic background.
   a. Would basic graduate help?
   b. It clarifies, but on the surface, it is still difficult to determine what basic graduate knowledge is. The rubric helps with this.
   c. Would foundational be more in line with what you are trying to accomplished?
   d. The master's and Ph.D. are very similar in this.
   e. the master's students are not pushed as hard.
   f. It is more important to maintain this distinction.
   g. The only distinction someone saw was the amount of SLOs. Some of them were very basic and almost identical though wording wise. Is this fourth SLO the only thing that distinguishes what a Ph.D. student is expected to do compared to a master's student?
   h. Prior to their dissertations is there anything else that separates them?
      i. The Ph.D. is more mathematically rigorous. You get basic metrics for economics in the master's for a consultation position in economics. The Ph.D. is more cutting edge, such as college teaching and writing in academic journals.
      ii. Is there a way to express this difference in the SLOs? Basic versus advance does not really tell the reader anything, and this makes it difficult when you go back to assess as well. What are you actually measuring in this SLO?
      iii. What skills are required to be successful at each level?
   i. Zack had a general question. It was confusing with whether the master's was just terminal students or students going on to the Ph.D. as well.
      i. Few people are terminal.
      ii. They start to look a little alike since it's the same population midway through.
      iii. They distinguish as much as they can, but they do not really have the faculty to do so.

iii. Douglass directed the conversation to the methods.

1. How long is master's program?

        a. Two years.
    2. When in the program do they take the ECON 660, 661, and 690? These are the same methods.
        a. It was typically in the fall of their first year, but now it is in the spring of their first year.
    3. Why are they an M.A. and not an M.S.
        a. This was traditional, but they have had discussion about getting this changed. Is this difficult to change?
            i. Douglass said it is intermediate to change. It is not super easy, but it is not as complicated as creating a new program entirely.
    4. Having an M.S. would be a great selling point.
    5. Zack is confused when comparing the two reports. Not only are two of the courses the same in both, but they are using the final exam questions.
        a. Usually Ph.D. students get the master's if they want to teach at a community college.
        b. They enter at one of the programs, but they can switch as well. Ph.D. students can just write their master's paper and then they meet all the criteria for the master's degree.
        c. Does it make sense that this course is associated with the master's program and not the Ph.D. program?
    6. Subramony said it was nice to see the micro and the macro. It was also helpful to include the rubric for the papers. When discussing the first year survey the program is using, the programmatic target mentions how many students respond to the survey. This is not a target. The students responding at a certain level area on the survey is a target.
    7. Gipson said she made this note as well.
    8. Zack said the rubric for the research paper does not contain something that aligns with the formation and execution of methodology.
        a. Where is the data analysis evaluation on page 15?

iv. Douglass directed the conversation to results.
    1. Gipson said they are discussing the entire plan, so they did a nice job with this.
    2. Douglass said it looks like these master's scores are coming directly from grades. What part of the learning is being covered in these grades?
    3. Gipson said she is assuming the program already knew the grades were not the best assessment tool to measure student learning outcomes, but currently that is what the program has.
    4. One of the strengths in the undergraduate was the rubrics used. The weakness here and in the Ph.D. was the rubrics were not here. The reader does not know what a score of five translates to. You would need this information is critical when looking to make improvements with a program.

        5. Subramony said this is a disaggregation area. It is hard to know where these students really are falling. We need to know the criteria where there may be aggregate strengths or need for improvement.
        6. Zack said they do not see the percentages, and it would be nice to see these here.
        7. Subramony encouraged them to disaggregate the data.
    v. Douglass directed the conversation to user results.
        1. Douglass said there were no program targets. Success needs to be defined here.
        2. What is the expected level and expectation here?
        3. It helps us know you are balancing demands.
        4. There appears to be comparisons across courses. How does this appear overtime though? This is something interesting to consider.
            a. Are these expected or unexpected?
            b. Maybe there needs to be a clarification of goals.

c. Ph.D. in Economics – Assessment Plan and Status Report
    i. Carl Campbell, Chair, Department of Economics, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Virginia Wilcox, Professor, Undergraduate Director and Assistant Chair, Department of Economics, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences attended to discuss the report.
    ii. Douglass emphasized to contribute new comments that have not been discussed already.
    iii. Douglass opened the conversation on the SLOs.
        1. Subramony said it is important to consider if students are teaching anywhere. Who is the Ph.D. program teaching? This should be taken into account when you are revising SLOs.
            a. There is nothing here that explicitly states teaching.
        2. Douglass mentioned this could give your employer feedback on how the Ph.D. students are going.
        3. Subramony mentioned SLO 4. Could this be them learning how to present their knowledge?
    iv. Douglass directed the conversation to the methods.
        1. There is a similar issue with grades. Some of the exams are pass and fail. There is a reason for the grade, but this does not show. The committee deciding this probably knows, but it is not coming out in the methods.
            a. As a department, you need to know this aggregated data, such as they are passing because of meeting x criteria and not passing because of not meeting x or y criteria.
            b. This will provide an opportunity to make program improvements.
            c. How do you make improvements if you do not know why they are not passing?
    v. Douglass directed the conversation to the results.
        1. Gipson said it would be nice to see more than one method for each SLO. A synthesis of results can address triangulation across more than one method or data finding.

        2. Add the sample sizes to the tables.
        3. Subramony brought up the results of SLO 4.
            a. Douglass said this was an old one. It has already been changed in the plan, but they are showing us the data since this is what they had before.
            b. An assessment of your students is really not about what they have learned. It is about where they are going.
    vi. Douglass directed the conversation to the user results.
        1. There were no comments.
d. The guests commented that they did not know what materials to bring to this meeting, and they thought they would be sitting in the audience just listening.
e. Douglass emphasized the meeting is meant to be consultative.

**3. 2019 Program Review Findings Report – Carolinda Douglass**

a. Carolinda Douglass discussed the report committee members received.
b. It is submitted to the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).
c. This report addresses what the Academic Planning Council (APC) did in the prior year.
d. The PR Findings Reports would cover the programs that will likely come up for UAP review in four years' time.
    i. The status reports review from previous four years is incorporated into this report.
    ii. Currently, completed twenty-five academic program reports and one center.
e. There are four basic questions they report to IBHE:
    i. Major changes in the program
    ii. Finding and recommendations
    iii. Actions taken prior to the review
    iv. Actions taken as a result of the review
f. Are they in good standing?
g. Explanation why the decision was made.
h. May track enrollments going forward or the assessment was not at the level hoped, so additional assessment results were asked to come to the committee.

**4. Other Business**

**5. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.
Next meeting Friday, December 6, 2019, 10:00 a.m. in Altgeld 203