

UAP Meeting
Friday, September 18, 2020
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
TEAMS

Present: Therese Arado, Dennis Brain, Carolinda Douglass, Hasan Ferdowski, Tawanda Gipson, Nicholas Grahovec, Katy Jaekel, Hyun-Mee Joung, Beth Moxley, Nestor Osorio, Alecia Santuzzi, Andrew Setterstrom, Ritu Subramony, Ursula Sullivan and Carrie Zack

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Panel members introduced themselves.
- Carolinda asked members to help solicit associate dean to participate on panel.

2. Overview of assessment at NIU

- Ritu gave overview of NIU's assessment structure and why we do assessment.
 - i. Provide peer review/feedback of assessment plans/status reports
 - ii. UAP members will become familiar with assessment processes
 - iii. Focus is on student learning outcomes at the program level
- Ritu facilitated a discussion to introduce members to the purpose of assessment and allow time for reflection on individual programs. Below are a few highlights made by members:
 - i. Question posed to members: Is there something in your course/program that you want to strengthen?
 - Several members responded with answers centered around improving/adding to assessment methods (e.g. more formative assessments)
 - ii. Question posed to members: What is it that you want to know?
 - They want to know where students are so they can improve something (e.g. stats skills).
 - iii. Question posed to members: Why assess? Ritu expressed that although some may assess due to mandates (e.g. accreditors, assessment office/college curriculum committees), we view accountability as secondary.
 - It's important to know where the students are so we can make improvements in teaching and learning (fundamental concepts).
 - To learn if we're achieving the goals we set out to achieve. As the years pass and students/practices change, we have to continually revisit our assessment strategies (although some tools will still work). Sometimes we have to look at it through fresh eyes.
 - To make sure that students are learning what we're teaching them. To find out if students are learning the right content and what they need to succeed in their careers.
 - iv. Ritu shared that the UAP uses rubrics to help provide feedback to programs that is really targeted toward best practices in the assessment cycle. The rubrics are used for guidance, but members are asked to keep the big picture in mind (i.e. why we are assessing). Carolinda commented that assessment may be viewed as an add-on, but we hope it will be seen as essential to helping improve teaching and learning through the use of best practices.

3. Review of UAP notebook including panel responsibilities
 - Carolinda walked the members through the notebook explaining each section. The full notebook was sent out to panel members via e-mail and also posted in MS Teams.
 - Below are a few highlights of the membership responsibilities.
 - Review university mission statement (this was done in 2019 along with other councils)
 - Serve in advisory capacity for regional accreditation (this was done in 2018 when the HLC Assurance Argument was completed)
 - Upcoming HLC quality initiative due in June (Carolinda and team are working on a proposal this year and will submit it to the UAP prior to submitting to HLC). We will be looking at equity gaps and student success and how Covid-19 is impacting minority students and other student groups.
 - Review assessment plans for new programs prior to submission to IBHE.
 - Work with Gen Ed Committee and Committee on Initial Educator Licensure Preparation on their assessment activities.
 - Support campus-wide activities to improve student learning outcomes
 - Support colleges and departments as they prepare for the assessment component of their discipline-specific accreditation reviews
 - Select additional items include:
 - List of membership (UAP members asked to make sure their contact information is accurate)
 - Meeting schedule is 1st and 3rd Friday from 10am – 12noon. ***October 2nd meeting is canceled due to scheduling conflicts***, next meeting is October 16th and will focus on helping new members prepare for upcoming reviews utilizing the academic degree program and support unit rubrics.
 - NIU Vision/Mission, Baccalaureate Outcomes
 - Program Review Schedule, UAP Status Report Schedule
 - Academic Support Unit Schedule (we meet with these groups on a five-year cycle) – we look at some programmatic outcomes beyond student learning with these units
 - Guidelines/Templates (separate for academic programs and academic support units)
 - Two main components (1. Assessment plan; 2. Status report)
 - Carolinda provided an in-depth review of the templates and each rubric component sometimes providing examples and suggestions for clarification
 - Carrie introduced members to assessment resources which are provided in the appendices which include a few book chapters and articles that will help inform UAP members about assessment topics (e.g. assessment basics, equity in assessment)
 - ***Special note:*** NIU's current assessment practices are being reviewed this year to help streamline processes. We will invite Kendall Thu, Faculty Senate president, to a

future meeting to provide updates and solicit UAP input. So far, annual assessment updates have been put on hiatus and Academic Program Review has been pushed back into the colleges (in lieu of being conducted by the Academic Planning Council). *Some programs have chosen to still submit their annual assessment updates although they weren't required.*

- In the past, Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation would provide an annual assessment update summary report to the UAP (since these reports are to help programs prepare for their UAP reports). In addition, a summary report of UAP activities would normally be given to the APC (since they would perform the program reviews).
4. Review of AAE's summer orientations for upcoming 2020-2021 UAP presenters – Ritu summarized meetings held over the summer via Microsoft Teams to help the upcoming academic programs/support units to prepare to complete their UAP status reports. Due to Covid-19, most of the programs have requested extensions to at least mid-October/November. AAE will gather feedback on their experiences writing their reports to bring that to UAP conversations.
 5. Review of UAP 2019-2020 findings – Ritu gave a summary of feedback given to last year's programs including suggested improvements to be made. AAE aggregated the UAP feedback received and below is a brief summary of findings:
 - Academic programs performed well overall, but could use more support with the following: including more details in reporting results such as sample sizes and disaggregation of data by student groups.
 - Support units could use support with selecting appropriate assessment methods (tied specifically to their goals/objectives), providing sustainable assessment systems, and reporting and use of results that demonstrate achievement of their outcomes.

Please note: *The above findings are not generalizable as they apply to the few programs that presented last year.*

6. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.
Next meeting Friday, October 16th