

Assessment Subcommittee Meeting
January 31, 2014
Meeting Notes

Present: Paty Rubio, Corey Freemnan-Gallant, Sarah Goodwin, Lisa Christianson, Peter vonAllmen , Denise McQuade, Sue Layden, Joe Stankovich, Mike Sposili, Auden Thomas, Beau Breslin, Charles Tetelman (Student), Kim Crabbe

1. Update on science literacy assessment: Lisa, Corey and Denise reported on the science literacy/QR assessment that they designed and will be implementing shortly. They will administer it to nine 300-level courses with the cooperation of the faculty. It has two versions, one that tests knowledge about science and QR, and the other on the nature of science as well as QR (and science literacy on both parts). They included some NSSE questions as a kind of cross-check and update on those data. The greatest challenge will be ensuring that the students take the assessment seriously and make a concerted effort on it. Lisa will administer it so that the students understand it is separate from their course work and grades.
1. Update on visual communication assessment: Sarah reported that we have applied for funds for an assessment as part of a grant proposal on visual communication, and Corey noted we won't hear about that until April.
2. Update on communicating with students about our use of survey results. Lisa noted that she and Charles will meet to discuss this.
3. Update on Middle States process. Beau announced the decision to do a Selected Topics self-study with a focus on integrative learning, and he outlined the timing the process. We agreed to circulate the proposal letter that we sent to Middle States to the Assessment Subcommittee.
4. Update on Alumni Learning Census. Mike reported that we are in the 4th year of 5 doing the Alumni Learning Census, and that we have achieved a 14% response rate this year, matching our previous maximum rate. We suggested that the community might be helpful in encouraging alumni to respond next fall during the final implementation, to get the maximum possible response rate. Peter also asked whether CEPP might be able to add a question to the instrument; Mike said yes, possibly. The ALC asks alumni for a given communion year--thus the five-year cycle for the assessment--about the relationship between our Goals for Student Learning and Development and their own experience; about their patterns of behavior that might illustrate those connections; and about connections they would draw between the Goals and their work experience. We agreed to look at the summaries of the responses at our spring meeting and consider how the College might make the best use of these data.

5. Our primary agenda item was to address crafting a comprehensive plan for the assessment of general education/Goals for Student Learning and Development. Beau led a discussion of the existing broad, general, rather vague plan and the ways we might be more specific. We agreed, seemingly, that the scaffolding is there and it's good, and can be more specific by determining which particular Goals we would like to investigate over the next five years, aiming for one each year. This year's general education assessment is the science literacy/QR assessment under way; next year's can be visual communication (Communicate Effectively); the following year could be oral communication, given that it is now a fundamental element in Middle States' outline of gen ed. We also agreed that we should confer with CEPP on what would be most useful to their deliberations, aiming to be assessing goals that seem most crucial now, focusing our inquiry on student learning rather than on mapping where the goals are ostensibly being met. (The usefulness of the map lies in part in determining what assessments are already happening; and for the more aspirational goals that are difficult to assess, it may be useful at least to know where they are being addressed.)

We concluded that Sarah, Lisa and Beau will work on updating the Assessment Plan and will circulate it, and that we will discuss the Plan further in the spring along with the results of the science assessment and the Alumni Learning Census.

Assessment Subcommittee of the IPPC
Meeting Notes
Friday, April 11, 2014

Present: Beau Breslin, Lisa Christenson, Kim Crabbe, Corey Freeman-Gallant, Sarah Goodwin, Sue Laden, Denise McQuade, Joe Stankovich, Auden Thomas, Peter von Allmen. Absent: Paty Rubio, Mike Sposili, Charles Tetelman. Note taker: Sarah Goodwin

1. **Review of the Science Literacy/QR assessment.** Corey, Denise and Lisa walked us through the results of the assessment just completed last week. The results are not quite ready for public release, but we were able to view the data, which reinforce the results of the 2008 assessment and provide additional information about our students' quantitative reasoning competency. In general, the results on scientific literacy were relatively strong for both majors in the physical and life sciences and other majors; in contrast, the QR performance for both groups seems weak.

We talked about how and when to share the results publicly, which are compelling and of broad interest. CEPP can make use of them in its review of the curriculum, and in the fall the results should be presented to the faculty. We agreed that we need a more standardized mechanism for communicating annual assessment results and allow for some open dialogue about them.

With a new QR director starting in the fall, we might suggest establishing a timeline for a response to these results, both short- and longer-term.

- >> Lisa will work with Corey and Denise on a report that can be posted on the assessment website and circulated to CEPP and IPPC.

- >> Beau will look for an opportunity early in the fall to present the results to the faculty.

- >> Sarah will pursue with Beau, Lisa and Paty Rubio, and ultimately the President, a standard way and time to communicate annual assessment results.

- >> Joe and Lisa will write a white paper that pulls together the QR results from this test with results from NSSE, the HEDS Alumni Survey, and the Alumni Learning Census.

2. We reviewed the Middle States timetable and our various responsibilities associated with it.
3. We touched base on the Institutional Assessment Plan 2011-16 in preparation for reviewing and updating it next year.

- >> Sarah will draft revisions and additions for the committee to consider in the fall.

4. We also discussed communicating publicly the results of other recent assessments, particularly the NSSE/FSSE data and multiple other surveys.

- >> Beau will plan for times and ways to communicate about these results and will work with Lisa and Joe on modes of delivery.

5. We agreed that next year's primary general education assessment related to the Goals for Student Learning and Development will be of students' visual communication. In addition to our longstanding plans to develop a rubric and assess our students' visual communication skills, this is a timely opportunity for us to establish a baseline as we begin to implement VIS, the major Mellon Foundation grant on visualization and visual communication.

- >> Sarah will talk to John Anzalone, PI for the grant, about planning now for the assessment next year.

Assessment Subcommittee of the IPPC
Oct. 1, 2014

Meeting Notes

Present:

- Beau Breslin, Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs, **Co-Chair**
- Lisa Christenson, Assessment Facilitator
- Kim Crabbe, Director, Career Development (Student Affairs)
- Corey Freeman-Gallant, Associate Dean of the Faculty for Academic Policy and Advising
- Sarah Goodwin, Faculty Assessment Coordinator, **Co-Chair**
- Sue Layden, Research Analyst for Enrollment, Retention, and Student Achievement (Admissions)
- Kelly Sheppard, Chemistry
- Paty Rubio, Associate Dean of the Faculty for Personnel, Development, and Diversity
- Michael Sposili, Executive Director, Alumni Affairs (Advancement)
- Joe Stankovich, Director, Institutional Research
- Auden Thomas, Director, Summer Academic Programs and Residencies (Special Programs)

Absent:

- Masako Inamoto, Assistant Professor of Japanese
- Andrew Lowy, SGA representative
- Bill Lewis, CEPP

1. Review of our Strategic Action Agenda for 2014-15

a. We reviewed the SAA and added two bullets:

- Continue to produce and disseminate White Papers that aggregate assessment data that are of particular interest
- Continue to implement, follow, disseminate and use the results of the Alumni Learning Census (in the fifth of its five projected years)

We also agreed that "non-academic programs" should be replaced by "non-departmental programs" with reference to areas in Academic Affairs that will be collecting assessment information (the Library, Tang, IT, IR).

- b. We agreed that it would be good to have a sense of 2015-16's gen ed assessment by March or possibly even January of this year. It may be a follow-up on this year's work on visual communication.
- c. A small group (Corey, Kelly, Lisa and Sarah) will confer on mapping the Goals to the curriculum and co-curriculum and bring to the AS a recommendation. Sue mentioned that at some schools the Goals are used in the advising packet as a kind of checklist for the students, so that they are mapping them on an individual level--something we might consider.
- d. The assessment of the London Program is in the works; Sue said she will email questions that some NY8 colleges have used in study abroad program assessments. We may also decide to sustain the assessment in the Spain program over multiple years.

- e. Mike mentioned that Advancement may be interested in continuing the Alumni Learning Census beyond its five-year period. A small group will confer on this and make a recommendation: Mike, Joe, Lisa, Sarah, and Kim.
2. Brief updates: Sarah updated the group on the visual communication assessment that is proceeding this year in three ways: through Project VIS, a mapping of visual communication to the curriculum (identifying courses where it's learned); the development of a rubric to assess students' visual artifacts such as powerpoints (still tentative but in the works); a standard college assessment project on students' ability to analyze visual artifacts, involving multiple departments/faculty. We talked about the possibility of including assessments of students' learning visual communication outside of the curriculum, perhaps in a second phase or in a summer project. We considered the possibility of communicating to the other areas of the college about this project, in the event it's of interest to them, and agreed IPPC would be a good place to do that.
3. Review of the Institutional Assessment Plan: We started discussion of the IAP but ran short of time. We agreed to communicate about it on email, considering in particular (but not only) the highlighted areas where there may be some disconnect between theory and practice. Based on our discussion today, Sarah will make some changes and circulate the document again, and we can continue to work through the questionable passages before sending it on to IPPC for approval.
4. IR White Papers # 6 and 7: Sarah and Lisa talked briefly about these documents and encouraged everyone to read them when they are circulated, shortly. They summarize some recent findings about QR2 and about our Goals in general.
5. CEPP 2012 report on Engaged Liberal Learning: The summary section of this report recommends that the Assessment Subcommittee take up the report and consider its findings. We agree that this will be on our January agenda.

Follow-up:

1. Sarah will make edits to the Institutional Assessment Plan based on our discussion so far and will circulate for further commenting/editing.
2. Lisa will send White Papers 6 and 7 to the group.
3. Corey, Lisa, Sarah and Kelly will confer on mapping the Goals to the curriculum.
4. Paty and Lisa will continue to work on the London assessment. Sue will email them the questions from the NY8 study abroad assessments.
5. Mike will keep us informed about the Alumni Learning Census. He will take the lead on a discussion of whether to continue with the ALC after this year (with Joe, Lisa, Sarah, and Kim).
6. Our January agenda will include the Institutional Assessment Plan (unless we can reach a consensus about it via email discussion) and the CEPP 2012 report on Engaged Liberal Learning.

Assessment Subcommittee of the IPPC

Meeting Notes

February 12, 2015

Present:

- Beau Breslin, Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs, **Co-Chair**
- Lisa Christenson, Associate Director of Institutional Research for Assessment
- Kim Crabbe, Director, Career Development
- Corey Freeman-Gallant, Associate Dean of the Faculty for Academic Policy and Advising
- Sarah Goodwin, Faculty Assessment Coordinator, **Co-Chair**
- Masako Inamoto, Assistant Professor of Japanese
- Sue Layden, Research Analyst, Enrollment, Retention, Student Achievement
- Bill Lewis, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion
- Paty Rubio, Associate Dean of the Faculty for Personnel, Development, and Diversity
- Kelly Sheppard, Assistant Professor of Chemistry
- Michael Sposili, Executive Director, Alumni Affairs
- Joe Stankovich, Director, Institutional Research
- Auden Thomas, Director, Summer Academic Programs and Residencies

Absent:

- Charles Tetelman, Student Government Association representative

1. Brief updates

- Middle States self-study:** we're on track, but Beau noted we do need more evidence from the areas outside of Academic Affairs that we are meeting the standards for institutional assessment (mission-driven, annual goals, gathering and using appropriate data, informed decision-making, institutional improvement, transparency). Beau asked those present to convey this information to their respective Cabinet members. Lisa offered to work with all divisions on ways to document that we are meeting the standards. Sarah urged those present outside of Academic Affairs to re-read Standard 7 and its fundamental elements and to review those in divisional meetings.
- Project on visual communication:** a study of students' ability to read and interpret visual communication is in process for this year and includes voices from across the curriculum as well as key staff
- Updates on assessment from your areas?** Mike Sposili let us know that the Alumni Learning Census is closed for this year and we can expect a summary report in mid-March and a more complete report in April. Advancement has been making good use of the data (as have Academic Affairs as well as the Middle States working groups), and Advancement has decided to continue the ALC beyond the original 5-year commitment.
- FEC's request, and change in our membership:** FEC asked that we reduce our membership by one or two faculty; Sarah and Beau conferred and agreed to reduce by one. This will

leave us with one at-large faculty member, the chair of CEPP, and the faculty assessment coordinator. We felt that this is appropriate, given the institutional nature of this subcommittee of IPPC.

2. Institutional Assessment Plan 2014-19

- a. We discussed and amended the Plan (attached with changes tracked).
- b. We agreed to send the Plan to CEPP and then to IPPC for discussion and approval before finalizing the document.

3. Mapping the Goals to the curriculum and co-curricular activities

- a. We discussed and amended the Map of the Goals to the Curriculum and Co-Curriculum (attached).
- b. We agreed that it would be useful to create a hyperlinked version with more details, although we admitted that might be a great deal of work and would not be easy to distribute in hardcopy. Sarah and Lisa agreed to try out creating some hyperlinks and see whether it becomes a black hole, and also to try brief annotations of the text to amplify some points.
- c. We agreed that it would be useful to find a way of indicating how well we are achieving the various goals. Sarah and Lisa will talk about this and see whether this information could be hyperlinked or otherwise indicated. It could be useful to CEPP to have some clear indications of evidence we have that we are not meeting some of the Goals as well as we would like.
- d. We may find it useful to seek new information from chairs and directors about which of the Goals their departments/programs are currently meeting. Our information from chairs is now several years old and changes have been made.
- e. Sarah and Lisa will confer on what's possible, tweak this document and make the changes we discussed, and send it to CEPP and IPPC for their information.

Meeting adjourned at 11:04.

Assessment 2014-15
Report of the Assessment Subcommittee of the IPPC

The Assessment Subcommittee of the IPPC met once each semester to review the plans for projects and their results in various areas of the college, and to discuss potential future projects. Below is a summary of the major assessments discussed and carried out in 2014-15.

1. One of our first tasks was to complete revisions of the college's Assessment Plan 2014-19, working with the Assessment Subcommittee and CEPP, and to gain approval of the plan by IPPC. This was done early in the fall.
2. The primary assessment of student learning in general education for this year was a project to determine how well our first-year students can analyze visual artifacts. Planning for the project went on throughout the year. We gathered student papers from a wide range of first-years in various courses; established a group of faculty and staff to do the assessment; found a project director (Professor Katie Hauser of Art History); created a rubric, based on multiple sources; and conducted the assessment by normalizing our scoring, scoring the papers, and discussing the results.

The results, report by the project director, were somewhat mixed. On the whole, we learned that many of the students' papers showed gaps in their analyses; we also learned that it is difficult to score a paper solely for its visual analysis, independent of the quality of writing, and that the group needed practice and repeated normalizing.

The original plan was to continue assessing visual communication in 2015-16 by gathering artifacts (such as, for example, power point presentations, posters, and/or films made for coursework) and studying how well our first-years communicate visually, but given the uncertain results of this assessment, that remains to be decided.

The assessments of visual communication align with the goals of our Project Vis and other visual initiatives currently underway, and are intended to establish a baseline early in these projects.

3. Department and program assessments: 35 out of 37 departments and programs reported on their assessment work this year. Almost all of them engaged in work related to direct assessment of student learning, and all departments and programs have at some point conducted direct assessments (most notably during the Teagle-funded Writing in the Majors initiative in 2012). We emphasize

conducting inquiries that are useful, and we allow faculty time for effective preparation for and follow up on direct assessments to ensure that they make good use of them. The two departments that did not report on assessments this year were undergoing leadership challenges and transitions, and we expect that they will return to doing assessments this year.

4. Alumni Learning Census: 2014-15 represented the final year of the original five-year cycle of the Alumni Learning Census. The results have proven to be so useful to the college that Alumni Affairs has agreed to continue to support the project on an ongoing basis. Data from analysis the ALC have figured importantly in CEPP's deliberations on the curriculum over the past three years, and they figure as well in the Middle States Self-Study that is underway.
5. Other assessments: Members of the Assessment Subcommittee were charged with reporting to their senior leadership to ensure that regular institutional assessments are happening in all areas of the college.

All current assessment reports are available on the Assessment website:

<https://www.skidmore.edu/assessment/>

6. The agenda for 2015-16 will include:
 - a. Continuing work on the Self-Study and documentation for Middle States
 - b. Continuing assessment of visual communication
 - c. Continuing to foster effective inquiry into student learning in the majors and in all areas of the college
 - d. Continuing to provide information to CEPP and other committees and initiatives as needed
 - e. Consider more effective ways to assess students' during study away.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Goodwin
Professor of English and Faculty Assessment Coordinator
Kenan Professor of Liberal Arts
Chair, Assessment Subcommittee of the IPPC

Attached: Appendix

Appendix:

**2014-15 Strategic Action Agenda for Assessment
May 2014**

- Continue to implement general education assessment plan. Visual communication baseline assessment in 2014/15.
- Track other data relevant to gen ed revision and provide to CEPP.
- Complete Institutional Assessment Plan 2014-19 with the Assessment Subcommittee, and bring to CEPP and IPPC for approval. This includes a more detailed plan for assessment of general education (the GSLD).
- Devise a mechanism to map the GSLD to the curriculum.
- Continue to work with chairs on departmental assessment; aim for 100% of departments doing and/or following up on direct assessments.
- Plan and conduct assessment of London Program and consider general relevance to study abroad.
- Work with other non-academic areas within Academic Affairs to collect assessment information.
- Complete draft of Middle States Self-Study and preliminary archive for the Early Document Review in fall 2015.