

## Assessment Subcommittee Meeting

12/15/2017

### Minutes

**Present:** Beau Breslin, Lucy Spardy, Kim Crabbe, Henry Jaffe, Auden Thomas, Michael Sposili, Sarah Goodwin, Marta Brunner, Joe Stankovich, Kerry Nelson

After introductions of new members, we began with an appreciation of Beau's contribution to assessment at Skidmore. Sarah highlighted Beau's leadership with regard to diversity goals and the increased participation of departments in assessment. All but 5 departments have submitted assessments this year.

#### 1. Updates:

##### a. Institutional Effectiveness

- i. We plan to divide areas of responsibility between Lisa Christenson's and Sarah's replacements, so that Lisa's replacement would be responsible for Institutional Effectiveness, while Sarah's replacement would be responsible for Student Learning Outcomes.
- ii. We considered whether Finance and Administration and Admissions should have a seat at the assessment table, and noted that we are waiting for the appointment of a person to represent the Chief Diversity Officer, as called for in our operating code.
- iii. As we make changes, we need to ensure we are meeting Middle States Standards and that our process is transparent.

##### b. Middle States Standards

- i. We need to show through documentation that we've been meeting the standards all along for the next self-study.
- ii. Auden provided an overview of the MSCHE annual conference, especially the experiences of the group of 15 schools who went through the new standards.
  1. The previous 14 standards were considered to be overly burdensome so they have been consolidated down to 7.
  2. A stronger emphasis has been placed on mission and goals. The college's strategic plan should be informed by its mission and goals.
  3. A greater emphasis is placed on evidence and data.
  4. The data inventory maps to goals.
  5. The 15 institutions thought the new standards were more streamlined.
  6. The Document Roadmap is now the Evidence Inventory
  7. Evidence has to lend itself to an outcome.
  8. The goal of the new standards is to reduce the burden and workload of self-study.

#### **Cautionary Tales:**

Start early!

- iii. How long will these standards last? We can expect them to last at least through our next review because of the rigor with which they were created.

- iv. Clearly defined mission and goals: how can the AS ensure they are being supported by assessments across the college?
    1. Strategic Plan/Strategic Action Agenda
    2. How are divisions across the college setting goals and reaching them?
      - a. How are we documenting that?
      - b. Mike Sposili cited an example from advancement-4 goals.
  - v. Evidence Repository (2022 Document Inventory)
    1. Lisa Christenson started to structure the repository according to the 7 standards. Folders for each standard have been created but the document archive has not been sorted into the folders yet. It is important that we submit the correct documents for the 2021-2022 mid-point review. The next self-study is 2025-2026.
  - vi. Joe has conducted a survey of other schools to identify what they are doing for assessment of institutional effectiveness (non-academic).
    1. We are investigating using software
    2. RPI is using Digital Measures with divisional learning goals. Voluntary at the course level.
    3. Our peers indicate that they think software probably would not help engage faculty.
- c. How are we working toward the goals from the 2017-18 Assessment Report?
- i. The library is in the process of developing a rubric for information literacy which they expect to finalize in January.
  - ii. The HEDS Alumni Survey and Withdrawn Student Survey are in progress.

**Action Items:**

- Read the 2016-2017 Assessment Report (distributed)
- Review goals for 2017-2018 as included in the Assessment Report. Email Sarah (sgoodwin) if you have objections.

*Kerry Nelson*  
*Coordinator for Institutional Research and Assessment*

## Assessment Subcommittee Meeting

2/12/2018

### Minutes

**Present:** Marta Brunner, Kim Crabbe, Sarah Goodwin, Henry Jaffe, Kerry Nelson, Ron Seyb, Lucy Spardy, Michael Sposili, Joe Stankovich, Auden Thomas, Peter von Allmen

#### 1. Updates on the Institutional Effectiveness proposal and on general education and academic department assessment:

- Institutional Effectiveness
  - Sarah and Joe are working to define the new role of the Institutional Effectiveness Coordinator/Associate Director of Institutional Research.
  - The Faculty Assessment Coordinator will focus on student outcomes, while the new IE role will focus on Institutional Effectiveness.
- Assessment
  - Assessment at Skidmore is a collaborative process.
  - What matters and how do you know if you are achieving it?
  - We have to respond to external pressure from Middle States.
  - We need to focus on using data for evidence-based decision-making.
    - What is data?
    - What is evidence-based decision-making?
    - We need to work on our file system and documentation, ensuring documents are collected and filed regularly.
    - How well are we using the resources that support student learning?
    - How do we set benchmarks?
    - How do we measure things that are hard to measure?
  - What are we doing to meet the college's strategic goals?
    - Strategic planning and assessment go hand in hand.
  - This committee needs to be empowered by VP's.
    - It is important for Assessment work to go beyond "divisional silos."
    - Leadership Academy is a strong network of 50 people who can advocate for Institutional Effectiveness at Skidmore.
    - What is each area doing?
      - A subcommittee in Student Affairs is working on assessment and will have a report by the fall
    - Marta suggested coaching between divisions where, for instance, someone outside the library would look at the library's assessment work and give feedback.
    - People from each division should develop expertise, workshops, and Middle States teams.
    - Skidmore has a good track record with Middle States and we need to keep that reputation.
    - We need to show that we are paying attention to the standards.

## 2. Informal reports from each member on work in our areas related to the strategic goals for health and wellness:

- One of the four main goals in the Strategic Plan 2015-2025 is “Well-Being”: “To strengthen the inclusiveness, health, and well-being of our community.” In addition, one of our Goals for Student Learning and Development is to “Foster habits of mind and body that enable a person to live deliberately and well.”
  - Are we doing this somewhere?
  - Are we doing it everywhere?
  - When we say “health and wellness,” who are we talking about? Students? Faculty/staff? Special Programs populations?
  - Our preliminary discussion of what we know we are doing toward these goals, and what we don’t know.
    - **Library:** SGA suggested having wellness equipment such as stretching bars, mobile standing desks, yoga balls and yoga bolsters. The library has provided these.
    - **Student Affairs:**
      - **Athletics** offers physical activity classes, non-credit fitness classes for faculty/staff and students, Intramurals.
      - **Health and Wellness** reports that “we are in year two of our participation in the Jed Foundation Healthy Campus Initiative. Last year we submitted a comprehensive survey regarding our mental health, substance abuse and suicide prevention services and support and had an on-campus site visit to review those survey results.” The survey has identified areas to improve and Health and Wellness is working on initiatives in response.
      - **Student Academic Services** has partnered with Counseling and OAA to offer faculty information sessions for working with students experiencing mental health issues. In addition, they coordinate survival week to help students de-stress before exams.
      - **Campus Life & Engagement** Organizes an LGBTQ+ students, faculty and staff welcome reception each semester. Lunch gatherings and care packages are offered for students staying on campus over winter break. New this spring, Queer Corner is a free clothing resource for students.
      - **Leadership Activities and SGA** organizes Winter Wellness monthly study break during the cold season to help alleviate seasonal depression. OLA/SGA have created a pilot program to provide taxi transportation for students who need to travel off campus for mental health services. Club sports, yoga and martial arts clubs provide physical fitness options. Peer to peer support is available for addiction and mental health. Other offerings are listed in the report provided by Kim Crabbe.

- **Religious and Spiritual Life** offers meditation and mindfulness breaks, yoga and sound healing at Wilson Chapel. The Chapel is reserved throughout the week for Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Quaker gatherings.
- **Student Diversity** OSDP offers a Students of Color Welcome Reception, OSDP Mentoring Program for students of color and students who identify as LGBTQ+. Create in Color Workshop series showcases the talents of people of color and the LGBTQ+ community. Additional offerings are listed in the report provided by Kim Crabbe.
- **Math and Computer Science** Departmental assessment work has focused on student learning goals. They will explore assessing student wellness, perhaps through modifications to departmental evaluations. Departments have the freedom to determine what they want to assess. Assessment does not dictate department assessment goals.
- **Special Programs** Because the Special Programs population is diverse and here for only a short time, measuring health and well-being for this population is difficult. Unless they are Skidmore undergrads, Special Programs populations do not have access to Skidmore’s health services and counseling center. Special Programs does have policies for the protection of minors.
- **SGA** Much of the SGA budget goes to health and wellness programming. SGA sponsors student fitness classes, Skidmore College EMS, student events and clubs provide school/life balance. SGA’s focus is assessing student needs across campus, for instance they conducted a survey to determine library needs. SGA does not do much internal assessment of their own programs.
- **Advancement** Planned improvements to athletics facilities will provide support for athletic teams and enhance the health and well-being of the entire campus. Planned improvements include a new fitness center, indoor/outdoor tennis facilities, and in the future, an ice hockey rink.

**Action Items/next meeting:**

- Share our collective efforts in regards to the Strategic Plans goals for well-being and inclusion
- Draft a “Briefing Memo” for new VPAA Michael Orr with an overview of Assessment: where we are and where we are headed.

*Kerry Nelson  
Coordinator for Institutional Research and Assessment*

## Assessment Subcommittee Meeting

4/24/2018

### Minutes

**Present:** Marta Brunner, Kim Crabbe, Sarah Goodwin, Henry Jaffe, Crystal Moore, Kerry Nelson, Ron Seyb, Lucy Spardy, Michael Sposili, Joe Stankovich, Auden Thomas, Peter von Allmen

1. Minutes from February meeting were accepted, with thanks to Kerry.
  - a. We began with recognition of Sarah Goodwin's excellent leadership of the subcommittee and tireless dedication to assessment at Skidmore.
2. Update on the Institutional Effectiveness proposal and process (Crystal)
  - a. The Institutional Effectiveness proposal has been approved by cabinet and will be reviewed and voted on by IPPC next Friday because it involves changes to the operating code.
  - b. Cabinet buy in on IE will mean accountability for all divisions. Institutional Effectiveness will become part of the way we do business at Skidmore.
  - c. Crystal will share the proposal with the subcommittee after it has been passed by IPPC.
  - d. The biggest change for the subcommittee will be less representation from academic affairs and more college-wide, with each division represented.
  - e. The subcommittee still needs a designee of the Chief Diversity Officer.
  - f. The Institutional Effectiveness Specialist (IES) position is going through the approval process. It is now in budget approval and we will begin the hiring process soon.
3. Round the table: reports on any new material on wellbeing and inclusion, in preparation for synthesizing it.
  - a. The Student Affairs Assessment Activities 2018-2019 document supplied by Kim Crabbe is a good example of an assessment calendar and briefing memo shared across divisions.
  - b. Sarah provided notes from the Academic Affairs Leadership meeting on Goal III: Well Being—To Strengthen the Inclusiveness, Health, and Well-Being of Our Community (attached for those who didn't receive a copy at the meeting).
  - c. Joe reported that Institutional Research supports research on Well-Being and Inclusion with the Withdrawn Student Survey, alumni surveys, and by providing data on race and ethnicity. In addition, the Enrollment Management Committee is doing a multivariate analysis that includes looking at first language and other variables, and that group does micro studies looking at student success and retention.
  - d. Marta reported that the library has a new Diversity Archives Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Diversity-Archives-of-Skidmore-College-161825487813773/> whose goal is to help foster a diverse and inclusive community. Mike Sposili suggested that the page is worth highlighting in Scope Weekly and/or Monthly. Diane O'Connor is the contact.
  - e. For CEPP, Marta reported that the Black Studies minor is in the Curriculum Committee's hands and is on the agenda for Thursday 4/26.
  - f. Auden reported that Special Programs is focused on looking at how students are spending their summers. Are summer work/internship/course opportunities competing with each other and are they inclusive? Students taking credit bearing courses in the

summer have gone down. We should think systemically about what we want students to do over the summer, what our goals are for them, and how the goals relate to longer-term well-being and inclusion, particularly given the close connection between summer experiences and readiness for career development after college.

- g. Advancement, Mike reported, is responsible for resource procurement for the college, and its focus now is on raising \$20 million to double fitness and recreation space and improve athletics facilities for the community's overall well-being. In addition, he reported, Alumni affairs has conducted a study to determine how Alumni of color contribute to and engage with the college. While the assumption has been that alumni of color are less engaged, the data show that alumni of color are just as engaged as white alumni. Mike offered to share a document with the subcommittee which provides a chronology of Alumni Affairs' work on inclusion over the past 2 years.
- h. For Career Development, Kim Crabbe reported that the Sands Family Foundation has funded a new position, the *Sands Family Foundation Assistant Director of Diversity and International Career Advisement*. This is an important step because students of color don't use the career development office as much as other students.
  - i. Career development wants students to spend their summers doing something pre-professional. This is the impetus for funded internships. Ten years ago, there were 9 awards of \$2000 each. Last year there were 50 awards at \$4000 each. This year, 400 applications have been received and potentially 60-61 awards will be given.
- i. Henry reported for SGA that, mindful of its short institutional memory, SGA is creating event evaluations to assess the success of events. This will inform future SGA leaders in identifying what has worked in the past and what has not.
  - i. SGA is also conducting an ADA audit of campus accessibility using GIS.
  - ii. A joint student and staff Residential Life Review Task Force is working to assess residential life.
- j. For Academic Affairs, Ron Seyb reported that OCSE has a new fund to pay for passports for Opportunity students to improve inclusivity for students who wish to study abroad. He noted that we continue to study the connection between mental health and academic performance. Current reporting processes on students are not proactive. Can the college identify at risk students before there is a problem? CampusConnect is a program we are looking at that will train 25-30 members of the community to respond effectively to students' emotional distress. These members will then be able to train others. CLTL has conducted a workshop with students and faculty on mental health concerns in the academic setting. There has been a good response.
  - i. The Academic Affairs Leadership Group had a meeting focusing on the 4 Pillars of the Strategic Plan. At the meeting, members broke into groups and came up with goals they would like to accomplish over the next few years categorized according to Pillars with themes across areas.
    - 1. Crystal made a distinction between "wellness" and "well-being," where wellness is the absence of illness but well-being is more holistic and inclusive. You can have a sense of well-being if you are sick or disabled. Well-being can be measured empirically.

2. Fostering inclusion and well-being leads to a sense of belonging.
  3. Next academic year, a Well-Being Task Force will work to unify the different well-being initiatives, including CampusConnect and HR's wellness efforts; it will determine what programs would be helpful to improve well-being.
  4. How are students of color experiencing the institution? Institutionalized racism may impact well-being by denying students of color a sense of belonging.
  5. The divisions of the college should take stock by evaluating how they are fulfilling the 4 Pillars.
4. Assessment briefing memo for Dean/VPAA Michael Orr
    - a. Academic leadership will provide a briefing book containing a 1 page brief from each area which covers:
      - i. Mission
      - ii. Origins
      - iii. What is distinct about the committee
      - iv. What we have accomplished this year
      - v. Goals
      - vi. How the committee supports the 4 Pillars
      - vii. Current challenges
      - viii. Successes
    - b. Our committee's brief should be centered around IE.
    - c. We could potentially provide a list of key annual assessments.
    - d. A template will be available May 9.
    - e. Brief tentatively due June 1. Sarah would like to complete it earlier and will circulate a draft.

**Action Items/next meeting:**

- Mike Sposili will share the Alumni Affairs document on inclusion
- Sarah will draft the briefing memo for Michael Orr after the template is distributed
- Crystal will share the Institutional Effectiveness proposal after it has passed IPPC

*Kerry Nelson*  
*Coordinator for Institutional Research and Assessment*