Minutes
Meeting of the Assessment Committee
Thursday, September 8, 2005
Academic Affairs Conference Room (2122), Founder’s Hall 3:30 p.m.

Present: Blauwkamp, Butler, Crocker, Cutler, Elliott, Fronczak, Hoehner, Jackowiak, Moore, Powell, Skinner, Unruh, Wheeler, Wilke

Guest: Lois Flagstad

Absent: Bishop, Hodge

The meeting was called to order by Glen Powell, committee chair.

I. Powell opened the meeting with a welcome to three new members: Joan Blauwkamp from Natural and Social Sciences, Janice Fronczak from Fine Arts and Humanities, and Kerri Skinner from Natural and Social Sciences. Powell explained that all terms are staggered so that the two representatives from each college go off at different times, except for the representatives from Natural and Social Sciences. He would like to change that with this term and will ask Blauwkamp and Skinner to decide who will take the longer term.

II. The 2005-2006 school year will be a critical year in program monitoring.

A. Powell briefly reviewed the history of assessment at UNK. Between 1997 and 1999, most departments stopped submitting reports because of a lack of administrative oversight. By 2000, only 15 departments were reporting. The goal for this year is to increase the number of participating programs from 82% to 100%.

B. Out of 59 programs, only 5 have not turned in any type of report within the last year: one undergraduate program and four graduate programs. Because NCA will be asking the coordinator and director of assessment what they are doing about this at the follow-up visit in three years, Butler has made a commitment to pursue personal follow-up with departments. She will be meeting with Deans and their councils of chairs as well as with individual chairs and faculty to offer help and to identify areas that need to be revised for the most effective use of assessment strategies.

C. Powell asked the committee members to help with the communication process. If they hear of faculty from departments in their college expressing frustration because their assessment does not work, they should let those departments know that they do not have to continue doing the same thing. The departments should contact Powell or Butler to discuss ways of solving the situation. The bottom line is that it makes no sense to continually repeat an assessment process or activity that does not work and now is the time to address that.

D. Powell also asked committee members to consider the question of whether it is essential to collect data every year. There are a number of different and effective strategies for certain departments to use in regard to collecting data. There was brief discussion regarding whether NCA requirements would allow for this type of alteration, and
Powell affirmed that from his interpretation of NCA guidelines that what is being done with the data, rather than the accumulation of the data, is now the focus of NCA. That will be a major emphasis of their next 10 year reaccreditation visit. Instead of repeating previous history of waiting until a couple of years before the visit to implement the criteria we need to begin this year.

III. Powell reviewed the budget. He does not yet have a final dollar amount, but his tentative proposal includes $3,000 for stipends, $9,000 for travel, and $2,000 for materials. One thing that will affect the distribution of the stipend money this year is the need to focus on on-line and distance learning assessment. A major portion of the travel money will be used to encourage the members of the assessment committee to attend conferences related to assessment. Powell particularly would like to see some committee members attend the Chicago North Central Higher Learning Commission in April as UNK works toward the NCA visit in 2014. The pending final budget will also be affected by straightening out a deficit of $4,000-$5,000 for a half-salary and tuition for the G.A.

IV. Powell distributed a draft of the strategic plan based on the information gathered in the work of the governance subcommittee last semester. The governance subcommittee will be reviewing and revising it prior to discussion by the full committee. The focus of the strategic plan is implementation of the NCA criteria that went into effect Jan. 1, 2005.

V. Powell recognized Jeanne Cutler’s current project work as she is investigating how best to assemble a database that will be useful to the director of assessment and taking a class on campus in database development.

VI. Butler distributed a status report that she is taking to her meetings with chairs and faculty, which highlights the accomplishments in assessment for 2004-2005 and the focus for 2005-2006. She feels that assessment on campus has made great strides due to the commitments of departments and faculty, as well as the work of the assessment committee.

A. Butler briefly reviewed the tasks accomplished within the last year, specifically, the creation of a student assessment committee, the successful Platte Valley Assessment Conference, the assessment awards luncheon, and the General Studies assessment plan that was completed this summer.

B. Butler highlighted points of focus for the coming year.

1. She hopes to have 100% of reports submitted by December.

2. She plans to host another assessment awards luncheon after the first of the year, focusing on the quality of submissions.

3. General Studies Program data will begin to be collected this fall, with data being submitted to the GSC in January/February with the intent of it being part of annual reports submitted next fall.

4. The focus of assessment this year will be distance education, and Butler will be meeting with departments that have online programs first, followed by departments with only a few online courses.
5. The other significant change in focus will be considering what departments are doing with their collected data. She will encourage chairs and faculty to make informed decisions based on data collection. As Powell stated previously, in the beginning they asked departments to pursue the same reporting procedure, in order to get used to the process of reporting assessment. Now we are at a point where departments can reflect on what they have been doing, consider whether it is appropriate, and make changes that will be more effective for them.

VII. Butler distributed a schedule of assessment conferences for the 2005-2006 school year.

VIII. Butler distributed a new assessment report checklist that she will be encouraging departments to use, which she compiled based on the information gathered last semester in the report subcommittee.

IX. Powell asked committee members to start thinking about what they see as priorities that need to be addressed. He plans to break into subcommittees again this semester, with one finalizing the governance document and the other finalizing the report checklist and then getting involved in the distance education assessment. There was brief discussion about whether the work of this subcommittee would be duplicating the efforts of the distance education committee, and Butler explained that the focus of the assessment subcommittee would be an overall responsibility for the governance of distance education assessment, rather than the specific instruments that will be used in data collection. Jackowiak made the suggestion of inviting a distance education committee member to join the assessment committee.

X. Powell explained that the committee will discuss distance education information more during the first part of the October meeting, followed by a break into subcommittees to begin working on respective projects.

XI. The meeting ended at 4:45.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Elliott, Scribe
Glen Powell, Chair