Present: Anderson, Bishop, Blauwkamp, Butler, Crocken, Elliott, Hyatt, Kommers, von Schrader, Wadkins

Absent: Covalt, Hodge, Lawson, Moore, Unruh, Vavricka

Director of Assessment, Jeanne Butler, called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. in Founders Hall Room 2147.

A. OLD BUSINESS
   1. Butler shared that after Bryan Samuel’s report last month, she completed an assessment training session with Student Services on October 26th. She plans to meet with each department head to discuss their assessment plans and provide direction, and she is still searching for someone to take Samuel’s place on the committee.

B. NEW BUSINESS
   1. Butler reported that 93% of the department assessment reports have been submitted, as of the end of October. The Office of Assessment is working with the departments who have outstanding reports.

   von Schrader is preparing feedback reports on each department’s assessment report and then meeting with each report preparer to discuss the feedback.

   Butler and von Schrader are also meeting with Deans and Associate Deans to give them an overview of what is happening with assessment in their college. They are identifying “best practices” within each college and discussing how these might be implemented consistently throughout the college.

   One of the topics of discussion for Butler and von Schrader at these meetings is to encourage the sharing of information in the assessment reports with the entire department. Butler said that she recently heard of an NCA focus visit where the examiners stopped any faculty member on campus to ask them about assessment. She is concerned that UNK faculty be prepared should that happen at the focus visit in the spring of 2008.

   2. In the last month, Elliott has made substantial revisions to the website in order to make information more easily accessible for the UNK community, as well as for NCA when they visit. Butler encouraged committee members to visit the site and contact the Office of Assessment if they have suggestions for increased ease of use.

   3. Hyatt reported on the work of the Student Assessment Committee. Their first project this year was to redo the General Studies student survey, which they sent to students last week. They have been working on recruiting more members for the committee. They have increased from four members to eight, but they are still
looking for a representative from the colleges of Business and Technology and Fine Arts and Humanities. They have proposed a presentation for the Higher Learning Commission and two presentations for the Platte Valley Assessment Conference, and they continue to work on the Academic Advising survey from last spring.

4. The attendees of the recent IUPUI conference in Indiana shared brief reports of the sessions they attended.
   a. Theresa Wadkins discussed the possibility of using assessment to impact teaching, and she gave examples from her experience.
   b. von Schrader discussed the opening session, which focused on the Spellings report and the trend toward emphasizing standardized tests as the best assessment measure. She indicated that if those involved in higher education do not want to follow the trend, we need to be proactive to search for meaningful alternatives. She offered the idea of portfolios as one alternative.
   c. Butler continued this discussion and mentioned the CLA standardized test, which the UN regents were examining last year. The committee had a considerable amount of discussion regarding the complexities of standardized tests, as well as the alternative of portfolios and e-portfolios, including the need for a standardization of portfolio evaluation.

Butler summarized the conversation regarding the conference by reminding the committee that there are many controversial discussions taking place regarding assessment, the outcomes of these discussions could have significant implications for students, faculty, and institutions.

5. In the coming months, Butler hopes to break into two working subcommittees. She listed potential projects for the subcommittees, but asked the committee to contact her with other ideas, as well. Potential topics include, reviewing software for e-portfolios, continuing work on a campus-wide assessment database, and investigating software and procedures for online submission of reports.

6. Butler reminded the committee that there are still funds available for those interested in attending the Higher Learning Commission in Chicago in March, and she reminded the committee that the Platte Valley Assessment Conference will be taking place at UNK in April, for which she is still accepting submissions.

NEXT MEETING:

The next Assessment Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, December 7, 2006, in Founders Hall, Room 2147, at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Elliott, Scribe