

University Assessment Committee Special Meeting with Dr. Droge (October 3, 2007)

Respectfully submitted by Joan Aitken, Secretary

We will have training in the next meeting. Meanwhile, we can begin to review items sent to us so we will have a context and can bring questions. Here is a checklist for reviewing course materials:

- Make sure each box on left has CLO that each item identifies.
- Make sure every box is filled.
- Make sure each box is measurable.

Dr. Droge's Comments

The Park University Draft Monitoring Report will go up on the UAC website. There will be a comment period until October 22, then we will submit in Nov. The information will go to the Higher Learning Commission, which may have additional questions or requests. One person is reviewing our report now.

Dr. Droge provided a handout of the UAC's charges:

The UAC is a University—not a Senate—Committee, which reports to Droge. The key groups involved and need to be engaged in assessment are faculty, Deans, and this group. Droge said he needs us to help him because “we want great assessment and student learning.” How do we know students are learning and how do we help them learn better?”

UAC Charges:

1. **Educate.** The UAC has an education/coaching function for faculty regarding best practices in assessment. The group is a committee of faculty leading faculty and advising the administration. We need to advise administration and faculty.
2. **Review and Approve.** The UAC has a review and approval function for assessment of student learning outcomes. We have oversight to make sure Park is assessing using best practices.
3. **Document.** The UAC is also charged with maintaining a website to document assessment activity at Park University. With the direction the US Department of Education is moving, documentation of student learning will become an ever increasing demand for higher education. We need one place where a reviewer can go to see what we are doing. We will need to know what jobs Park graduates receive and other ways of documenting student learning.

Assessment Plan for Each Degree Program

We need a common language and need to focus on key pieces. Each degree program has a plan. Plans need formative and summative assessment. And we need to look for curricular consistency.

1. The core assessment model is a major assessment piece.
2. The summative assessment is the end of program piece to make sure students have mastered what we expect.

Annual Comprehensive Assessment Report

We need to see how data collection is used to improve our effectiveness. We need a comprehensive assessment report for the program that includes department by department discussion of end of program assessment, tri-modal study, and course assessment. Departments need to think about that for a more comprehensive view. Deans tend to look at program assessment. We need to keep assessment simple and streamlined, which is difficult. “Core Assessment” means the whole thing, including learning outcomes, assignment, and rubrics.

Dr. Droge’s Response to Question about Authority

Deans should have recommendations from this group about program assessment. We share our recommendations to the department and dean so all three groups are working together. Ultimately, the dean may decide something else, but the dean needs to consider our input. We need to work it out collaboratively. Then the UAC reports to Dr. Droge any time we have issues. The Higher Learning Commission wants a UAC with authority. Learning outcomes come to us.

Dr. Droge’s Response to Questions about Flow-Chart

The deans should hear from UAC before anything is finalized. We want to make progress on both fronts and not be in use a linear way. We may want to talk with deans and faculty to work as collaboratively and quickly as possible. We should send our recommendations to both the department and dean simultaneously. We may want to create a collaborative discussion, which should reduce concerns about the final say. The final say is Dr. Droge’s, no one else. There is more than one way to do assessment, which will cause some diversity. We also look at the standard for assessment at Park. All assessment should be good assessment, including what’s good for the discipline. If we and a dean are deadlocked, we go to Dr. Droge. There are multiple ways of doing assessment and ultimately it probably doesn’t matter beyond being reasonable. There may be very specific reasons why a department needs to do something a particular way.

Dr. Droge’s Response to Questions about Where Should Everything Be Stored

We want redundancy. One repository is the website. We could use shared file as an option, which is backed up in several ways. Electronic space is not a problem. The problem is keeping track of the latest for so many documents. Dr Droge suggested a document management plan. We can have someone work with us because it’s too big of a job for one person’s hard-drive.

We discussed how the redundancy of two sets of records is a problem, and we should have one set. Perhaps the shared file where we all have access and everything is backed-up daily is the answer. Redundancy is accomplished by the syllabus website. The system is there; we just need to use it. Dr. Droge will arrange a track-it request to set up committee shared file. Wen suggested a CSS system so you can always get the latest system, but the system will keep track of the versions. She will work with Ken Austin to arrange. The latest version needs to automatically go into the website. The UAC website could have a link. The faculty is frustrated because they can’t find what they need. Multiple accesses to a single source may work best.

To be more efficient, we could have individual committee members work on the documents, then have someone periodically check across the board at the website. Checking the website is like swimming in mud.

New Courses. This group should be checking materials when they go to the curriculum committee as a parallel process. Assessment materials have been handled as separate documents so the curriculum committee doesn't get bogged down. The UAC and curriculum committee shouldn't be doing the same review. Faculty don't think of the UAC when planning new courses, but it would be good to involve us. If assessment came before curriculum, that may increase overall efficiency.

IT Help. We can have whatever IT help we need. We can't have drafts hanging around. There really isn't anything more important than what this group does because of the importance of student learning.

Indirect Assessment. Indirect assessment is our need to know what happens to students after graduation, including what graduate schools and professional schools they attend. Surveys of employers could be useful. We could put a question on the student's application for graduation. This kind of assessment could contribute to institutional effectiveness.