University Assessment Council  
October 23, 2009, 10:00 a.m.  
206 Samford Hall  
Minutes

Members Present: Drew Clark (Chair), Glenn Anderson, Susan Hubbard, Nels Madsen, Sharon McDonough, Paul Patterson, Constance Relihan, Greg Somers, Tin Yau Tam, Susan Villaume, Rebecca O’Neal -Dagg, and Iryna Johnson

Drew summarized Barbara Walvoord’s visit and the points she stressed during her exit interview with Provost Mazey, then provided a brief update on what has happened since Walvoord’s visit: a letter to department heads announcing pending changes in our assessment system, suspension of access to the AU Assessment web site, further work on alignment of Core Curriculum and General Education goals, and development of planning process for the SACS QEP.

Following examples that Walvoord used, Drew distributed a chart with boxes representing campus constituencies and data and asked UAC members to draw lines representing the flow of data about student learning at Auburn at the current time. After brief discussion of the completed charts, UAC members next completed charts, including a box for the UAC, that would improve the flow of information about student learning and the use of this information for improvement.

The UAC agreed that key groups should be responsible for certain functions on the chart:

- **Approve and review Core courses, including assessments.** This function is the responsibility of the Core Curriculum and General Education Committee.

- **Support assessment measures; fund/conduct some measures.** There were several different points of view. Some committee members suggested that this should be a Provost’s responsibility, others – that it should be Dean’s responsibility. Drew mentioned that he sees this as OIRA function. Susan Villaume suggested that it might depend on the level of assessment. For example, if it is a college specific assessment, it could be a Dean’s responsibility. We can also have some “hybrid” of institutional and college levels. For example, in case of alumni survey one can have a university-level common part and college-specific part of the survey.

- **Aggregate and analyze assessment data from all sources.** Again the opinions were divided. Some committee members thought of it as a Dean’s or Provost’s office responsibility. Others – as OIRA responsibility. Again, it might depend on the level of assessment – institutional or college.

- **Provide training in assessment measures.** As Drew pointed out, there are several ways of approaching training. One of the ways is to have a group of qualified faculty members who would have a responsibility to conduct assessment training. One can also invite a consultant, which we did. And, one can support a web site resource, which we also did for several years. Susan Villaume commented that if one should carry out a lot of training, then assessment is not “clear and simple” any longer.

- **Make recommendations to departments, deans, Provost, VPs, Senate.** A concern was expressed that it might depend on a type of recommendation. Are recommendations related to a
procedure or to an output? At the same time, the group agreed that this should be a function of UAC.

• **Allocate funds in support of assessment-based improvements.** Again, the group agreed that this should be a UAC function.

The next task for the UAC is to set guidelines for a new “clear and simple” format for reporting on the assessment of degree programs. Drew distributed two alternative models that were included in Walvoord’s handouts (Example 2, Department of Biology and Appendix C, Data for Presentation to Department Annual Meeting). Drew also distributed Criteria for a Department’s Report on Its Assessment. Nels suggested a third alternative, which was sent out to committee members later, see Assessment Alternative Form.

In view of the need to prepare departments for new reporting expectations, the UAC members agreed that they should meet one more time this semester.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.