Members Present: Drew Clark (Chair), Donna Angarano, Cecilia Champion, George Crandell, Dan LaRocque, Paul Kittle, Leonard Lock, Edward Loewenstein, Nels Madsen, Sharon McDonough, Karen Rogers, Juliet Rumble, Jennifer Schuessler, Tin Yau Tam, and Iryna Johnson.

Guests Present: Kelly Martin

Drew Clark called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

Minutes from the last UAC meeting on October 26, 2011 were approved.

Drew Clark provided an update on the visit of the President of SACS, Dr. Belle S. Wheelan, to Auburn.

Peer review of program assessment was discussed. Questions about the number of representatives from each unit were raised. It was mentioned that Auburn University has 270 programs. It would be challenging to maximize participation in a manageable way. Several UAC members mentioned that they received a mixed feedback about usefulness of peer review of program assessment from their colleges. Peer review would benefit some faculty members. But some departments felt that it would not be very useful. Overall, while the majority of UAC members approved use of peer reviews, some concerns were raised about their utility.

UAC members discussed the article Valuing Assessment: Cost-Benefit Consideration by Randy Swing and Christopher Coogan. A question of cost of assessment in colleges and units was raised. Many UAC members commented that not enough financial resources are spent on assessment. Assessment cost is mostly faculty and staff time. A concern about duplication of professional and university accreditation was raised.

Cecilia Champion started conversation about costs and benefits of assessment. The problem is that faculty members are not seeing the benefits. Assessment is frequently perceived as an unfunded mandate by faculty members. Estimating the amount of faculty time spent on developing assessment has been briefly mentioned. Does it cost less to purchase a standardized test? It was also mentioned that it is difficult to decide when it is teaching and when it is assessment.

Dan LaRocque mentioned that young faculty members are more interested in assessment. It might be helpful to consider including assessment in promotion and tenure documents. Otherwise, assessment might be taking time from what could help with promotion.

Drew asked UAC members to write down costs associated with assessment and share these costs with the group. Juliet Rumble mentioned project SAILS, a standardized test administered to Auburn students for assessment of information literacy skills. Lenny Lock noted TK 20 purchased by College of Education to collect assessment data. Sharon McDonough indicated that Harrison School of Pharmacy hires actors to play patients when students take an exam. At the same time it is not clear what part of it relates to teaching and what part relates to assessment. Nels Madsen mentioned EBI surveys. EBI surveys are also carried out by the Division of Student Affairs, College of Nursing, and College of Education. Several other
activities, such as course evaluations and paying external consultants to review student work were brought up. Again, most of these activities are related to teaching and only partially to assessment. Drew mentioned administrative costs in salaries and benefits and university-wide projects, such as Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE).

UAC members were also asked to categorize these and other assessment activities and projects into four categories—low cost and low benefit, low cost and high benefit, high cost and high benefit, and high cost and low benefit. Examples of low benefit and high benefit expenses were discussed.

Iryna Johnson provided an update on the progress of 2011 assessment report submission.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.