

Single Committee Proposal

Assurance of Learning Committee + Co-Curricular Assessment Committee

DATE: 02-22-2023

RE: Proposal to Combine the Assurance of Learning Committee with the Co-Curricular Assessment Committee

Dear Committee Members:

Assessment activities on campus have been exciting and challenging all at the same time. We've made a great deal of progress, and we have also discovered many challenges.

As you know, the Higher Learning Commission has placed Wright State University on "monitoring" and requires the University to undergo a Focused Visit.

Specifically, HLC has communicated the following:

1. In a letter dated October 28, 2020, subsequently reissued on October 29, 2020, Wright State University's President, Dr. Susan Edwards, was notified that "[the] IAC voted to change the [reviewing] team's evaluation of Criteria 4B and 5D from "Met" to "Met with Concerns." In conjunction with this action, [the] IAC required the following interim monitoring.
2. Subsequently, a Focused Visit was scheduled for spring 2023 to address Core Components 4B, 5C, and 5D. Wright State University was informed the institution must provide "*evidence of ongoing, systematic assessment processes in undergraduate programs, general education, graduate programs, and co-curricular programs and that there is substantial involvement by faculty and staff in these assessment processes. ... Finally, the institution needs to provide evidence that it develops and documents performance in its operations. The institution should provide evidence that it learns from its experience and applies that learning to improve institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability in areas throughout the University.*"

Challenges

Although the University has made incredible progress in documenting our advancements in association with Criterion 4B - Assessment, we cannot yet claim full compliance in any assessment area.

Core Oversight Committee

- Our Core Assessment efforts associated with General Education would benefit from the following:
 - Updating the committee charge.
 - Improving organization associated with recordkeeping, securing documentation, and archiving evidence of assessment.
 - Following through to ensure assessment data is used to continuously improve our core courses with evidence of results that can be reported to HLC.
 - Improving timeliness.
 - Increasing committee participation.
 - Reviewing Core courses that are unable or unwilling to participate in Core assessment and providing consistent, actionable recommendations to the Faculty Senate for course remediation or elimination of courses from the Core.
- Although the Core Oversight Committee is a standing committee within Faculty Senate and not overseen by our respective committees, the Core Oversight Committee provides reports regarding Core Assessment to the Assurance of Learning Committee.
- When it rewrites its charge, the Core Oversight Committee would benefit from our combined committees' assistance and collaboration (if allowed). Additionally, there may be the possibility to collaborate on assessment activities to improve effectiveness, increase efficiency, and raise performance.

Assurance of Learning Committee

- The Assurance of Learning Committee has historically met once or, perhaps, twice per semester.
- Wright State University must redesign all its efforts, assessment components, and systems. The following list provides some context:
 - Course-level learning objectives (student learning goals – what students will learn within our courses)
 - Course-level learning outcomes (as a result of their learning experience, what students can do)
 - Mapping course-level learning outcomes to program learning outcomes
 - Course-level assessment against course-level learning outcomes for curricular efficiencies, student success, and continuous improvement
 - Course-level assessment—assessment of all courses against learning outcomes—should take at least once place every three years
 - Courses do not have to be assessed every semester or every year, but all courses should be assessed every three years
 - Program-level learning objectives (program learning goals – what students will learn across a body of knowledge before they graduate)

- Program-level learning outcomes (as a result of their learning experience, what students can do as a result of their learning experience across a body of knowledge before they graduate)
- Mapping program-level learning outcomes to department learning outcomes, college learning outcomes, institutional learning outcomes, strategic plans, and the institution's mission, vision, and values.
- Annual Assessment Reports
- Academic Program Review
- Self-studies
- Mid-cycle reports
- Assurance arguments
- Accreditor site visits
- Assessment planning
- Use of software and systems to aid assessment
- Accountability

Co-Curricular Assessment

- Co-curricular life is vital to the student experience at Wright State University.
- Wright State Students engage in organized, non-credit learning activities that highlight, integrate, and enhance otherwise formal academic learning experiences.
- Proper assessment planning also includes identifying the range of co-curricular educational experiences through which students demonstrate learning.
- Co-curricular units and programs set priorities, write learning objectives and outcomes, assess outcomes, then report on progress annually and cyclically.
- A review of our co-curricular assessment activities has revealed we don't always assess for outcomes according to best practices.
- A redesign of this component is necessary.

Academic Program Review

- Historically, academic program review has operated on a five-year cycle in which the entire institution participated simultaneously. I've been told that the process was very stressful. Therefore, the Office of Academic Affairs has partnered with the Office of Institutional Research to draft a new rotating schedule for academic program review. Additionally, the draft document aligns our efforts and review process in support of HLC criterion.
- Although much work has gone into producing the draft document and proposal, neither should be issued yet because the process hereafter would benefit from a review of this committee and shared governance processes.
- Therefore, before the end of the semester, I plan to issue the document to this committee for review and subsequent revision if necessary.

Institutional Learning Outcomes

- I'm told we've historically used our Core Learning Outcomes as our Institutional Learning Outcomes. Unfortunately, our Core Learning Outcomes reflect our goals for outcomes associated with general education rather than institutional learning outcomes.
- Institutional Learning Outcomes describe the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes students are expected to develop in their overall experiences with any aspect of the University (not limited to general education), including courses, programs, and student services. Institutional Learning Outcomes are also written to support our mission, vision, and values.
- Therefore, collaboratively in the spirit of shared governance and in association with a request made by our provost, our committee has been charged with the task of writing Institutional Learning Outcomes.

Watermark Assessment and Accreditation Technology Platform

- The University has investigated expanding upon the Watermark products we already purchase to cause the entire assessment system to become more effective and efficient, creating the culture of assessment necessary for HLC recognition of full compliance with all Criteria by our next reaccreditation visit.
- That visit will occur between August 2025 and June 2026, which will approach more quickly than we anticipate.
- When I joined the University in August of 2026, we faced making up for lost time and effort. Unfortunately, we had to "put the cart before the horse," so to speak, and begin preparations for the Focused Visit from scratch – beginning with writing our Focused Visit report. Furthermore, we did not have time to begin the collaborations necessary to redesign our institutional assessment system(s). Our mantra became, "we'll do what we need to do now, and we'll do everything else after the Focused Visit."
- The Office of Academic Affairs highly values collaboration and shared governance. Therefore, we have much work to do in redesigning our assessment system(s), deploying technology, and making progress toward the mission of assessment to ensure continuous improvement of the student learning experience. We also strive for full compliance with HLC accreditation requirements.

HLC Reaccreditation and Reaffirmation Visit in AY 2025/2026

- As stated, our next HLC institutional reaccreditation and reaffirmation visit will occur between August 2025 and June 2026.
- This timeline is already somewhat compressed. After our HLC Focused Visit, we must focus on redesigning our assessment system(s) while conducting assessment and writing our 2025/2026 Assurance Argument. This document is due no less than eight weeks before our next HLC visit, which could occur as early as June 2025.

As you can see, we have a lot of work ahead of us in association with assessment and accreditation. The institution needs our help! In response, I propose we do the following:

1. Combine the two committees to enhance effectiveness and efficiency.
2. Reduce the committee membership to 16.
3. Consider everyone on the committee as a representative of the committee-at-large, as with an executive committee.
4. Form subcommittees of only two or three members dedicated to working on our challenges and interacting with faculty, staff, and students to achieve our assessment goals.
5. Report the accomplishments and progress of each subcommittee to the committee at large, which might also review and approve our work.
6. Establish clear expectations and timelines while the committee-at-large acts as an accountability partner supporting each subcommittee's efforts and engagement.

I hope you find this work to be as energizing and exciting as I do! You'll receive a meeting invitation shortly so we can gather, put our prodigious minds to work, and discuss this proposal. I'll be in touch soon.

With every good wish, Bruce