The Minutes of
UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
OF
ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The University Assessment Committee met Tuesday, October 24, 2013 at 2:00pm in Rothwell 456. The following were present:

Dr. Monica Varner (Chair)     Dr. Stephen Jones     Dr. Patricia Buford
Mr. Wyatt Watson             Ms. Amy Pennington    Mr. Bruce Sikes
Dr. Jan Jenkins             Dr. Susan Underwood    Dr. Annette Holeyfield
Dr. Ivan Still              Dr. William Hoefler    Ms. Antonette Stuckey
Dr. Mary Gunter             Ms. Audra Porter

Guests Present:
Dr. David Underwood, Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs

Absent:
Dr. Lucas Maxwell            Dr. David Roach
Ms. Marilyn Johnson          Dr. Robin Lasey

Call to Order
Dr. Varner called the meeting to order and introduced our guest, Dr. David Underwood.

Approval of
Minutes:
September 17, 2013 minutes approved by the UAC.

Introduction:
Dr. David Underwood presented Open Pathways, our current accreditation process mandated by two components: the Assurance Review and Quality
Initiative Project (“Gateways to Completion”), and gave a timeline for our reaffirmation of accreditation. A packet from the Higher Learning Commission outlining the criteria for accreditation was provided. Questions arose as to whether each sub-category of the core component of criterion must be completed entirely or partially to fully address the criterion, so further examination will be done to insure accuracy. Dr. Underwood highlighted why we do assessment: to improve the quality of education for our students that they receive at our institution.

Old Business: No old business brought forth.

New Business: Materials handed out: Dr. Varner provided several documents for the committee to review. She discussed:

“Engaging University Units: Building a Culture of Assessment”

Page 1: ATU’s assessment units.

Page 2: Principles to lead ATU through assessment

Page 3: Dr. Varner’s philosophy and assessment model, Utilization Focused Evaluation (UFE). UFE enhances the use of evaluations (assessment). UFE helps users clarify their purpose, objectives, intended results, implications for use, and change model.

Page 4: An example of an assessment and peer review process, Horizontal Evaluation (HE). HE is flexible and can be applied to a range of settings to facilitate the sharing of experiences and knowledge while building trust and a sense of community.

“ATU Evidence of Assessment”

An overview on the completion rates of academic, general education, and non-academic assessment evidence uploaded in TracDat.

“UAC Strategic Plan”

Discussion included scheduling unit assessment, aligning the language of the UAC strategic plan to fit with our goals for usage, the duplicity of uploading data to both regional accrediting bodies as well as in TracDat, and how TracDat will benefit us in preparation for an HLC visit. Motion made to change the language in goal two of 2013-2014 strategic plan.
Motion to Approve Strategic Plan with amended changes by Dr. Gunter and seconded by Dr. Susan Underwood. Dr. Varner agreed to complete requested changes and send Assessment Strategic Plan to UAC by email. If no further changes were required, the UAC strategic plan will be approved and shared with university stakeholders. The motion was unanimously approved if all conditions were met.

Adjointment

The meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

Follow-up:

On October 25, 2013 Dr. Underwood contacted Dr. Varner concerning sub-categories of the core components. Dr. David Underwood researched the requirements for completing subcategories of the core criteria. His response has been included in the minutes. Dr. Underwood also provided an HLC document explaining the process.

Dr. Varner,

After the meeting with the Assessment Committee yesterday afternoon, I called the Higher Learning Commission regarding the sub-components of the Criteria and whether or not it was necessary to provide evidence regarding those. The answer from the Commission indicated that in order to meet any Criterion, the institution must meet all core components and sub-components of the Criterion (if the sub-component is applicable to the institution). In the document that I passed out entitled “The Criteria for Accreditation” I would refer everyone to Page 1, in the lower right corner, under “The Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components”. Without quoting the entire section, please note that it says “The Core Components identify areas of particular focus within the Criterion. Some of these Core Components are further elaborated or explicated in sub-components. The sub-components are not comprehensive: they elaborate certain aspects of the Core Component that the Commission seeks to ensure are not overlooked, but they do not fully constitute the Component. Some of the Core Components do not have sub-components because such elaboration has not appeared necessary. An institution provides evidence with regard to those sub-components of the Core Components that apply to the institution...”

Based on this, I believe we need to move forward with the assumption that it will be necessary for us to provide evidence that we have met the requirements specified in each of the sub-components unless we can make a good argument that they do not apply to this type of institution.

David

Also see HLC Online Assurance Review and the Pathways Model (page two)
The new criteria now contain three levels: The original Criteria and Core Values, plus the Core Values now contain Subcomponents which must be specifically addressed. Meeting all of the Subcomponents can be equated to meeting the Core Values which can be equated to meeting the Criteria. If any subcomponent or core value is not met, that Criterion is not met and sanction follows. All components will be rated by reviewers as 1) met or exceeded, 2) met with some concerns, or 3) not met (which means sanction).

The new Criteria contain an additional, or new, emphasis on the following:

- More explication of mission
- Public obligation and purpose
- Primacy of educational responsibilities over other areas/interests
- Responsible and ethical conduct and full disclosure
- Clarity in governing structures, priority and authority
- Appropriateness of degree programs differentiated by learning goals
- Assured, consistent quality wherever and however programs or courses are delivered
- Effective advising, preparation and placement of students
- Appropriateness of co-curricular programs
- Ability to demonstrate claims made for the educational environment and student experience
- Assessment of student learning
- Program review (must include, in addition to assessment, information regarding retention/persistence and should include information regarding placement of program graduates)
- Student retention, persistence and completion
- Appropriateness of transcription of credit and program/course rigor (some examples mentioned here were dual course credit, transfer equivalency, non-traditional format of course length, presentation format, i.e., face-to-face, online, etc.
- Institutional effectiveness, systematic performance documentation and improvement