

Year-End Report: Assessment Council

1. **Council:** Assessment
2. **Academic Year:** 2017-2018
3. **Council Members:** Yoel Beniluz, Cara Berg (Chair), Lorra Brown, Meredith Drew, Kendall Martin, Greg Mattison
4. **Council Charges and Summary of Council Activities**

Additional Charges (Priorities for 2017-18)

Work with the Academic Standards Council and Associate Provost for Curriculum and International Education to revise procedures and documentation for revisions to the Program Review Handbook and clarify the process of assessment.

Through a collaboration with the Academic Standards Council, the Assessment Council was able to receive clarification, information, and future ideas regarding program review. The two councils met jointly in December to discuss the questions both groups had about the Program Review Handbook, assessment, and program review.

Dr. Lincoln joined both councils at the March meeting, providing helpful information, including:

- Current status- the university is moving ahead with the program review schedule. The schedule is operationalized as an eight-year cycle.
- There has not been a significant amount of progress made on the WPU Program Review Manual from the Provost's office (which was updated in 2012 during the change of the mission and goals).
- Programs get rejected by the President's Council for two usually two reasons: no assessment plan and not following the recommendations of outside review.

Questions and Answers from that meeting included:

Q- If a change to the program has to be implemented based on program review, what is the university's timeframe on that?

A - Courses and program changes go through the traditional process, not taking into consideration the recommendations of program review. The Dean will guide major program changes with the department. The impact of larger changes to the Middle States or other accreditation agencies would also be taken into consideration.

Q - Is there a pathway for program review for the next Middle States report?

A- Right now we have some good examples since our periodic review, and we are doing the necessary work to work on the UCC program. We need to work on how we are assessing outcomes, but we are following through on what we need to do.

Q- Will there be a need for a new assessment plan for the UCC?

A - In discussions with Jonathan Bone (UCC Coordinator) to do a program review of the UCC plan, and to treat it like a department going through a program review. The UCC Council is looking into this now, and reviewing the syllabi for UCC classes, and will report back to the Provost's office by the end of the semester.

Q - What would the role of the two councils be next?

A - Get the message to the Senate about what program review (timelines and procedures) is all about.

As a result of the information from this meeting, the Assessment Council determined that their work on this charge should continue during the 2018-19 academic year.

Develop assessment training and information sessions at the College level, based on the results of the Needs Assessment Survey deployed in Spring 2016 and presented to the Faculty Senate in October 2016; consider request.

A member of the council is part of IRT and discussed the idea of using Blackboard as a way to disseminate a survey. That discussion went from a survey to the idea of a course shell training module to help the campus community with assessment. The Council would solicit interested parties through targeted surveys or focus groups to find out what issues people are really struggling with, then find an expert to address that subject area with a small group. The session could be recorded and distributed.

The idea was began and discussed this year and would be implemented during the 2018-19 academic year.

Collaborate with the Research and Scholarship Council to assess its effectiveness in promoting research

A discussion with the two chairs of the Research and Scholarship Council revealed that the Research and Scholarship Council had a similar charge but their charge was worded to focus more on the ART award. The Research and Scholarship Council rescinded the charge, however, discussion was had between chairs about possible work for next year with assessment and promoting research.

Standing Charges

1) The Assessment Council shall carry out its charges within the context of the current Assessment Policy and the "Principles of Assessment", adhered to by this institution. On this campus, assessment is distinct from evaluation. Assessment at WPUNJ shall be defined as "the measurement of course, program, and other student learning outcomes, as well as university-wide curricular initiatives, for the purpose of improvement." To enhance our educational environment, assessments will be designed that:

(1) Better articulate the educational goals

(2) Provide means for collecting information on the progress towards the goals,

(3) Disseminate results to faculty and staff involved, who will consider possible modifications in that which has been assessed.

The discussions at our meetings looked to address these charges. One discussion the committee had dealt with an assessment plan. Questions about an assessment plan included:

- There has not been an Assessment Plan in place for several years now. Do we need one?
- Who takes ownership of the Assessment process; what are the roles of Administration & Faculty?

The group, in several meetings, discussed different departments' views on assessment. It was noted that the 2015-16 individual college assessment report does not have information regarding the various attitudes toward assessment reflected by different colleges. It was also noted that colleges who require assessment as part of accreditation seem to reflect a different disposition toward assessment than those who do not and working from assessment template seems to improve acceptance and participation. Discussions on the previous Needs Assessment resulted in the idea for the Blackboard Course Shell and training assistance that would result from that.

2) The Council's principal functions shall be to:

(1) Inform and educate the university community regarding issues and trends in relation to assessment (e.g. via an annual newsletter, and annual university forum).

(2) Act as consultants for assessment projects campus-wide, including program reviews.

The council gathered information from a variety of sources this year: past surveys, other councils, their own experiences, and a conversation with Dr. Lincoln to assist them in informing and educating the university community. With all the information gathered, the Assessment Council can next year implement potential survey tools and training modules. The ongoing work on program review will hopefully be a collaboration with both councils and the administration next year.

Charge 2-2 is mentioned above in Additional Charge 1.

5. Recommended Charges For The Next Academic Year:

- 1) Work cooperatively with the Academic Standards Council and the administration to outline the timelines for the Registrar (Banner)/ official University catalog system / University website in order to have the program review updates and new programs up and running in a timely manner in order to assist current students and recruit new students.
- 2) Develop a Blackboard Shell through collaboration with IRT, including needs assessment from focus groups and surveys. Develop content on the shell useful to the campus community about assessment.
- 3) Work cooperatively with the Research and Scholarship Council to discuss assessment and research promotion.