

Charge to the Academic Assessment Committee

Revised December, 2001

The Academic Assessment Committee was created in August 1995 to help guide and coordinate campus assessment efforts. During its April, 1995 visit, the SACS Accreditation Committee found that the university needed to do a better job of establishing student learning outcomes for its academic program, of evaluating the extent to which expected outcomes were actually met, and of using the results of evaluations to improve program effectiveness. Originally composed of representatives from each of the university's nine departments and four colleges, the committee's membership was expanded during the 2001-2002 Academic Year to include all chairs and deans. The charge to the committee was also revised to focus its activities more directly on the reformulated SACS accreditation requirements approved in December, 2001. The new standard on institutional effectiveness reads as follow:

The Institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and administrative and educational support services, assesses whether it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results.

In addition to this general requirement, a SACS standard specific to undergraduate programs requires institutions to identify competencies within the general education core and provide evidence that graduates have attained those college-level competencies. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board also requires institutions to assess the extent to which common core course objectives are being achieved.

The revised charge to the Academic Assessment Committee is to:

- 1) Oversee the reporting process on assessment. (All units in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs are expected to complete an "Annual Assessment Report of Student Outcomes" and include it in their unit plan.) Committee responsibilities will include recommending to the President university-wide assessment guidelines regarding the kinds and number of assessment instruments to be used, and the type of documentation that must be maintained of the results of assessments and how they have been used to improve effectiveness.
- 2) Compile the annual department assessment reports into a single campus-wide assessment report and distribute this report by April 1 of each year. All campus-wide assessment reports will be posted on the UHD web site.
- 3) Conduct an annual assessment of the university's institutional effectiveness program and advise the President on how fully the university is in compliance with SACS and Coordinating Board requirements.
- 4) Develop and publicize guidelines under which departments can seek financial support through the Academic Assessment Grants program for special

assessment initiatives. Review proposals for Assessment Grant funding and make funding recommendations to the AVPPA

5) Assist in the maintenance of assessment resource in the Library.

6) Advise the President on other projects that might be undertaken to support and assist departments in their assessment efforts.

Final Report of the 2002 – 2003 Academic Assessment Committee

The committee met once in the fall and once in the spring to review the state of assessment activities at UH-Downtown. In addition to sharing information among themselves on academic assessment activities taking place in their own departments and colleges, committee members heard presentations from Karen Alfaro-Chamberlin of the Alumni Office regarding information available in the alumni data base, from Dr. Caroline Jurgens, Director of Counseling, Career and Student Health Services on the job placement information collected by her office, and from Garry Greer from University College on the university's participation in the Pew Foundation's Student Engagement Survey.

A major issue at both meetings was assessment of student learning outcomes. A draft copy of the "Annual Report on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes for the Academic Year 2000-2001" is attached. After reviewing the assessments reports that had been submitted as part of the unit planning exercise, there was agreement that some departments continued to have a difficult time in coming up with direct measures of student learning outcomes. Dr. Alberto Gomez-Rivas, chair of Engineering Technology, indicated that his department had run into difficulties in its last ABET accreditation review because it could not provide data on the job placement of graduates. Other departments agreed that employment surveys of alumni were needed to assess how effective a student's educational experience had been in preparing the student for the workplace.

David Mitchell reported that the College of Business had decided to use standardized exams prepared by AACSB to assess learning outcomes. The expense of these exams would be covered by a special student assessment fee. These exams were designed to test over the material the AACSB had determined should be part of any Business Curriculum. The results will show COB faculty what areas of the curriculum need strengthening and how UHD graduates compare with the graduates of other business schools.

Fairbanks proposed administering a short survey to graduates right before the commencement ceremony. The survey would ask students to evaluate how well the university had achieved the major goals listed in the university's strategic plan. After discussion, a basic set of questions were agreed to. Greer and Fairbanks were charged with producing the survey instrument and administering it. The Graduating Student Survey was administered at both Winter and Spring Commencements. A copy of the survey and the winter results are attached.