

VALUE-ADDED ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Introduction

As Trustees know, an important aspect of the June Board resolution was its stipulation that we begin the process leading to implementation of University-wide value-added assessment by meeting with faculty and campus leadership to develop the initial procedures and timeline to be followed as well as a formal Memorandum of Understanding, to be endorsed by faculty governance, which will address faculty concerns.

We completed the task of developing a draft of the Memorandum of Understanding at the end of September, so that it could be discussed at the fall plenary sessions of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges and the University Faculty Senate.

Fall Plenaries

At its fall plenary, the Faculty Council voted to respectfully request that the Board of Trustees reconsider the June resolution and allow Community College faculty to proceed unimpeded with their current approved plans of general education assessment. The Faculty Council indicated that the faculty do not support a system-wide plan for the use of common metrics to assess student learning outcomes, and the resolution that was passed did not address the MOU.

The University Faculty Senate, at its fall plenary this past week, respectfully requested that the Board suspend implementation of the June resolution in order to engage in a substantial dialogue among representatives of the Provost's Office, the Board of Trustees and faculty governance regarding "University-wide campus-based assessment." (By this, I believe they intend to describe a diverse set of campus-based processes across the University.) Further, they indicated that they cannot support the proposed MOU but that they do support an ongoing discussion which will produce a mutually acceptable process of University-wide campus-based assessment. They also underscored their long-standing commitment to University-wide campus-based assessment and indicated that they will urge campuses to continue to implement their GEAR-

approved General Education assessment plans. And finally, they invited the Board and System Administration to continue to discuss the assessment of foundational skills in General Education, indicating that this may include externally referenced measures of the campus's choice that provides for campus responsibility and System Administration oversight.

Next Steps

At this point, I have not yet had an opportunity to speak with Chancellor King and to receive his instructions as to how to proceed. But clearly, the opposition of faculty governance bodies to what has been proposed complicates the implementation of the June resolution. Aside from the practical difficulties we would face in not having willing faculty participation in the development process or volunteer campuses for the pilot process, we have a deep respect for faculty responsibility for the activities that go on in their classrooms. We have tried—from the outset—to develop an assessment initiative that enjoys the support of faculty across the University, as experience with assessment nationwide indicates that it is always better to have strong faculty buy-in if the assessment process is to grow roots and thrive.

Despite these difficulties, I remain optimistic. While I am disappointed that faculty did not articulate their support for the underlying objectives of value-added assessment, including the importance of probing campus-based factors that influence intellectual growth (goals which are well grounded in good assessment practices), I do believe that the faculty are sincere in wanting to work with us and I believe that we will succeed in developing a process that we all agree will address the important goals of this initiative.

Donald Steven

Associate Provost and Head of the Office of Academic Affairs

System Administration

October 27, 2003