Manoa Assessment Committee (MAC) Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2012, 12:00 PM, Hawaii Hall

Meeting started at 12:05 PM, with following participants:

Committee Members   Ex-Officio & Invited Guests
    Violet Harada   Kyle Kurashima (ASUH Rep.)
    George Harrison   Aaron Levine (GSO Rep.)
    Peter Hoffmann   Marlene Lowe (Assessment Office)
    Sang-Hyop Lee
    Adam Pang
    Lilia Santiago (Cmt. Chair)
    Amy Schiffner

1. Call to meeting (Lilia)

2. Announcements

    a) Peter will chair the next meeting, on April 11, due to Lilia's research leave.

        i) Peter notes that a vice chair will eventually need to be assigned.

3. Review of 02/22/2012 minutes

    a) Committee approved the minutes.

4. Report on the High DFIW subcommittee meeting (Lilia)

    a) Lilia reports that the Vice Chancellor has indicated he will address the departments' concerns.

    b) Lilia says that consultation with advisors will be held before Spring Break, so the subcommittee wishes to address some of the issues and suggested actions.

        i) One suggested idea from the subcommittee's meeting was to organize a student orientation in how to retain students. Subcommittee is still considering the details for this.

        ii) Sang-Hyop states that The Manoa Advising Center does something very similar, so we may consider including the currently suggested orientation as part of that effort.

            (1) Lilia says that the Manoa Advising Center seems to have a lack of advisors.

            (2) Adam asks what the role of the advisors at that office is and asks how students are selected for advising. Asks if advisors help with time

management and other DFIW-related issues, in addition to their course planning.

(a) Lilia says there is a perception that students do not carefully consider which courses they should take.

(b) Kyle answers that students are getting the opinions of the advisors to see if there is something that needs to be changed.

(c) Lilia states that sometimes the advisors need guidance about what to advise. Also, the number of advisors needs to be considered.

iii) Sang-Hyop raises the question of why DFI and W are combined into a single category when the reasons students get a W or I may differ from the reasons they get a D or F. He says that students' choices are made for different reasons.

(1) Lilia adds that they notice that the dates of withdrawal may be too early. A student can withdraw and then add a course, and the student might not know their standing in the course before they withdraw. So, the subcommittee is suggesting possibly moving the date of withdrawal.

(2) Sang-Hyop adds that he is concerned that students fail to withdraw by the deadline but continue to miss class, which results in an F.

(3) Peter suggests that with withdrawals, it is more likely to do with the content than with the student's performance.

(4) Aaron addresses the two different Ws—one that is not on your transcript, and one that is. This latter suggests that this is why the late Ws and the Is are included with Ds and Fs. He adds that we would expect the Ws and Is to be randomly distributed across courses.

(5) Sang-Hyop agrees that the Is and Ws should be randomly distributed, but not the grades.

5. Report on the Critical Thinking Workgroup (Adam and Peter lead discussion)

a) Adam and Peter: The workgroup came up with a draft, which they will distribute to MAC before the next meeting so that we can address specific suggestions before submitting to the three committees—the CAP, the GE, and the MAC—and before submitting to the full senate.

b) Peter says the workgroup is in the fact-finding stage. The following year, they expect to identify implementation plans, and the year after that, expect the implementation.

c) Lilia asks if the critical thinking meshes with the DQP.

i) Adam's take is that the DQP is a general, overarching, plan.

ii) Violet and Amy add that critical thinking runs through the five DQP.

6. Report on the DQP Workshops (Lilia, Amy, and Marlene leads discussion)

   a) Marlene, Monica, Lilia, Amy, and Adam attended one or both workshops.

   b) Lilia says that WASC is moving toward having five pillars of the qualifications (e.g., critical thinking, oral communication, etc.) for graduation.

      i) Amy clarifies that WASC seems to have backed off from making the 5 pillars a requirement and more of a guide.

         (1) Marlene adds that, yes, WASC is presenting the DPQs as a suggestion for programs to consider.

   c) Amy states that WASC sees their suggestions as a way to replace prestige with competency, where the content of courses takes precedence over the institutions' status as elite or not; that this is a means to level the playing field, to make students' choice to select a school about the content rather than a university brand.

      i) Lilia adds that there is some resistance, for example among employers, that students do not graduate with the required skills. Students who graduate from Harvard, for example, might not actually fit the job—it's not guaranteed that these students will have the skills to work.

      ii) Amy says that yes, there is a perception that students are graduating without the skills that employers want, so WASC is presenting a way to address that need.

      iii) Lilia says that an issue is that the levels of proficiencies are up to the universities to decide.

   d) Lilia says that one of the vague pillars is the *broad integrated knowledge* (in two academic fields). She adds that it depends on how you define integrated knowledge. The GE component is set, but WASC has not suggested the criteria for evaluating integrated knowledge.

   e) Amy says that the DQP workshop folks (WASC) were discussing how the competencies are presented as being across the board. She expresses her concern about the contradiction in the discussion, that the arts were given a lower status than other subjects, characterized as the lowest-common-denominator, which goes against this message that the purpose is to level the playing field.

   f) Sang-Hyop adds that universities in Asia are providing free degrees, where students create their own degrees, might address some issues and might be doable here.

      i) Peter adds that this might be perfect for some students, but not others.

      ii) Marlene says this sounds like interdisciplinary studies.

         (1) Adam agrees and asks if interdisciplinary studies was on the chopping block.

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g) Amy says there is this notion that career training is more strongly valued than the liberal arts and that there has been a culture shift in thinking about degrees as a career track and that this has had an effect on the academic track students choose. The concern is that the DQPs are presented as career prep that moves students away from liberal arts. WASC has a large effect. A big part of their role is to define where education is going and it will be interesting to see how this impacts everyone.

    i) Lilia asks how civic learning is different from applied learning in WASCs definition.

        (1) Marlene reads from DQP brochure and she and Amy note the career-emphasis in the wording.

    ii) Aaron agrees that this is an issue and says he saw this as promoting rote learning, not the thinking skills.

    iii) Sang-Hyop says that another way to view this is as providing opportunity for students to learn about the real world.

h) Lilia asks if new employees are trained on the job.

    i) Not much anymore, says Marlene.

    ii) Peter says that an issue is that unpaid internships are becoming more common, but that this is a policy issue and probably not an academic issue.

    iii) He adds that these issues are relevant for students applying to grad school. We need both the applied and the academic focus.

        (1) Aaron says that in his experience, he had to argue his way into some graduate courses because he had the requisite knowledge. He adds that the name of the major should sometimes not be as important as the courses they took.

            (a) Peter adds that students who complete a thesis or final-project demonstrate that they can make the cut, though, so a degree is valued more than taking course-work only.

i) Amy addresses Lumina and financial institutions' roles in their influence on WASC, and WASC's influence on education.

j) Lilia recaps on the process of WASC's involvement.

k) Amy reminds us that UH System has volunteered to participate in WASC's suggested plan.

    i) Lilia clarifies, saying that *Manoa* has not agreed, even though other institutions in the system seem to have agreed.

7. Reports from the AO office (Marlene)

a) Marlene summarized feedback on the Annual Report rubric

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i) Peter asks if there is a system-wide use of the rubric. Marlene says that AO's hopes and dreams are that someday the MAC will embrace this and use it as a talking-tool among the various departments to find out how the AO can help the departments in terms of assessment support and MAC can make resource recommendations. So, if we get this into nice shape, we can pilot this out with a select group.

ii) Amy says she tried out the rubric and added that it would be useful to give to all assessment coordinators when they prepare their annual reports

iii) Marlene concurs and says that this, along with examples, will likely be useful.

iv) Peter says that most departments will appreciate *some* type of feedback.

b) Marlene encourages us to attend the workshops on assessment, the details of which are in the email sent out earlier this week.

8. Lilia announces that the next meeting will be April 11. The last meeting of the semester will be May 2nd to avoid conflict with the finals-week schedule, which is during the 2nd week of May.

9. Meeting adjourned at 1:00.

Respectfully submitted by George Harrison