Neag Assessment Committee Agenda
Fall 2007

December 3, 2007
11:30-1:30

I. Welcoming
   Priorities
   Introductions
   11:30

II. The Alumna Survey Results
    Brief Introduction: Survey, Distribution, Analyses-to-Date
    Work Groups (across departments)
    Report Out
    11:38

III. The Employer Survey
     Brief Introduction
     Work Group (by departments)
     Report Out
     12:15

IV. The Departments’ Assessment Plans
    Presentation using OATS System
    Mission, Description, Goals, Objective, Measures,
    Results, Use of Results
    12:40

V. The Assessment Plan
   Brief Introduction
   Work Group (across departments)
   Report Out
   12:55

VI. Next Steps
    1:24
Neag Assessment Committee Meeting Minutes

December 3, 2007

The following were distributed prior to the meeting and in a folder at the meeting to facilitate discussions: committee members list, agenda, spring 2007 priorities, 2007-2008 priorities, draft alumni report, draft employer surveys, and draft Neag Assessment Plan.

Welcoming

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting. For introductions, individuals went around the room introducing themselves, departments, and roles. They each shared one thing about travel.

The purpose of the Neag Assessment Committee (NAC) – advisory committee that focuses on assessment across five departments from various perspectives - was articulated. How the committee was reformed and reconstituted in spring of 2007 was shared.

The priorities that this committee successfully completed last spring were reviewed. These included: assisting with developing an alumni survey, assisting with the content validity of a diversity survey developed by a student, starting with an outline for the Neag Assessment Plan, and ensuring each department’s programs have a mission, goals, objectives, and measures tied to the objectives.

This year’s committee priorities were presented and a quick review was given. These priorities are: providing feedback on the alumni survey report, assisting with the development of employer surveys, solidifying our Neag Assessment Plan, and ensuring each department’s assessment plans are tied to objectives for 2007-2008. Relationships of this committee to work done within the School with accrediting bodies, such as NCATE, were discussed with PowerPoint slides used to answer individual questions.

The Alumni Survey – The 1st Priority

A brief review of the instrument and method used to gather perspectives of graduates was presented as a review to returning members and as an introduction to new committee members. This included information on the purpose of the survey (periodically administered across the five Neag departments to gather feedback from graduates), the survey respondents (1994-2006 cohort years; 18% response rate), and the contents of the
instrument (Section A - satisfaction with experience, beliefs, year/program/degree, open-ended questions, grade given; Section B - employment status, satisfaction of employment, and salary; Section C – demographics including option of noting employer; Section D - optional section used by Educational Leadership).

The members were asked what to call the survey because different viewpoints were expressed by many via e-mail. After discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of ‘graduate’, ‘alumni’, ‘alumnae’ and other terms with the members, the committee reached consensus. It should be henceforth referred to as the Program Graduate Survey.

The committee members met and broke into assigned groups across department to discuss their reactions to the draft report sent in advance of the meeting. A recorder for each group noted the findings for each group. Each group also had a defined facilitator and timekeeper. (Thank you to all who participated in these important roles.) Sections in the draft report were assigned in a round-robin format, allowing each section to be reviewed by at least one group.

Committee members were very positive about the survey, indicating that it was the first time done across all departments. They also expressed how it would save time for departments and/or programs that needed to do such a survey for accreditation or other purposes. They felt that it was a good idea to look at each department separately to gauge where the lower response rates are coming from. Concern was also noted in that there was such a wide range of years studied because it might be hard to draw conclusions about pros and cons of a department due to the many changes that have occurred during that large span of years.

For the purposes of this document, the reactions by recorders were sorted and are included under specific feedback about the draft report, answers addressed as part of the review of the draft report, and lessons learned to consider regarding the next survey.

Specific suggestions:

Table 1  We are either not educating a diverse student body or we are not eliciting response from a diverse student body.

Table 2  We’re interested in the variability of some of the measures. For example, the advising experience and the experience in internships have high variability (and somewhat lower means). This is important program feedback. We’re curious to see that the accessibility to faculty is high, but advising is much lower. The table might be beneficial if we could also see the breakdown by department.

Tables 4/5  There’s clearly a gap in the job students feel Neag School of Education is doing with understanding people from other racial/ethnic backgrounds and promoting an understanding of diversity and culture differences overall, since they are stating that the NEAG School is not meeting their expectations.
Table 9: Table 9 should be merged with Tables 11 and 12 as an additional column in Table 11/12 is possible.

Table 10: Table 10 should be merged with Table 13 as an additional column in Table 13 if possible.

Tables 11-15: Satisfaction and Importance data should be presented prior to the difference data.

Tables 16/17: Is there anything that gives us a starting point or prior data to see if we are doing better or worse? How does this compare to the bigger university? Are we better or worse? We would like to see the narrative data: why or why not? Connected to the quantification question (44% dissatisfied with faculty, 22% not prepared for career). Maybe reference the actual questions numbers from the survey with the table. Back to the wide range of years included in the data analysis, the current data should be separate from 12-year data. How to better capture and describe the data, particularly in the narrative/qualitative data? We need to know how many people wrote in a ‘why or why not’ (what is the n from which the percentage of comments were pulled? The numbers here may be quite small, but we can’t see that given the use of percentages. Probably should say something like “12 comments noted….” Rather than “44% of the comments”). Again, is there prior data to determine if we are doing better or worse? Should add a ‘missing data’ number to tables: How many people did not respond?

What are the ‘no’s about? To what are people responding when they say yes or not? We don’t really know what the ‘no’s mean.

The question for Table 17 seems very broad and opinion-based.

Table 18: Should we provide more of a descriptor of what an A means, what a B means, etc.? Write the descriptions of how to grade the overall quality – e.g., exceeded expectations - or some other quality rating scale.

Overall: Since graduates are reporting that there is not enough diversity in course selection, it would be a good thing to look at the curriculum and change things around.

Qualitative Data

Very valuable information!

Overall, linking the qualitative (short answer) to the quantitative would also be more helpful in understanding the meaning of the quantitative data.

Interesting finding that they all liked the faculty but felt that they were unprepared.
Typical of undergraduates that they don’t want the breadth of knowledge in their courses, they just want to know how to do what they need to know (Want more practical knowledge, rather than theoretical).

Results show disconnection between academia and the students. Students just want to know the applied skills, not the theories behind them. Should increase the relevance of courses, but try to hold onto the theoretical frameworks.

Graduates don’t understand that they need the theories, which are why they are reporting this now, but we are confident they will see the significance of those theories in the future.

**Questions addressed as part of the review of draft report:**

Q: Can each department do their own alumni survey? A: Yes, each department was invited to add their own questions to the end of the current Program Graduate Survey. (See Educational Leadership – Section D). The department can also complete a survey of their own graduates.

**Lessons learned to consider “fixing” for the next survey:**

The 18% response rate - One suggestion could be to send out the survey from individual departments.

Emotional questions are asked. It needs to have more objective measures.

Given that we’re looking at a Likert Scale of 1-5, would it at all be helpful to have a scale of 1-7 to better gauge the variability of experiences, beliefs, etc. (Does the 1-5 scale capture variability well?)

A potentially asked question is: Now that you’re out in the real world, what do you feel like you’re missing? What could we have done to make you feel more fully prepared in your job?

Belief statements for the Neag School of Education do not appear relevant to kinesiology, physical therapy, and may not be relevant to other departments as well.

Maybe we can ask them to list what classes they were dissatisfied with and what could have been done to what courses they should include to make them better prepared. For example, make the question more of a positive and narrow it down to what the specific problem is. Don’t ask what was wrong, but what would you improve.

**The Employer Survey – The 2nd Priority**

The purpose of developing employer surveys was discussed. A draft was distributed. Groups then met by departments to generate suggestions.
**General remarks**

Who the employer survey goes to is very important.

You may need multiple surveys to reach the employers of our graduates.

There should be a question asking what percentages of employees are UConn graduates.

**Teacher Education**

Keep the survey as short as you can. You’ll get a greater response rate if it is shorter.

Maybe focus groups of questions toward specific people, i.e. for employers of teacher education graduates, answer questions 4-8, for employers of physical therapy graduates, answer questions 9-14.

Keep the second list (dispositions) as it is, but the first list should be linked to conceptual framework or CCTs. It shouldn’t include anything and everything.

Send one copy to the Superintendent. Look at who is directly reporting. The Superintendent is not going to know our graduates as well, making it a less adequate measure. Maybe it could only be sent to Superintendents once every 5 years.

Follow up on individual graduates with the Principals. Don’t put the specific graduate’s name, just say, “We’ve seen that you’ve recently employed a UConn graduate…”

Should ask everyone more generic questions and then tailor other questions to the employers of graduates from different majors.

Part D overlaps a lot with Part B. All of B should be kept and the parts of D that are not redundant should be added to it.

**Curriculum and Instruction**

In reference to graduates who are not in the teacher education program, I’m not sure how many would be taking subsequent jobs in schools. For those that are, they often return to their regular teaching job and do not enroll in the C & I program to improve their teaching, but rather to set them up for the next step or just broaden their horizons. I think that it may be too varied to have a single, meaningful survey that could ask employers about the non-teacher prep UConn grads. (I also don’t expect that the employers will necessarily know, and they would lump the teacher.)

Questions A-X on Part A may not be appropriate to ask about a non-teacher education group. Our students might be studying curriculum, critical pedagogy, research, student academic identity development, teacher learning (preservice or in-service), pedagogy of
teacher education, etc. The list seems most focused on the “how-to’s” of teaching and leaving the program as an effective k-12 educator. Our students also are more specialized in their studies, so one would not expect such a breadth of knowledge to be addressed in their programs.

From the questions in Part B: The relevant questions seem to be: B, D, E (without phrase “desire to work…”), F, G, K, and L. It would be best to know more specifically what the purpose of the program at Neag was so that the survey could include questions relevant to that particular degree. The other way to do this is to look at the new mission statement that the department of C & I has put together for its doctoral program and develop questions in relation to those desired outcomes.

Also for the questions in Part B: Who do you expect to send this to, say, Central, if one of our doctoral students graduate and took a job as a teacher educator there? Would you send this to a district office to get information about a curriculum facilitator (and how do you indicate that it is for that person and not the teacher prep grads)?

**Educational Leadership**

Changes to questions in Part A:

A. To effectively communicate information and knowledge to stakeholders
B. Using appropriate approaches to deliver information and knowledge
C. Implementing state and professional standards
D. Collaborates with colleagues
E. Adapting in changes in standards and/or resources
F. Dealing with changes in the workplace/organization
G. Knowing professional knowledge
H. Creating meaningful learning opportunities for clients and stakeholders
I. Possesses workplace management skills
J. Integrating technology in the workplace
K. Works effectively with parents
L. Work with stakeholders who are English language learners
M. Work with stakeholders with special needs
N. Work with stakeholders who have both special needs and who are also English language learners
O. Possesses knowledge and skills to identify and develop talent of stakeholders
P. Educates stakeholders from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds
Q. Encourages interaction among people from diverse backgrounds

**Physical Therapy and Kinesology-** They will send in comments.
The Departments’ NEASC Assessment Plans – The 4th Priority

The New England Association from Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation system was briefly explained. Committee members were told that the university went through a NEASC accreditation site visit as part of the 2006-2007 year. As part of this system, the university developed an assessment system that will be implemented across all schools. To assist in the facilitation of this assessment plan, the assistant provost met regularly with the assessment liaison from each school during 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. Now they met as a group two or three times a year. (For Neag, Mary Yakimowski is the liaison.)

Each department must submit the follow information for posting on the OATS system.

- Mission
- Description
- Goals
- Objectives
- Measures
- Results
- Feedback using results

The committee heard that each of our five departments will submit their assessment plan for the second year. The OATS website: [http://oats.uconn.edu/frontpage.cfm](http://oats.uconn.edu/frontpage.cfm) is used. The committee members received an overview of this system using print screens of OATS. In the spring, the committee will have access to each assessment plan from the Neag School. They will also be afforded the opportunity to offer suggestions on each department’s efforts tied to solidifying these plans.

Of further note was that it was shared with the committee that 2006-2007 was the year that all undergraduate programs in the university were to have their assessment plans. The graduate program would phase-in over the next few years. In reality, the timeframe for the university has been modified. In 2007-2008 all undergraduate programs must have the assessment planning done. For Neag, it was felt that we know the concepts involved (from mission to feedbacks using the results), and we are doing both undergraduate and graduate assessment plans. For 2006-2007, most of our departments successfully implemented all steps in their assessment plan. A couple did not do the last two steps. It is hoped that this year we will have all department submit all aspects of the plan.

The Neag Assessment Plan – The 3rd (and most important) Priority

The committee members then heard about the 400+ page document that describes the Neag Assessment Plan. It was first completed in 2005-2006. About 95% of this document captured the teacher education program. Most of the contents can be a standalone report (e.g., PRAXIS data) available perhaps on the Internet. So, it can be decreased to fewer than 50 pages. Also, all departments should be included in the revision.

In the spring, the committee developed a draft outlines. A draft report has begun. The draft is using the following outline:
Overview
Assessment as evidence
Assessment purposes
Assessment as the link to missions, conceptual framework, beliefs, dispositions

The plan
Who and how
Key assessment components
Ensuring reliability, validity, and free of bias
Formal complaint process
The formal review and approval

Data collection and reporting
The cycle for the assessment system
The role of student, faculty, and administration

Alignment to state and accreditation agencies
NCATE – by field, PT, APA, Athletic Trainer, etc.
What components under each do we need?

Ongoing look at assessment
Committee structure
Department meetings
Colloquia on assessment
Conference on assessment
Newsletter

With the exception of the one section – alignment to state and accreditation agencies – the first draft of this plan has been produced. The committee was then asked: Is there anything missing? Is there anything we REALLY need to add? Do we need any clarifications?

To address these questions, the committee members requested to meet as a whole rather than break up into groups. Upon doing so, the following reactions were expressed.

- Very comprehensive
- State the main audience.
- Is there a centralized location we can go to and see those instruments? (Answer: A centralized location is not available now; not sure if it can be established.)
- Include an organizational chart that identifies programs and accrediting body.
- When entering the admissions assessments, a department should make sure it is synchronized with what is presented on the admissions website.
- It shouldn’t be the faculty members assessing their performance. We have to make sure we have multifaceted assessment.
- The assessment plan could become very complicated. Is it even effective if one person doesn’t meet all of the criteria until the spring of their senior year? Is the plan valuable if we cannot say that they have achieved a specific thing by a specific time?
The assessment plan should be required for all programs subject to NCATE review. Could it also be useful for those non-NCATE programs? In reference to Teacher Education, it would be interesting to look at the assessment, but it cannot be all-consuming on top of the other assessments people are doing. For example, each goal is designed to meet the matrix of learning goals. How do you know your students got what you want them to know? One way we can do that is when you admit them, through a collective way, you can say that among these 10 students, they know this and don’t know that. Programs use the same standards to continually assess students and see what they now know and don’t know. Is there a way we can show that across programs? It would be a very effective tool, in NCATE accreditation and for the faculty.

Next Steps

It was stated that the committee members had been great throughout the meeting providing their input. They had shared the perspectives and insights on the draft alumni report, draft employer surveys, and the draft of the Neag Assessment Plan. They also were informed about current activities relative to the NEASC-related Assessment Plans that each department is expected to submit.

Individuals were asked to forward on other suggestions tied to the alumni survey draft report, draft employer surveys, and draft Neag Assessment Plan by the end of the month. Committee members should expect an update of the priorities in January via e-mail.