Neag Assessment Committee Meeting Minutes

November 11, 2013; Time: 11:10am-1:30pm
Location: Gentry Room 144; Lunch: Sandwich, soup, and salad

Welcoming and Introductions

At 11:10 AM, the meeting began with a quick introduction from everyone in the room. Mary reviewed background information on the Neag Assessment Committee (NAC) for new and returning members, including the history of NAC and how all departments and the Teacher Education unit are represented in the membership. Next, the committee charge, the vision/mission statements, and the priorities accomplished during 2012-2013 were presented. Looking at the draft priorities for the 2013-2014 academic year on the handout, we reviewed and approved the following:

In 2013-2014, we wish to accomplish the following:

- Continue dissemination throughout the community of the school’s research study guidelines.
- Continue to update the 2nd generation of the assessment website for this school.
- Report on the first-time results of the schoolwide exit survey and determine an annual timeline and process.
- Determine an annual PAR timeline and approval process; and, review and offer feedback on the PARs submitted for the 2012-2013 school year.
- Fine-tune the development and then administer and report results of the school-wide alumni survey.
- Implement the “self-study” as the first of the triennial assessments about our assessment system and include the newly created data collection survey on faculty involvement in PDS.
- Determine the method(s) of committee’s support for the Research, Assessment, and Evaluation Colloquium Series.
- Obtain updated data (and possibly report, if received) on where our alumni since 1984 are employed in K-12 CT public schools.
- Begin publishing in-house (and web-based) reviews of literature about background and career paths of identified fields/programs.
- Begin publishing in-house (and web-based) information about background and career paths in identified fields/programs in k-12 CT districts.
- Pilot an assessment award to foster collaboration with students and faculty addressing alumni.

Continued from Last Year

Mary went over how the Study Guidelines came into existence and the rationale. Last year, the NAC-developed guidelines were sent to all faculty at the beginning of each semester via the faculty listserv and were posted on the web for the 1st time. As the faculty listserv has been replaced with new technology, it is now posted on Neag Daily Digest and the web. Members provided additional dissemination feedback. Members noted to share these guidelines with students in the honor program
and their respective mentors. Also suggested was to post the guidelines on the web for “Current Students” and the Alumni. Mary indicated she will pursue these and provide an update to the committee.

An update regarding the 2nd generation of the assessment website was covered. Yujin and Mary provided a run-through of the new features that have been updated during this year. (http://assessment.education.uconn.edu/). This included the new NCME assessment glossary, new forms, and PRAXIS results. For example, Mary explained that PRAXIS (including the computerized tests that start with the number “5”) will also be updated each December as we will provide the Class of 2014 preliminary information.

Members noted some suggestions including having the social studies and science elementary test tables available and including the state pass rate on each table. Mary thanked folks and indicated this could be accomplished in December.

It was announced that we will have our 1st colloquium in December. The first colloquium in 2013-2014 academic year was introduced by Rachael. She, Morgaen and other colleagues will offer this colloquium on December 9th from 11:30-1:30. It was further shared that all new faculty members just received a special invitation to present a colloquium.

Schoolwide Exit Survey

Mary provided a review of the three-part structure of the format of Schoolwide Exit Survey, administered the first time at the recommendation of the NAC in April of 2013. The first purpose, contact information, was then highlighted. Mary shared how each department chair and support staff and the respective individuals from the Teacher Education Unit received the Excel spreadsheet from the survey responses. It was asked if alumni know. Mary explained this information was shared with Robyn Wilgis, the Director of Alumni from NSoE, Shawn Kornegay, and the UConn Foundation.

Cory then shared how information can now be accessed on SIS. This was the debut showing. He will now put in the 3 categories of alumni. For example, “Do you wish to be sent job openings? Y/N”. After this, it will be announced to all support staff and department heads.

The committee then endorsed a schoolwide survey for this year with the following general timeline:

- Announce spring administration dates – last week in January and/or 1st week in February
- Announcement to department chairs and Neag Digest – February
- Incorporate new/modify questions into the survey – March
- Administration – 2nd and 3rd weeks of April

Periodic Review of Assessment with PDS Imbedded Questions

Mary introduced a new need – gathering baseline data of faculty involvement with PDS by Teacher Education. Dorothea gave an interview noting this information would come from faculty in all departments. Some members raised various potential concerns and confusion over the purpose of PDS survey. Dorothea explained that is was designed to gather baseline data of what our faculty do in the schools in the identified districts. A concern was raised that faculty and districts could have different perspectives on the “partnership.” Dorothea shared that this survey will aim to assess faculty’s view, and that the unit of analysis would be faculty rather than districts. A concern that the survey could potentially generate an over-estimation of faculty members’ involvement with the districts was raised. Some modifications in the survey were suggested, which included providing responses by each project or assessing involvement in school districts by each year. The issue of time spent to complete this
portion of the survey was raised as a concern as well as the need to “find” the information. Marijke explained to the membership that the intent was to provide general estimates, not to actually calculate the number who submitted surveys, for example. It is to be a gross estimate of what we do in PDS.

Mary mentioned that it could be administered in December or in February after the holiday break, as Dorothea mentioned that she does not wish to rush but rather to carefully construct an instrument. Dorothea thanked individuals for giving her some suggestions on further development of the instrument to faculty beyond Teacher Education. The suggestion was provided for an ad hoc group and/or email to gather additional feedback about that this instrument from committee members.

School-Wide Alumni Survey

Mary introduced overall format, history, and the general timeframe of Alumni Survey. For some of the programs that undertake accreditation, an alumni survey is administered every two years, and questions are embedded as part of this schoolwide survey administered every four years.

Committee members discussed the purpose of the survey, how the data have been used, the length of the survey, and what new information can be obtained in the case that you have about three students in your program. Differences and alignments between the Exit Survey and the Alumni Survey were discussed.

The discussion led to suggestions such as:

♦ The new action research questions should be included only for Teacher Education.
♦ For Part A which poses questions about “satisfaction” and “importance,” some alternatives were suggested such as “usefulness,” “relevance,” “preparedness,” and “what we need to add to advance in 5 or 10 years later” were brought up for consideration.
♦ For Part A, rather than “no opinion”, consider “N/A,” “I don’t use this skill,” or “UConn prepared me well.”
♦ For Part B (Employment Information), review potential confidentiality issues when asking current employers information.

Mary will gather the ad hoc committee next week. She asked for interested people interested to let her know via email.

PAR-Program/Concentration Reports

Historical information was provided by Mary. She explained that the University has been trying to get all programs involved in developing and implementing an assessment plan for almost 10 years now. Before, the assessment plan used a system called OATS. We were notified that the university would no longer support OATS, and that each School/College now needs to develop a system to do assessment plans. The components of the assessment plan include the program’s articulated mission, goals, objectives, measures, data, results, and implications of the results. Last year we implemented PAR at NSoE, instead of OATS.

The relationship of SPA-PAR to university-level requirements was discussed. Some troubleshooting areas identified were system limitations, response quality issues, and no plans submitted. Solutions were not suggested at this time. Mary shared her frustration honestly with the committee. She suggested that this item be put on hold until our Spring meeting. In the meantime, Mary will send the links out to the entire committee so that all can directly read the “view” on the assessment plan from the University’s perspective.

Wrap-Up and Follow-up

Mary thanked everyone for attending and for their help with the committee work. The next meeting will be in the spring, March 26.