

Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment March 11, 2008, 1:00pm MINUTES

Members present: Judi Repman, Maggie LaMontagne, Chris Thompson, Delores Liston, Kent Rittschof, Chair; *Ex-Officio*: Donna Colson, Randy Carlson, Stephanie Kenney

1. Minutes

Minutes from the February 19th meeting were unavailable, but the meeting was reviewed and documented here.

It was reported that the February meeting included a discussion of the existing T&L department dispositions rubric and the way that it addressed requirements in that department more effectively than a common one could. Discussion centered on whether or how T&L would use the common rubric. The draft rubric assembled by Judy Repman per previous committee discussions was distributed and examined at that meeting. No changes to the rubric draft had been reported yet.

Maggie had recently discussed the T&L department concerns with Jennie Rakestraw and following that discussion reported to the committee now that T&L would be using their existing rubric as their required dispositions key assessment and therefore could use the common, committee developed rubric as an add-on to address college-wide Unit-Assessment needs, but that they would not call it their “key” assessment.

The challenges in creating a meaningful college-wide graduate key assessment rubric were acknowledged again.

2. Agenda

Agenda items included:

1. Minutes
2. Feedback on the graduate dispositions rubric draft
3. Progress on the Proposal for a standing Assessment/Accreditation committee
4. New NCATE Standards -- Stephanie Kenney
5. Reliability/Validity/Fairness Policy: Plan for revision/completion – Kent Rittschof
6. As may arise

3. Feedback on the graduate dispositions rubric draft

Members carefully examined the rubric draft and opportunity for feedback was given. It was suggested that the scoring be done as a 1, 2, 3 rather than a range of scores given that this rubric was being used for program and Unit assessment purposes and the 1, 2, 3 approach was decided upon by COE administrators for all graduate reporting of key assessments.

Discussion of the pros and cons of using three discrete levels versus a continuous scale were discussed. Issues included scoring for unit assessment versus course grading and development, scoring the rubric using a set of stated criteria versus calculating a percentage based upon the added numbers, and failing the rubric with one or more unacceptable ratings relative to failing the course or having effect on the course grade.

This discussion led to another discussion about the need to decide how the rubric would be used. That is, determining whether the rubric is used in a course would have implications for its use in scoring and the implications for failing one or more criteria/elements in the rubric. Some members expressed the view that it would likely need to be used in a course, which could be designated by departments and program committees.

The minimum number of times the rubric would need to be used was discussed. It was suggested that the minimum could be set at one time, possibly toward the end of a given program would work, and that providing the rubric to students early in the program would allow them to work toward satisfying the known criteria. However, it was pointed out that a systematic, developmental approach was explicitly required by NCATE (p. 22), so it was agreed that administering the rubric in at least two courses would be more appropriate, unless a better solution could be devised. It was further suggested that the score might only be reported once (preferably later in the program), but that the rubric be used at least twice.

Following additional discussion, suggested recommendations from the committee include:

- a. Use of a 3 point scale (1, 2, 3);
- b. labels of Unacceptable, Acceptable, Target (to match NCATE and help students see what is not acceptable and what to work toward);
- c. Administration of the rubric should ideally take place twice in each program, preferably once in an early course and once in a late course in the program, to be determined for each program;
- d. Inclusion of some additional criteria description for plagiarism/professional judgment under the “Commitment to Knowledge, Skills...” category and something about NCATE’s focus on “all students can learn” under the “Commitment to Diversity” category, possibly something regarding technology about “as available and applicable,” given the various technologies that might be available while assessing dispositions (versus those that are required during actual technology skills evaluation), and a statement regarding the fact that the use of the rubric and the evaluation would be relative to the expectations within current program the student was in, and not those of any past or future programs of the student.

Additional concerns expressed by the T&L department relative to the fact (mentioned above) that they already have a usable dispositions rubric might suggest that discussion about T&L’s use of the committee developed rubric would possibly continue, likely with T&L faculty or the COE Administration.

4. New NCATE Standards

Stephanie had a copy of the newest NCATE standards, which were useful when she referenced them during the discussions of the rubric. These new standards and their implications would be discussed at a future meeting, following further study of them.

5. Reliability/Validity/Fairness Policy: Plan for revision/completion

Kent distributed a copy of a proposed revision to the committee's existing draft of the Fairness Policy. The revision uses the wording developed by the committee and breaks the Fairness policy down into a policy statement and a set of procedures. The procedures are categorized by "Performance Criteria/Standards" and by "Data/Reporting."

The purpose for this proposed two-part revision is to have a brief policy statement that captures the essence of what the College intends to do regarding assessment, which could be more easily used in accreditation reports and elsewhere, then have a set of procedures that could be changed by committee each year to evolve with changing needs. In addition, the revision uses the more accepted, all encompassing terminology of Reliability, Validity, and Fairness, in an effort to avoid wording that is less encompassing (Bias and Consistency).

(Note for reference: Although NCATE uses the terms Bias and Consistency [along with Accuracy] in standard 2a, all those terms are encompassed by the arguably more appropriate terms Reliability and Validity, which are also explicitly linked to useful assessment standards developed by APA, AERA, and NCME. Also, NCATE standard 2a does use the term Validity.)

This proposal was briefly discussed and will be discussed further at the next meeting. Stephanie agreed to look at the new NCATE requirements regarding a policy on assessment.

6. The committee adjourned at approximately 2:35pm