

**Report to the SIUC Faculty Senate  
From Leslie Freels Lloyd, representative on the College Wide Assessment Committee  
July 8, 2009**

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the Faculty Senate representative on the College Wide Assessment Committee (CWAC). The CWAC was scheduled to meet monthly throughout the 2008-2009 year, however, there was a miscommunication and I was not informed of the Fall semester meeting dates. Further, a few meetings were cancelled and I was out of town during two, resulting in my being at about 5 meetings.

The Office of Assessment primary mission is developing and implementing academic (student) program assessment. Assessment is mandated by the [North Central Association of Colleges & Schools](#) (NCACS) and the [Illinois Board of Higher Education](#). According to the University, "the University supports this activity in recognition of the fact that, performed properly, assessment can systematically improve academic programs and student achievement."<sup>1</sup>

During the 2008-2009 academic year, the Acting Director of the Office of Assessment was Dr. James Allen, who also chairs the College Wide Assessment Committee. This office is under the direction of the Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, currently directed by Dr. Patricia B. Elmore.

Of course SIUC's NCACS site visit is in March 2010. Thus CWAC's primary activity during 2008-2009 was to address issues related to the upcoming accreditation site visit. Our primary activities are outlined below.

1. Review of unit assessment report and plans.

Campus units (Colleges, Departments, and other units, such as the Student Center) were asked to submit their student or program assessment reports and/or plans. These plans and reports were then reviewed, using standardized review criteria, and feedback provided by committee members. One of the more concerning issues was the lack of consistency in assessment plans, as well as several campus units that didn't submit reports, some even expressing that they don't have plans to submit a report. This is further addressed in #4 below.

2. Provision of assessment training opportunities.

The CWAC provided a training workshop to provide assistance to those who conduct student assessment. The committee members initiated a two-day workshop, conducted by Dr. John Shuh, Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Study, Iowa State University. Approximately 40 persons participated in the training, however, it was noted by the committee that those who attended were already conducting student assessment and submitting reports and, several of those who are not engaged in student assessment, were not in attendance at the meeting (although specifically invited). A few units who are not yet engaged in student assessment sent representatives, but very few.

3. Search for a Director of University Assessment.

Another activity of the CWAC was to recommend and support the Interim Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs in recruiting and interviewing candidates for the position of Director, University Assessment. The search committee spent several hours on this task, reviewing 25 applications and making a recommendation, back in April, that two candidates be interviewed and by the end

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<sup>1</sup> <http://assessment.siuc.edu/welcomeF.html>

of the semester May 11. The current status of the search is that the University has decided not to fill the position at this time.

4. Development of a campus-wide assessment plan.

The CWAC worked, under Dr. Allen's guidance, to develop a strategic campus-wide assessment plan for undergraduate student outcomes. It is difficult to develop an assessment tool that can be utilized by all campus units to ensure all SIUC students are meeting core SIUC learning outcomes and the processes by which our university measures said outcomes. Clearly, it is much easier to do this on a unit level. The CWAC will continue to attempt to develop said tool in Fall 2009.

5. Issues of lack of assessment activity.

The CWAC consistently addressed the fact that several units across campus are not conducting formal student or program assessments and/or are not submitting assessment reports. The Assessment Workshop conducted by Dr. Schuh was one attempt to change this. The CWAC is also considering several other approaches. The first is conducting an "Assessment Town Meeting" to assess the current climate regarding assessment as well as current activity. A second approach would be to hire the Higher Learning Commission of the NCA to implement a four-year "Academy for Assessment of Student Learning." This Academy is designed to accelerate and advance efforts in student assessment.

Primary concerns I have are two. One, that the university units are not, on the whole, committed to student assessment, which is especially important in light of the upcoming accreditation visit. Two, that the position of Director, University Assessment is not being filled at present, per Dr. Patti Elmore this month. Without a strong administrative commitment and support for student assessment at all levels (i.e. Dean, Provost, Vice-Chancellor, Chancellor, and President) , the university cannot expect that the campus units will whole-heartedly engage in assessment, nor can the university be expected to be prepared for the upcoming accreditation visit in Marc 2010.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve as the Faculty Senate representative on the CWAC. Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

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