

October 15, 2009

To: Members of the HOAP (Help for Outcomes Assessment) group

From: Ellen Wentland

Re: Minutes of the October 14, 2009 meeting of the HOAP Committee

Attendees: Judith Ciampi, Ruth Young, Kerin Hamidiani, Suzanne Van Wert, Joanna Fortna

The general topics discussed at today's meeting were the outcomes assessment process at NECC, and the HOAP posting on the Program Review/Outcomes Assessment website.

With respect to the outcomes assessment process at NECC, there were several members in attendance who are also on the Academic Skills Assessment committee. A recent email detailing the Committee's proposed pilot of an institutional level outcomes assessment process was shared and feedback was requested. Discussion focused on the process by which the five listed outcomes were arrived at, as well as the details of the proposed pilot assessment process.

One member shared that her impression was that one effect of having institutional level assessments of these core skills was to remove responsibility from the program level, freeing program coordinators to develop and assess outcomes which were program specific – relating to program specific knowledge and skills. Comments made by participants, most of whom have been involved in developing outcomes assessment plans and conducting program level outcomes assessment, included that this assessment work is time consuming and difficult to fit in along with other coordinator responsibilities. This may be because the process at NECC is more detailed and elaborate than it needs to be in terms of quality and potential effectiveness.

One possible modification to the current process would involve having coordinators prepare their assessment plans as they do now, listing all of their key learning outcomes on a curriculum map. However, instead of proceeding to try to assess all of them, coordinators and faculty could select a set of learning outcomes which had high priority for their programs, and which could reasonably be assessed within an approximate three year period, after which time the cycle could begin again. In this way, any weaknesses identified in year 1, for example, would have a chance to be addressed, possibly through curricular or pedagogical changes, in years 2 and 3. Year 4 assessments could then be used to determine the effectiveness of the interventions used. Or coordinators might decide to focus on other outcomes if issues or concerns about them have become more salient over time.

I indicated that I would draft an outline of this proposed revised process, and discuss it with Lane. It appears that it has the possibility to:

- maintain the ongoingness of assessment work,
- make it more targeted,
- provide more focus on the effectiveness of interventions, and
- result in a decrease in assessment-related workload.

Also to be discussed with Lane is the responsibility of program coordinators vis-à-vis the new core academic skills with respect to outcomes assessment.

The second topic discussed concerned the HOAP page for the Program Review website. I shared what I had drafted to date, and noted that some minutes were missing. The group agreed that it was better to post the minutes that are available than to leave them out entirely.

Next meeting was set for Wednesday, December 9 at 2:30.