

Assessment Taskforce
May 7, 2008
Business Sciences Building, Blueroom 112

Members present: Debbie Puett, Brett Parker, Dr. Myra Johnson, Kim Gold, Terry McEntire, Jeremiah Council, Tommy Tucker, Vicki Covington, Karen Jones, Kelly Dedmon, Becky Cleland, Charles Wiggins, Evelyn Woods, Elisabeth Barrows, Jo James

Brett began the meeting by providing context and an introduction to the topic for the meeting. He stated that there were questions that needed to be addressed by the taskforce regarding taskforce organization and future goals. Brett confirmed his intentions to step down as the chair of the Assessment taskforce and indicated that there were several challenges that would need to be addressed in the coming year. He expressed the concern that the new chair would need to be aware of these issues and be prepared to address them in order to maintain the direction of the taskforce.

Some of the challenges facing the taskforce include dwindling taskforce membership, lack of participation at campus-wide meetings, and continued support of the QEP. Brett also mentioned that the taskforce has made considerable progress since its inception. The committee was officially formed 10 years ago. During the past ten years the taskforce has expanded beyond academics to include service areas and has grown to encompass assessment at many levels of the organization.

Dr. Johnson followed up with Brett's comments by reminding the taskforce of the background of Isothermal's assessment efforts. Over the past year much of the assessment effort has been driven to the program level and to specific areas of the college. Part of the challenge of the coming year will be to help specific areas take ownership of their assessment efforts so that individuals will find the campus wide meetings relevant to their efforts. Dr. Johnson also indicated that perhaps the role of the Assessment taskforce has evolved to more of a support role in the assessment efforts rather than the driving force.

Dr. Johnson encouraged the taskforce to not feel that the importance of the taskforce was diminished by this change in goals. In fact, the importance of the taskforce was highlighted in an article published in the Chronicle of Higher Education recently. In this article it was noted that there were colleges that were losing funding because they were not doing an adequate job of assessing. This article emphasized the importance of being well prepared for our next SACS visit. At that visit we will need to show that we are assessing all areas of the institution. Dr. Johnson emphasized that communication between the Assessment taskforce and the departments was critical in order to accomplish this goal.

Dr. Johnson was asked what the average attendance at campus-wide meeting was currently. She responded that at the last meeting there was 40 -50 people in attendance with approximately 20 of those attendance being staff.

Some of the needs the taskforce felt needed to be addressed in the coming year included redefining the role of the taskforce. There is currently a great deal of confusion regarding the duties of the QEP steering committee versus the Assessment taskforce. There is also confusion regarding the relationship between the mission of the Assessment taskforce and the formal organizational structure, Dr. Quinley's office, Academic Deans, and TALC leadership.

Dr. Quinley stated that one problem with the mission is that it is a two-fold mission. One part of this mission is to explore and research assessment. The second part is on-going assessment plans. The organizational structure and it's relationship to the taskforce is confusing.

Dr. Johnson stated that this confusion may be a symptom of growing pains. Part of the maturity process in terms of taskforce organization. The first year after Nancy took the chair position the focus was on reading and research. We are currently ahead of other organizations but in terms of where we can go, we have only skimmed the surface. The question is "how do we go?"

Brett stated that one challenge facing the taskforce is the research and informational part of the mission. The taskforce needs to explore the literature and stay in touch with the current status of assessment.

Vicki Covington made two suggestions. First, perhaps we need to return to the beginnings of the taskforce. The taskforce began with an expert in a campus wide meeting. Perhaps it is time for another expert. We need a vision of how we pull everything together.

Terry McEntire emphasized the need to pull things together. He mentioned that the documentation of activities is not happening. The overlapping of the various taskforces makes documentation important.

Evelyn Woods suggested that we explore what we want to assess then focus on the tools needed to accomplish the assessment. This should help each taskforce see where they fit.

Dr. Johnson suggested that we revisit the history of assessment at Isothermal.

It was mentioned that the CCSSE report was planned to be discussed at the first campus wide meeting. Kathy Ackerman asked if we had chosen 2 general education skills for next year.

The taskforce discussed possible competencies for focus and decided that Historical and Diverse cultures and writing should be the competencies focused on during the 2008-2009 academic year.

It was also suggested that there be some report on the competencies focused on last year.

A suggestion was made that one meeting focus on resources for people to assist in using rubrics. Breakout sessions to give people the opportunity to use the rubric.

One point of discussion was the assessment of service areas. It was discussed that assessment is an important component of SACS accreditation. SACS is always changing and it was suggested that people be sent to conferences to learn about the changes.

It was noted that the Groupwise list serve needs to include Kelly Dedmon and Erin Riddle. Also a suggestions was made to include another craftsman related member needs to be added perhaps nursing.

The meeting was adjourned.