UNIVERSITY OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT COUNCIL (UOAC)

Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2014
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
small conference room, Milton Hall 185

Attendees: J. Bosland, J. Fitzsimmons, L. Grant, S. Lalla, M. Mahaffy, N. Lee, S. Stovall

- Approval of record of meeting – 9/2/2014 record of meeting approved with attendee corrections
- GE Assessment Report
  The open forum related to the GE Assessment Report held at the Teaching Academy was well attended; there were 35 attendees, which was close in number to those that attended the scoring sessions. D. Smith led the open-forum conversation and kept the conversation focused on content. After looking at the results there were a few issues that the GE group will look to rectify during the next round, including reducing the number of non-existent or erroneous Aggie IDs on the responses. S. Stovall will forward J. Bosland the list of participating VWW courses to determine if the sample, which indicates an overrepresentation of College of Business students, is an anomaly or is representative of the full population of VWW courses in spring 2014. Because of the need to draw graphs, this particular instrument is limited to face-to-face courses; online courses were excluded from participating in the activity, which may limit the number of part-time students. The core findings of the assessment were that students were better at 'rote' tasks, but challenged to meet tasks that involved higher order critical thinking skills. UOAC suggestions for moving forward to close the loop are
  Suggestions for Survey
    - Include explicit, verbal instructions to student participants to fill in Banner/Aggie ID
    - Solicit faculty in STEM and/or other GE courses, and inquire about how they are addressing issues of critical thinking
    - CASL-GE develop samples of questions/ assignments/ exams/ rubrics/ grading that do/don't require higher level critical thinking, and ask faculty to evaluate their course materials against these samples.

  Suggestions re Results of Study
    - Bring in a teaching expert in developing critical thinking to do workshops with faculty in developing materials that increasingly require higher order critical thinking skills

- Consider relationships between these results and the Quality Initiative (QI) – specifically how writing-to-learn practices foster critical thinking; this could result in a Teaching Academy or other like-event
- CASL-GE chair and/or representative should present the completed report and PowerPoint with a one-page executive summary to associate deans (ADAC). This should include suggested actions followed by targeted questions such as: What additional issues do you see? Do you agree with the proposed 'next steps' (as listed above)? If not, what do you suggest? What is the most effective way to move forward on next steps? In addition, solicit recommendations on how to distribute the findings to departments and close the loop.
- Distribute final report to Assessment Liaisons

Further discussion also centered on the purpose of the GE assessment, *which is to determine competence of program completers.* The UOAC agreed that value added was beyond the scope of GE assessment, and that the responsibility of the institution in assessing learning is to 1) assure students are achieving competence in stated learning objectives, and 2) ensure the institution is taking steps to improve learning on identified objectives, particularly if students are struggling to meet minimum expectations.

- NSSE Report
  Discussed the need for more written analysis of the data. Also discussed was whether the approach should be to focus on the strengths or focus on the weaknesses within the data and the pros and cons of both approaches. J. Bosland will provide further updates on the NSSE results at the December 2 UOAC meeting. More NSSE data will be released in early November. The November UOAC meeting will focus on Assessment Day planning. — See "NSSE 2014 Selected Comparison Groups" handout.

- Communication Talking Points – S. Stovall distributed information on the multiple levels of support available at NMSU for assessment. The list contains summaries of the groups and efforts on campus related to assessment. — See "Talking Points for UOAC Members" handout.