

UW-Madison University Assessment Council

Annual Report 2002-03

1. 2002-03 Members and Alternates (with appointment dates)

Mark Albanese, Medical School (September 2002)
Carolyn Lazar Butler, Law School (May 2003)
Kathleen Christoph, Learning Technology and Distance Education (September 2002)
Jennifer Coburn, School of Education (January 2003) ‡
Alan Cohen, Office of Testing and Evaluation Services (September 2002)
Joy Dohr, School of Human Ecology (September 2002)
Geselle Durham, Graduate School (September 2002)
Patrick Farrell, College of Engineering (September 2002)
Julie Foertsch, LEAD Center (April 2002)
Susan Hyland, School of Veterinary Medicine (September 2002)
Marilyn Jenkins, School of Nursing (September 2002)
James Johannes, School of Business (September 2002)
Elaine Klein, College of Letters and Science (September 2002)
Kathy Luker, Office of Quality Improvement (September 2002)
Jocelyn Milner, Office of the Provost, Co-Chair (September 2002)
Christine Molter, ASM Representative (September 2002)
Ken Neimeyer, School of Pharmacy (September 2002) ‡
Sarah Pfatteicher, College of Engineering (September 2002) ‡
Dean Pribbenow, Office of Quality Improvement (September 2002)
Robert Ray, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (September 2002)
Joel Robbin, Letters and Science, Quantitative Assessment Project (September 2002)
Denise Solomon, Letters and Science, Verbal Assessment Project, Co-Chair (September 2002)
Michael Subkoviak, School of Education (September 2002)
James Sweet, UW Survey Center (September 2002)
Judith Thompson, School of Pharmacy (September 2002)
Char Tortorice, Office of Testing and Evaluation Services (September 2002) ‡

‡ Indicates alternates assigned by some schools and colleges.

2. Meetings

The UAC met six times in the 2002-03 academic year (October 19, November 26, January 21, February 18, April 15, and May 20).

3. Updating the University's Assessment Plan

The 2002-03 University Assessment Council was charged by the Provost with reviewing and, if necessary, revising the University's assessment plan by August 2003.

Regular UAC meetings provided the forum for this review. At the October 2002 meeting, the UAC discussed the charge to review the assessment plan and other goals of the UAC for the year. The UAC identified a broad strategy for reviewing the plan -- to begin by defining an overarching structure for the campus plan that provides a unified institutional framework and use that framework as an impetus for school/college planning.

Provost Peter Spear attended the November 2002 meeting to deliver the charge to the UAC and to discuss the broad institutional goals to be addressed in the assessment plan. The UAC also conducted a focused brainstorming session to enumerate principles, plan elements, methodology, and key elements or issues to include in a revised assessment plan. At the January 2003 UAC meeting, Council reviewed the summary of the brainstorming session from the November meeting and more thoroughly considered how to cast the objectives of the assessment plan and how to articulate guidelines. Several UAC members described their school/college assessment plans and activities at the January and February UAC meetings. These presentations illustrated the depth and breadth of assessment activity across campus, reinforced many of the principles identified in the more general discussions, and highlighted key areas for further consideration.

Denise Solomon, Jocelyn Milner, and Elaine Klein prepared a draft of the assessment plan that was based on these UAC discussions. The Council is especially indebted to Elaine Klein, the Letters and Science representative to the UAC, for writing the first draft of the assessment plan and for her role in refining the draft that was presented to the UAC at the February meeting. Council members provided feedback and suggestions at the spring meetings and the plan evolved through several iterations. That draft was distributed to the UAC and discussed at the February 2003 UAC meeting. Council members provided feedback and suggestions that were incorporated into successive drafts.

UAC members agreed on a general format for assessment plans submitted by individual schools and colleges and for general education:

1. Description and overview of the school/college or unit.
2. Administrative structure for assessment, as well as external forces such as accreditation, resources for assessment, and audiences for assessment.
3. Overview of current practice that summarizes the focus of the unit's assessment efforts and typical assessment methods (rather than incorporate details of practice, this section should provide links to existing assessment reports).
4. Directions for improvement, further development, or closing of gaps.
5. Assessment agenda for the future that highlights assessment activities or goals for the next 5 years or so.

Council originally intended to integrate the school/college plans within the University's assessment plan. However, it became clear that the schools and colleges revised their assessment plans on individual schedules. Some units were revising their plans and those documents would not be available for inclusion for many months. Some units updated their plans on an annual basis and did not want to commit to one plan for the life of the University's assessment plan. Consequently, Council decided to uncouple the school/college assessment plans from the University's plan. This arrangement recognized the dynamic nature of assessment and assessment planning and is more consistent with the unit-centered approach to assessment.

The UAC developed its own plan, which is included in the University's guiding document. Developing the priorities for the UAC that comprise the heart of this plan was the focus of the April 2003 meeting.

At the May 2003 UAC meeting, the Council discussed a final draft of the University Assessment Plan, including the UAC plan, and formally adopted the document pending some final editing. UAC members ratified the final assessment plan through an email review and the assessment plan was finally ratified on June 23, 2003. Council co-chairs Denise Solomon and Jocelyn Milner submitted the plan to Provost Peter Spear.

The 2003 Assessment Plan will be made available to the campus community through the assessment web site (<http://www.provost.wisc.edu/assessment/>).

4. Workshop: December 17, 2002, Demystifying Assessment of Student Services

This workshop, held at the Pyle Center in December, showcased the development and implementation of an assessment plan by the College of Letters and Sciences Student Academic Affairs (L&S SAA). L&S SAA worked with LEAD and had support from the Assessment Funds for their work. Detailed information about the workshop and a manual is available on the assessment web site (<http://www.provost.wisc.edu/assessment/>).

Eighty-three individuals from across campus attended the workshop. The workshop evaluations were generally positive. Among the comments on what would be useful to help implement assessment programs, attendees called for more hands-on workshops, training, and information resources to help them develop the know-how for this work.
