REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Assessment Committee (currently CAASL)

Brief History of Issue - why the issue is being considered:

This proposal includes the organization of a new committee, the University Assessment Committee, to become a Standing Committee of the University Faculty By-Laws. This committee will replace the current, Council for Assessing and Advancing Student Learning (CAASL).

CAASL was organized with the responsibilities to “lead, implement, and sustain assessment activities on campus” per the 2009 UW-Eau Claire Self Study. Additionally, as the Self Study states, the committee was charged with “assessing student learning in the majors, General Education, and the co-curricular aspects of the university.” Previous to the development of CAASL, UW-Eau Claire was served by a committee, the University Assessment Committee, charged with ensuring accountability and with oversight in the “implementation of the University Assessment Plan.”

Since 2009, changes have occurred at UW-Eau Claire to enhance assessment. A full-time Director of Assessment was hired in July 2011. This position, reporting directly to the Provost/Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, has the responsibility for curricular and co-curricular assessment processes and the application of those processes in support of improving student learning, in consultation with faculty, staff, and administration. In addition, the University Assessment Plan was not fully implemented due to the departure of the previous assessment administrator.

In order to support the Director and to develop a clear, sustainable mission, vision, and University Assessment Plan, the University Assessment Committee will represent Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, other key institutional offices to further student learning through a focus on assessment.

Pros of Recommendation:
1. A Standing Committee will provide continuity and focus in all aspects of the assessment of student learning.
2. A smaller committee will utilize resources in a productive manner while representing the stakeholders at the university level.
3. Clear direction and policies will allow for timely and appropriate feedback.
4. Sustaining the efforts in assessment is critical to continued accreditation.
Cons of Recommendation:
1. Students will not be represented on the restructured committee, however, a separate advisory committee made up entirely of students will be developed in the fall 2011 semester to allow for a focus on the BluGold Commitment and other assessment-related issues impacting students.

Technology/Human Resource Impact:
The Director of Assessment will lead the Committee consistent with the charge for CAASL and the Office of University Assessment maintains an assessment website. Both will support the work of the University Assessment Committee in fulfilling its charge.

Recommendation:
That the University Assessment committee be established as a University-wide committee as follows:

University Assessment Committee

Membership
Director of Assessment, Chair
Faculty Member, College of Arts and Sciences
Faculty Member, College of Education and Human Sciences
Faculty Member, College of Business
Faculty Member, College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Representative, Academic and Support Programs
Representative, Academic and Support Programs
Dean's Office Representative, College of Arts and Sciences
Dean's Office Representative, College of Education and Human Services
Dean's Office Representative, College of Business
Dean's Office Representative, College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Dean's Office Representative, Dean of Students

Mission
Advance a Culture of Assessment at UW-Eau Claire
Assist academic departments and academic support programs to develop, implement, and sustain useful and effective plans for assessing and advancing student learning
Demonstrate to all stakeholders the successful learning of our students and promote our ongoing efforts to advance student learning
Support and contribute to other initiatives related to the assessment of student learning
Function

1. Assist departments and academic and support programs to develop and improve plans for assessing student learning
2. Annually collect and review assessment reports from departments and academic and support programs and provide feedback
3. Prepare an Annual Report for Academic Affairs and the University Senate that includes a summary of assessment activities conducted throughout the university.
4. Develop, implement, and evaluate the results of institutional level assessment activities in collaboration with Institutional Research (exit interviews, standardized exams, surveys, etc.)
5. Prepare reports on student learning at UW-Eau Claire for UW-System’s VSA program
6. Annually review the effectiveness of plans and practices for assessing student learning at the University, department, and program levels.
7. Develop and implement policies and procedures related to the assessment of student learning at UW-Eau Claire
8. Assist with other initiatives involved in the assessment of student learning as requested the Provost, Academic Senate, or other stakeholders, as necessary
9. Advise the Director of Assessment in performance of the duties of the position.

Membership (12 members)

1. Chair, Director of University Assessment (ex-officio, voting)
2. A representative from the dean’s office of each college and the dean of students (ex-officio, voting)
3. Faculty representatives: one from each college; 3-year appointment
4. Two representatives from two different academic and support programs; 3-year appointment

Functions of the Chair of the University Assessment Committee on Behalf of the Provost

1. Chair the University Assessment Committee
2. Provide assessment resources to the university community
3. Report to stakeholders about the status of assessment activity at UW-Eau Claire and the status of student achievement as determined by department, unit, program, and institutional learning goals and outcomes.
4. Perform other duties as assigned by the Provost.