**Assessment Committee, March 13, 2023, MEETING NOTES**

**Attended**: Yvonne Smith, Mary Jean Williams, Jil Freeman, Dave Mount, Lisa Reynolds, Lisa Nielson, Jason Kovac, Elizabeth Carney

Guest: David Plotkin

**Agenda**:

1. Info/Updates:
   1. Accreditation visit
   2. Charter update
2. Chat with David Plotkin
   1. Guest: David Plotkin, VP of Instruction and Student Services
   2. Topic: General catch-up. The state of needs/opportunities/challenges in doing academic assessment these days.

**MEETING NOTES:**

Year Seven in the accreditation cycle is an inflection point and good time to reflect. Think about how to make assessment authentic and sustainable

Question for David Plotkin: Any insights you can share gained from serving as an NWCCU evaluator?

* DP: Some colleges seem to be working really efficiently but not so meaningfully. Some seem to spend a lot of time on course-level assessment and it didn’t seem to filter up--they aggregate data to some extent but it doesn’t involve conversations within a program. Not like the way you are focusing here at CCC on more meaningful assessment. It’s not about an algorithm, it should be about faculty having conversations about outcomes and expectations--assessment as inquiry not assessment as compliance.

Assessment software

* DP: Assessment software doesn’t necessarily do anything to facilitate meaningful conversations. Need to set aside time or provide bumpers to any software.
* DM: Moodle extremely limited in its use for assessment - not helping faculty to see assessment as an ongoing journey.

DP: Hard to do meaningful work and hard to avoid burnout. Let me know things I can do to help

Question for David P: Any thoughts about what we can do about burnout and limited capacity? This is a place where we get stuck as a committee. Any thoughts of levers etc that are possible?

* DP: At the executive level, we’re starting an inventory of all software at the college to look for redundancies - what do we need tech to do and what requires heavy cognitive load?
* DP: Looking into ideas to try to scale back - such as designing a gap year - but we looked at the current load and we didn’t want to ask people to do more. We need to think about how to implement some ideas but on a smaller scale
* DP: Increase funding: there are certain ways efficiency can help but we need more resources - or we need to stop doing some things.

DM: Conversations [about teaching, learning, assessment] are what really resonate with faculty. Achievement data feels like hoop jumping but the conversations are what matter. I want to help faculty focus on the question, what do you want to know? There’s a sense among people that we have to have an objective percentage.

DP: We have to have some data so we are held accountable to the things we promise students they will learn. If you focus only on your driving questions, you might have blind spots. See the data as the indicator of something we need to investigate. Real work is figuring out the why behind the data.

Some challenges and aspirations:

* How do we continue the work and meet needs and ask good questions and address the high workload
* We want to take advantage of any opportunities to crosswalk data with other places in the college especially which groups are and are not meeting outcomes (equity).

JF: The pandemic was a major disruptor; at the same time, there’s stuff missing from our process. During the Academic reduction (ARE) process there were questions from folks about the value of assessment - if programs that are doing all this good assessment work are on the line, what is the use of the assessment work?

EC: We hear from faculty comments about how they don’t hear their deans or upper administration saying anything about assessment in recent years--they don’t hear that it still matters. They only hear about it if they don’t do their report but otherwise it doesn’t seem integrated above in terms of accountability and celebration.

YS: (Example of the need for greater systematic cohesion and relevance): Our department has been working on being more intentional about what we put in our unit plans, but time ends up getting spent on other stuff that pops up.

DP: Academic leadership plans to go through all program reviews and do a qualitative analysis - look at what’s showing up that leads to something above and beyond what a program can do

DP: At a conference I saw something about a college using student success rates. I’m uncomfortable with publishing individual course rates but what they did that was helpful was to identify where there were particular barriers - a course or particular section of a course - then they could use that at an individual level as a coaching moment but more so use it at an institutional level.

DP: Institutional learning outcomes - I’m still interested in this. Not sure gen ed proxy (what we’re doing now) is the way to go. We haven't had time and bandwidth up to this point to consider institutional outcomes.

DP: Great point to focus our attention back to assessment

EC: David, Jason, and I have talked about setting up a meeting between deans and the Assessment Committee -- discussion/plan is in the works.

DP: What would the committee's recommendations be? Help David think about conversations with deans and the exec team.

JF: Hope we can have some real conversations with faculty about what they need. There’s a labor loop: you do the assessment and it creates new work (improvement etc). Also there’s an uptick in faculty presence in a lot of college initiatives - more labor. There are conversations about not enough funds to hire enough FTF and we have asks and pressure from external sources. So what do faculty need to ease the work burden? I don’t know if it looks like grant money or what.

DP: If you are a good teacher you can never do enough work to satisfy yourself and student needs..so for deans, it’s thinking about how to help prioritize work. When you are stretched you don’t have time to reflect and be planful. Hope we are coming out of a time when external reality is throwing so much at us that none of us had time to think (both faculty and administration).

DP: Would like to share these notes or a version with the deans and talk about how we plan

JK: Assessment Committee should be part of any conversation about planning.

EC: So I will share meeting notes, then David and deans can discuss potential answers, but the Assessment Committee will be part of any decision-making about plans.

Question for David P: Any last advice for the accreditation visit?

DP: Be honest and be appropriately proud.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Share these meeting notes with David P.
2. David and deans discuss notes, discuss potential approaches to addressing issues raised
3. Set up meeting with deans and committee to explore potential approaches