May 26, 2010

To: Keith Alley, EVC and Provost

From: Evan Heit and Maria Pallavicini, Co-Chairs, SACA

The Senate-Administration Council on Assessment (SACA) met seven times during the spring semester. As you know, the Council's charge included making resource recommendations to the Administration regarding needs for accreditation, unit annual review, and program review. During the past year we have surveyed units on campus, developed principles for an institutional assessment system, and prepared resource recommendations for the 2010-2011 academic year.

SACA recommends that resources for review and assessment be phased in over multiple years. Institutionally, we continue to learn about review and assessment needs, so we plan to return to the issue of resources needed for assessment in the upcoming year and make a multi-year recommendation at a later time.

Process for Developing Resource Recommendations

(1) SACA developed principles for institutional assessment.
(2) Units received request for resources for assessment and program review.
(3) SACA reviewed requests and made recommendations.

1. Principles for an Institutional Assessment System

- Provide localized, on-going, and direct assessment support to academic and co-curricular programs and administrative units to continue development of a culture of assessment focused on improving student learning and success.
- Provide support at appropriate levels, from clerical support to high-level analytic and assessment functions.
- Recognize faculty ownership of academic assessment, but provide local support, e.g., to FAOs, rather than paying faculty stipends to do what can be done by staff.
- Connect annual and periodic program and unit assessment activities and results to integrate with institutional mission, goals and related institutional assessment initiatives.
- Phase in resources over multiple years as the plans and needs of individual units become clearer in time. Continue to monitor workload, e.g., for FAOs.
- Provide a dedicated staff member (Director of Assessment), reporting to the EVC. This Director of Assessment will provide a broad institutional perspective and coordinate annual and periodic assessment at the local level, ensure consistency in assessment practices, and disseminate results across the campus community.

2. Summary of Unit Responses for Resource Requests for Assessment and Program Review

Unit	Requested	SACA Comments
SoE	No response	Coordinate resources with ABET
SNS	Director of Student Success, 25% administrative analyst	Concur
SSHA	Funds for standardized tests, photocopying, student employee for clerical work	Has large numbers of majors and minors, Writing Program; no current high level support
Grad Division	Support needed for collection of annual assessment data and institutional analysis of graduate data; Could be addressed by adding specialists/analysts to Schools/IPA or Grad Division	Concur
IPA	New principal analyst and new administrative analyst	Concur
CIO	No response	May need support for e-portfolios
Library	No additional resources requested	
Student Affairs	No new request	Currently has 40% assessment person
Administration-VCA	Estimates 2 additional people for assessment	
VPUE	No response	Likely to need support for assessment of general education (e.g., CORE), pending plan
CRTE	Outlined scenarios in which CRTE's support of assessment will increase or decrease	For now, SACA recommends local support based in schools
Academic Senate	New principal analyst to provide organizational and operational support to Senate committees, school-level programs, and graduate groups during program review; assist in compiling data and reports.	Concur

3. Recommendations

For 2010-2011, SACA recommends the following:

(1) Create a campus-wide position of Director of Assessment (see description above)
(2) Support at least one *high-level* assessment support staff (assessment specialist) in each school
(3) Add principal analyst and administrative analyst in IPA
(4) Add principal analyst to Academic Senate office
(5) Establish a reserve fund for miscellaneous expenditures, annual and program review.

Assessment Specialists: The assessment specialists will use the expertise of the professional assessment community and literature to connect local practices to ongoing developments in the UC and in higher education more broadly. In general, they will advise FAOs and other faculty members on best practices for assessment, annual review, and program review. For example, assessment specialists will draft assessment plans based on program learning outcomes, help organize and implement data collection, assist with analyses including drafting analyses and reports, and make recommendations regarding future practices. SACA notes that schools vary considerably in the number of programs and students, e.g., SSHA has twice as many programs as any other school, so we recommend that assessment specialist workload in each school be monitored.

Clerical Needs and Other Unanticipated Needs: SACA is concerned that clerical needs for assessment may exceed estimates from schools and recommends that this issue be monitored during the upcoming year. In addition, SACA recommends monitoring unanticipated needs for annual review and program review at the unit level. SACA recommends that a reserve fund be established for unanticipated needs for assessment support and that the EVC establish a process for funds to be requested and disbursed. For example, travel expenses for external members of program review teams could be $2500/year for each program undergoing review.

FAO workload: SACA notes that FAOs reported heavy workload for assessment activities, which will increase with program review. Although two of three deans have not requested stipend support for FAOs, SACA recommends that the issue of faculty workload be monitored during the upcoming year, once assessment specialists are in place. SACA's view is that it is preferable to provide high-level support to faculty rather than paying faculty to do what could be done by staff. With that said, SACA observes that much of the work done by FAOs would be done by a department chair or other faculty administrator at a mature university.