



**Graduate Executive Committee**  
**March 11, 2016**  
**Minutes**

**Attendees:** Todd Casey, Jose Mora, Ron Koch, Jeff Spicher, Craig Elder, Karen Livesey, Steve Tragesser, Al Schoffstall, Cindy Zomchek, Cathy Claiborne, Whitney Porter, Chris Bell, Edin Mujkic, Sylvia Mendez, Anna Kosloski, Sarah Elsey, Kelli Klebe, KrisAnn McBroom

**Business**

- Nursing Education Course of Study Certificate (materials sent electronically) – Jeff Spicher
  - The Nursing Education program would like to add on a course of study certificate in Nursing Education. This will meet the needs of currently enrolled students, a group that is not currently able to utilize the current Nursing Education Gainful Employment certificate.
    - Action: The Graduate Executive Committee voted to recommend approval of the Nursing Education course of study certificate.
- Leave of Absence processes (see supplemental documents):
  - The GEC discussed the current processes and forms. The committee provided feedback on the procedures document and also raised areas of concern. One concern is when a student does not want to go on leave but a program is requiring that student to do so. Is there a form/method that needs to be brought in to include that type of situation? The programs also requested stronger language on the process of coming back to ensure the program knows early enough to plan for cohort based courses.
- Dean's Report
  - Assessment Update (see executive summary of report on assessment focus groups): David Moon will be coming in April to discuss assessment. Remember that GEC is supposed to provide oversight on the assessment process. Please read over the executive summary to see if the report matches your own experiences. Come prepared to ask David Moon questions and provide input about assessment procedures at the April meeting.
  - Is there interest in a NSF GRFP Workshop for students and faculty who may be interested in writing an NSF GRFP proposal? The departments are interested in having these workshops. They would prefer them to be during the breaks between semesters and closer to October rather than early summer.
  - Recruitment Scholarships—Yours to give and to use to recruit; you inform students; report to Graduate School as soon as you can if not using; need to use by June 30, 2016 and report recipients to graduate school. It is important that we use these scholarships. When we do not use them, then it weakens the argument that we need more funding for graduate students.
  - Marketing and Recruitment meeting: We met with the Chancellor's Strategic Communication Taskforce to discuss graduate enrollments and marketing/recruitment on Friday, 3/11/16. The group brainstormed different methods campus can take on to help ensure enrollment numbers do not decrease. Graduate enrollments have declined this year and the goal is to have enrollment numbers at least stay flat although growth is preferred.

**Announcements**

- Spring 2016 GEC Meetings (10:00-11:30):
  - April 8 (Dwire 204)
  - May 6 (UC 124): NOTE CHANGE FROM NORMAL 2<sup>nd</sup> FRIDAY DUE TO COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY CONFLICT

- Fall 2016 GEC Meetings (10:00-11:30; Dwire 204)  
September 9; October 14; November 11; December 9

### **Upcoming Events**

- Mountain Lion Research Day, April 8, 8:30 – 1:30 Must RSVP for lunch by March 28 to [alaforce@uccs.edu](mailto:alaforce@uccs.edu)  
9 Student Talks; 127 Posters (40 from graduate students); 2 Faculty Research Presentations  
Keynote Luncheon Speaker: Anne M. Libby, Ph.D., Professor and Vice Chair for Academic Affairs,  
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus Department of Emergency Medicine; Program  
Director: Clinical Faculty Scholars Program
- Spring into Wellness Challenge 2016: Runs March 28<sup>th</sup>-May 8<sup>th</sup> 2016. Each week will present a new focus on wellness (e.g., physical, intellectual, emotional, financial, and occupational). Students who are interested in participating can contact Meghan Weiss ([Myohann@uccs.edu](mailto:Myohann@uccs.edu)).
- GSA Graduation Celebration: Open to all GSA members. Students who are graduating can pick up their GSA cords for commencement. **April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in Clyde's from 5:30-7:00.**

## Certificate Approval Form

In order for a certificate program to be reviewed, please fill out the form below and submit to the appropriate college and campus committees. Please plan on at least six months after submission before offering a certificate. Complete information in Part I for all requests. Part II needs to be completed by those seeking approval for Gainful Employment (GE) certificates with financial aid eligibility for non-degree seeking students. All appropriate signatures should be obtained.

### PART I

1. Name of Certificate: Nursing Education Certificate
2. Department(s): Nursing
3. College(s)/Institutions: Helen + Arthur E Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing + Health Sciences
4. Faculty Director/Advisor: Kerry Peterson, PhD, DNP, PMHNP
5. Type of Certificate:

Gainful Employment (previously approved)

Course of Study

Professional Development

Non-notated

6. Expected start date (semester and year): ASAP
7. Number of required credit hours: 12
8. Anticipated length of the program in semesters including summer (e.g., 2 years = 6 semesters):  
2 semesters full-time / 4 semesters part-time
9. Describe the certificate program. Include in your description the following information: (See Attached)
  - a. How the certificate program fits the unit's role and mission. If applicable, explain the specific roles of each institution if there are multiple institutions involved.
  - b. Courses and requirements (e.g., minimum grades) to complete the certificate.
  - c. Admission criteria (at a minimum must follow criteria delineated in policy but program may have higher standards)
  - d. The exit process (include requirements for finishing, any forms that must be completed stating who completes these forms—student, faculty director, etc.; who will provide a list of completers to A&R so that a person's transcript may be changed).
  - e. Costs of offering the certificate program.
  - f. Expected benefits, income, return on investment.
  - g. If applicable, describe any fees (e.g., program, course, application) that you will charge. (Note: You will need to follow campus procedures for fees.)
  - h. If you are proposing a non-notated certificate, please explain why this is the best type of certificate and why you are not using a CoS or PD certificate. Please submit a plan for how you will inform students that the certificate will not be notated on official university transcripts.

## Nursing Education

a) The Nursing Education Certificate fits into the Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences mission to provide excellence in education, scholarship, and practice in the health professions. Specifically, this certificate program will provide education and training for current and future nurse educators who can directly impact nursing education and health care.

b) The 12 credit certificate consists of the following 4 courses (3 credits each)\*:

- NURS 6225 Roles of the Nurse Educator
- NURS 6210 Transformational Teaching Strategies
- NURS 6200 Curriculum Development
- NURS 6190 Measurement and Evaluation

\*These courses were previously approved with the Gainful Employment Post-Masters Nursing Education Certificate

Course of Study Certificate Requirements:

- Completion of 12 credits
- A grade of "B" or more in each certificate course
- Completion of certificate requirements within six years

c) Admission Criteria for Course of Study Certificate:

- Minimum of BSN with cumulative GPA of 3.0 for all previous course work
- Nursing Education Certificate Application Form

d) Exit Process for Course of Study Certificate

- Intent to Complete Certificate Form- Turned into Diane Busch, Program Assistant for Graduate Nursing

e) The certificate is currently no additional cost since all courses are required for the Gainful Employment Nursing Education Certificate

f) Benefits will include the ability for current MSN students in our FNP, ANP, and AGNP tracks to complete coursework in nursing education. This would give these students education and training to prepare them for roles as nurse educators. In addition, BSN prepared nurses from the community that are interested in becoming nurse educators could also obtain the necessary education and training from the certificate program.

g) \$100 technology fee for each online course.

## Leave of Absence Process

### Restrictions:

- No student can be on academic probation
- New/readmit students who drop all classes by the drop deadline are not eligible
- Must have a minimum GPA of 3.0
- Any student ordered to active duty or to state/national emergency relief is eligible.

### I. Being placed on Leave of Absence

1. Student initiates request, fills out and submits form electronically to program
2. Program processes and approves request following college rules for such requests, and submits to graduate school
3. Graduate school processes and approves request
  - a. Submit form to Office of the Registrar
  - b. Records will inform IT to maintain student portal access
4. Records will place a LOA on the student's program/plan within CU-SIS to inactivate the program. The effective date of the LOA will be the first day of the first term the LOA begins. Records will also disable the student from registering for any future terms by deleting future term activations.
5. Records will inform Financial Aid of the Leave of Absence to ensure Financial Aid records are updated accordingly (if applicable).

### II. Returning from Leave of Absence

1. Student must contact their program and inform that the LOA needs to be lifted
  - a. If it has been more than one year since the last term the student was enrolled, a new tuition classification form must be filled out and submitted to Office of the Registrar. The Tuition Classification Form can be found on [www.uccs.edu/registrar](http://www.uccs.edu/registrar) under Student Forms (<http://www.uccs.edu/Documents/admrec/TuitionClassificationForm.pdf>). The student's residency status will be reevaluated upon reentry to the university.
2. Program will inform the graduate school of the students return and what term they will return. This can be done via email.
3. The Graduate school will submit a request to Records to remove the LOA status. Tuition Classification Form should be included with this request if not previously received by the Office of the Registrar
  - a. Once a Request is received from the Graduate School, the Registrar's office will activate the students program/plan with an action reason of "Return from Leave of Absence." The Registrar's office will also term activate and make the student eligible to enroll. If a Tuition Classification Form has not been received then the student's residency status will be classified as "Under Review" which equates to non-resident/out of state tuition rates until received.
4. The student can continue with the program

Request for Leave of Absence

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree Program: \_\_\_\_\_ Term Admitted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Term Year

Requested Terms for LOA: \_\_\_\_\_ LOA Start Term: \_\_\_\_\_ LOA End Term: \_\_\_\_\_  
(No more than 1 year) Term Year Term Year

Have you previously taken a leave of absence? Yes  No

If yes, please indicate the term(s) and year(s) in which the leave was taken: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you registered for any classes during the semester/s you are requesting an LOA? Yes  No

State the reason(s) for requesting the leave of absence:

- I understand there is a time limit for the completion of a degree, and I verify that the degree requirements will be completed within the prescribed time limit.
- I understand if I am registered for classes, it is my responsibility to officially drop these classes by completing and submitting a drop/add form. I understand if I request a LOA after the designated drop/add period, I am responsible for full payment of tuition.
- I understand if I am receiving Student Financial Aid, I must contact the Office of Financial Aid.
- I understand that I must contact my graduate program office prior to my return.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Only if PhD and post-comps)

Program Director signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dean of College/School signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate School Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For Graduate School Use only:  
 Approve  Reject  If approved, attendance to resume no later than: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Term Year

## The State of Assessment of Student Learning at UCCS Executive Summary

During the week of February 8-12, 2016, five one-hour focus groups were held with UCCS faculty from across campus that have a role in assessment for their department or program. All colleges on campus were represented. Discussion group sizes ranged from 6 to 8. The facilitator asked pre-determined prompting questions, added additional questions for clarification or follow-up, recorded notes, and ensured that everyone participated in the discussion.

The summary below is organized by the prompting questions and is the integrated understanding of the facilitator after listening closely for five hours while 35 dedicated faculty members shared their thoughts and feelings about the state of assessment of student learning at UCCS today.

### I. What are the main reasons UCCS does assessment of student learning?

Responses to this question fell into two broad categories: 1) to meet the requirements of external agencies and constituencies and 2) to improve our curricula, our teaching, and the student experience. Details under each category were extensive – faculty had no trouble coming up with reasons!

Fundamentally, faculty members believe they are always assessing student learning and using what they learn to improve their courses. The faculty in most departments and programs also periodically discuss the gaps and how to close them. However, there is a large disconnect between what faculty believe they are doing to improve student learning and what they are being requested to do by the campus assessment office. See more detail below in Section III.

### II. Do faculty play an important role in deciding how assessment is carried out at UCCS?

Here the response categories could be called 1) yes, of course, who else? And 2) most faculty members are not engaged and are in fact disillusioned. It is clear that those faculty members tasked with managing assessment for their departments or units have a role, and it is clear that relevant committees regarding assessment are composed mostly of faculty. However, assessment coordinators are generally frustrated with the difficulty in creating and getting approval for assessment plans, changes to format and reporting that have occurred over the past 3 or 4 years, and the lack of response from some faculty when they request input or data.

Some faculty members feel that their expertise in assessment for their disciplines is being discounted and ignored by the assessment office and review committee. They express unhappiness at being driven into a specific format for an assessment plan even while acknowledging that the format is more flexible than it used to be. Some feel they are being “rubriced to death” and that measures that have seemed to work well for them for many years are no longer considered good enough.

These comments were not a referendum on Lynne Calhoun, director of the assessment office. In fact, many faculty commented on how easy Lynne is to work with, how tough her job is, and how she is understaffed for what we are trying to do. But while personal interactions with Lynne were overwhelmingly positive, the formal responses from her office were mystifying to most. Specifically, the following issues were mentioned: being told that the plan was not sufficient but not being told why or what to do to fix it, asking for best practices in a given area and not receiving any, submitting and waiting weeks or months for a response.

Some suggested solutions that came up in conversation:

- 1) Have a retreat for assessment coordinators and any interested faculty so they can learn exactly what UCCS is trying to do with this, what the external constituencies actually need, and how to translate all that into their departments or units
- 2) Communicate broadly what is required by HLC and why it is important – if there are some things we simply have to do, i.e. boxes to be checked even if we don't think they are helpful to improving student learning in our disciplines, let us know what those are
- 3) Trust the faculty in the departments to understand what they want their students to learn and that they work regularly to improve their courses and curriculum
- 4) Treat this as a communication and documentation problem, not a "failure to assess" problem

### III. What does assessment look like in your department or unit?

Responses to this question were hugely varied. Two categories that stood out were 1) departments or units subject to external professional accrediting agencies such as AACSB, ABET, CAEP, etc. and 2) departments or units that do not have such professional accreditation.

For those who have professional accreditation, faculty members are involved and understand the importance. However, the primary focus is on meeting the perceived requirements of the accrediting agency, collecting the data, and doing the reports. Most accrediting agencies now want to see that we are using the data for improvement and we can show that. However, activity is much heightened in the year before the visit, and tails off for a while after that – it is not as consistent year after year as it might be.

For departments without professional accreditation, faculty members are less involved in producing assessment plans. The assessment coordinators end up being responsible for that. Faculty are usually involved in collecting data. Feedback loops are often lacking, as assessment coordinators are busy first rewriting assessment plans, then badgering faculty for data, then doing analyses and writing it up. While the write-up is communicated back to faculty, there is often no face-to-face faculty discussion of it.

While the above appears to be what is happening with formal assessment, there is an informal, more organic and ongoing assessment of student learning occurring in most departments and units. This is prompted by a committed department chair or assessment coordinator who engages the faculty in looking at the questions of student learning: Are they learning what we want them to? Are we preparing them appropriately to be out in the world generally and in our



discipline? Is our curriculum keeping up with what's happening in the world? Are we sharing best practices with each other? These conversations are rich and wide-ranging and qualitative. They are impossible to reduce to a number, but they are more likely to actually result in change that is seeking to improve student learning.

IV. What support and resources are available to your department to help you implement successful assessment?

Again, this varies widely. Departments preparing for external accreditation find the resources to get that done, usually through extraordinary effort.

For ongoing work, here are some of the arrangements across campus:

- The department chair or program director takes care of it
- There is a faculty assessment coordinator for whom it is part of their service load
- There is a faculty assessment coordinator who receives a course offload, but generally has additional responsibilities beyond assessment
- Assessment of artifacts is done in the summer by faculty who receive a small stipend (e.g. writing program)
- There is an assistant dean whose primary responsibility is assessment (College of Business)

Most feel the support and resources are insufficient to do an excellent job. Most believe that this is partly driven by instability in plans, lack of a clear schedule, and lack of time to have effective feedback sessions that "close the loop."

V. From your perspective, has assessment had a positive impact on UCCS at the campus-wide level?

Responses ranged from "yes, it's gotten us to look at some things we really need to be looking at" to "no, it's been a waste of time" to "I don't know – there's no communication about whether we're doing well or not."

The yes responses to this question were focused on the faculty conversations that have ensued in working on assessment plans and the value in periodically taking a deep dive into what we're doing and why with regard to student learning. There is also an understanding that the larger environment including government entities, parents, employers, and prospective students are demanding accountability and reassurance that the value they get is worth the cost of a higher education.

The no responses were focused more on the frustration many people feel at having taken a run at this year after year with no solid data yet on which to base decisions. While the current approach is seen as better than the past approaches, frustrations linger from experiences with SAAC, the WEAVE system, and filling out templates. There is feeling that things are still shifting around.

## Other issues

In the course of the discussion, other issues would arise that were not directly related to one of the prompting questions. Here are some of them:

- How are we addressing the role of transfer students in our program assessments? Many programs have a high number of transfer students. Sometimes an identified gap in learning can be tracked down to the fact that not all students had certain foundations because they didn't take the early courses at UCCS.
- How are we viewing the role of students in their own learning? We can do everything we can think of to improve student learning but the student has a responsibility also. Given this, it may be that certain numerical targets are never attainable and/or that the quantitative results move up and down over time in a way that's not useful for driving positive change.
- There are concerns about Task Stream. How will it impact assessment? Will it do what we need or are there unintended consequences?
- There are concerns about GT Pathways, which is looking at a rubric-based approach that will require every institution to use the same rubrics. This means that the rubrics will be imposed from outside for those classes being assessed for GT Pathways.

## Conclusion

We are on the way toward incorporating program level assessment of student learning into our operations. We are not there yet, but even the most frustrated faculty member acknowledges that we are improving our approach over time. In order to continue to create a culture of assessment on campus we should consider the following:

- Stabilize our approach so the assessment plans stay in place over several cycles
- Collect data, analyze, and close the loop with feedback to faculty
- Share stories of how effective assessment lead to positive changes and improved student learning
- Communicate how well we are doing overall