

Minutes

Dr. Natasha Jankowski / GFC MSU CAAAC Meeting
March 28, 2019

Dr. Natasha Jankowski
Great Falls College MSU College Assessment – Analysis – Accreditation Committee

Attendees

Dr. Natasha Jankowski, Director, NILOA (National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment)
GFC MSU CAAAC

Dr. Heidi Pasek – CAO
Mary Kay Bonilla – Chief Student Affairs and Human Resources Officer
Mandy Wright – Director of Academic Assessment
Eleazar Ortega – Institutional Researcher
Jeri Pullum – Special Projects Coordinator
Dena Wagner-Fossen – Registrar
Toni Quinn – Admin. Assistant to CAO

GFC MSU: Great Falls College Montana State University
NWCCU: Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Dr. Pasek welcomed Dr. Jankowski to GFC MSU and expressed our excitement in working with her.

Strategic Plan

Natasha (NJ) shared several observations on the Strategic Plan; she will leave her notes.

NJ: Is the audience the institution or NWCCU?

Jeri-due to comments received from NWCCU, wondered whether we should we have two Strategic Plans. Mandy and Dena agreed that we should just produce one as we don't have resources to develop and maintain two.

NJ: it seems like the current Strategic Plan is more of an external plan to get to the 2022 visit as opposed to a plan for the college.

Introduction and History section: was less about why we wanted to move to the 8-Week Advantage—suggested framing the “why” differently.

Heidi wants it to answer that beautiful question: “What if every single student who walks through this door is successful?”

NJ: The plan is reactive. Accreditation process often causes panic at the college.

She felt NWCCU's feedback was that the indicators are mismatched.

Natasha referred back to Heidi's beautiful question: What would it look like and what would it take.

There will be a desire to see what the future planning and process looks like—this is easy, a one-paragraph.

Vision and Mission

NJ: How do you feel about Vision and Mission?

Mandy: we've had a hard time with this, defining the difference between and the functions of the vision and mission. Thinks of the vision as a lofty goal; the mission as more of who we are and what we do. Everything in SP should align backwards with the mission.

NJ: Vision—lofty place in future. Mission: how we get there every day.

Jeri: historically, the college's vision was huge, sometimes up to several pages.

Mandy: it's difficult to define why we have our fingers in all these pies. Wants the current mission statement to be something the average person understands but applicable to our school.

We started with a three-pronged approach: Student Success, Community and Learning.

Dena: and this is difficult to assess. We feel stuck depending on how we define it, it affects our next steps.

NJ: How connect to mission? Am I an enabler or an exactor of the mission?

Dena goes back to infrastructure to support the work of the college.

Jeri: be mindful that our dean has defended the "To Educate and Inspire" before the Board of Regents.

NJ: "Educate and inspire" could be moved into the vision statement. Also you wouldn't have to assess it if it's part of the vision.

Mission Statement

NJ: Are these listed in order of preference?

1st Mission Statement

NJ: Likes the 1st one - replace "quality" with "high quality".

"Achieve these goals..." - does that narrow the student population that's covered? Mandy is concerned about the word "every"-not every student comes here for more than one class (example: Lifelong Learning), and those students may not need a Purpose, Plan, Path. If we say "every"— concern is that during accreditation, accreditors will say "you said 'every student' and you are excluding a certain population".

Purpose Plan Path

NJ: Maybe PPP could be defined as *either* a purpose, plan or path. Or think about how it plays out to different students.

Dena: One third of our students are dual enrollment—500 people. They are here for different reasons.

Mandy: PPP: we've defined those terms operationally, but don't really see how that applies across the board to all our students.

NJ: Let's think about purpose a little differently:

Purpose: degree-seeking student

Could also identify purpose as functional units- the purpose of that entity is "This" so if you're in "That," ... could be related to core theme of readiness.

Purpose of Lifelong Learning could be to reskill, to refresh knowledge. It becomes "because I'm in this experience, this becomes my purpose."

Mandy: Lifelong Learning or Dual Credit—would be more under "community" as opposed to "academic" chunk of things.

Heidi: do we change our operational definitions?

NJ: for every degree seeking, you could formally identify a purpose. For others, it's more of a "you have been notified."

Community

Jeri: the college is also a community gathering place.

NJ: the purpose of community stuff could be exposure, raise awareness.

Jeri: if in the mission statement, you limit yourself to the "every student"—then you leave out the community.

Jeri: can the Strategic Plan be Purpose Plan Path?

NJ: Take out "every student." You want to keep it very high level.

2nd Mission Statement: integrative educational model-what does that mean? Just strike this one

3rd Mission Statement: includes the "inspires and educates."

Be careful of the **4th and 5th Mission Statements**: hard to measure—for example, community surveys, if you include “support student success”—you leave yourself open for reviewers’ comments of “why don’t you do it the way we do it.” Alleviate the broad words.

Mandy feels like the first one is the best one to work from—NJ agreed.

Heidi explained the comments/diagram from the accreditors and the visual that one of the accreditors drew after meeting with ET.

Mandy expressed frustration with SLOs and core learning outcomes - don’t need to be a one-on-one.

NJ: you can “crosswalk” it and include a crosswalk table. There does not have to be a one-on-one relationship.

This is how our CLO show up in core themes. You don’t have to map that down to the individual courses, for example.

Heidi: retention stays pretty steady. If this 8-week advantage doesn’t work, then what WILL work? Part of it is retention.

NJ: feedback-these are process levels.

Vision: possible option: “it plays a vital role in the future of the community by educating, strengthening, developing (focus on future) . “College sets an example”—cut that and put in the “educate and inspire.”

Purpose, Plan and Path

NJ: Are students locked into PPP?

Dena: Not necessarily. Jeri: it’s not a failure if you’re off your plan. Dena: majority of degree-seeking students have a plan, which they don’t always follow.

Heidi: sometimes when we don’t give students enough structure, they get off-track.

Core Themes

Core Theme 1 - Learning

NJ: Drop “engaged learning”—hard to measure

“Improved student learning”—again hard to measure—like in the Ad Hoc Report instead of the Strategic Plan, Natasha likes “we create the learning environment.”

Core Theme 2 - Readiness

NJ: Loves the readiness Core Theme.

Workplace: is there an interest in whether they are successful or that they’re ready—or is it that they’re ready AND successful? Hard to measure student success in the workplace.

Ready to be successful: because our programs are aligned to support this.

Dena: this ties back into Program Review. Heidi: this helps with the bottom of the triangle. Dena: need a better word for “infrastructure.”

Jeri: are we not going to use HIPS in Core Themes 1 and 2?

Core Theme 3 - Community

Jeri: This core theme used to be the Lifelong Learning core theme. Why this is the community piece.

NJ: is community the main piece of that, do you need service and civic engagement?

Jeri: not sure where service learning should be: It’s a muddle.

NJ: need to define “applications and experiences” below the core theme 3.

Dena: we need to predefine where HIPs go.

NJ: are we going to do all HIPs? If we wanted, we could pull up all the HIPs and put them in the right places.

Heidi: We are focusing on Service Learning and Learning Communities but we did a work session last Friday where faculty identified all the HIPs they were currently using.

The team worked through assigning HIPs to Core Themes

CT1 - Learning

- 1st year seminars and experiences
- Common intellectual experiences
- Learning communities
- Writing-intensive courses
- Collaborative assignments and projects
- Research
- Diversity/global learning

CT2 - Readiness (transfer, ready for workplace)

- Internships
- ePortfolios
- Capstone courses

CT3 - Community

- Service learning

NJ: Want to give them a clear path from Mission Statement to Core Themes. Need to add a narrative in introduction. Figure out how the 3 core themes are incorporated into the mission statement. Unpack what part of your mission relates to what part of your core theme. Then add: “and it is measured in this way.”

NJ: “I think you guys are doing a great job. This is no easy feat.”

CLOs:

Mandy doesn't think workforce readiness needs to be a student learning outcome, because it is already a core theme. Need to be authentic and purposeful in our assessment of these, do we need workforce readiness?

NJ: when you leave the college, you should be on some trajectory. If you come in for one class, you will not get every single CLO.

Mandy: If a student is in credential-seeking program—when they leave, they should have ALL the CLO experiences.

NJ: Look at the definition of workforce readiness. Workforce readiness is professionalism, working as a team, etc. Support services would fit in here.

Mandy: originally wanted to call this professionalism. The way it's worded doesn't fit with assessment criteria. NJ: you could define it within the transfer environment.

NJ: doesn't want to lose the idea but maybe workforce readiness is the wrong wording. Let's replace it with another term (professionalism?)

Every core theme has at least one CLO connected with it.

Civic engagement has a problem in that people see it as an external activity.

Heidi: We constantly hear from advisory groups that our graduates don't have the “soft skills” they need to be successful in the world.

NJ: Add “And to ensure that we are meeting these: we have a two-pronged approach: learning and activities. In addition, we also have initiatives that are unfolding here in Montana.

Leads with us, and then it gets into what we're doing, and then it goes into measurement.

Meanwhile, we can think behind the scenes, this is how this will fit into accreditation.

Here's our stuff, here's our core themes, and here's what we're doing to support this.

Jeri: Business as usual needs to be the most important job. There was fear that if some peoples' work wasn't in the Strategic Plan it wasn't important.

NJ: How does this build onto what we've been doing – "we can build from our foundation of what we've already been doing and we're going to continue the things that we have been successful doing."

Dena: example: Mandy's department has to be fluid, has to be able to make changes as we go along.

Heidi: when Executive Team is making decisions, we can then go back to the data-driven decisions.

Student Services

Mary Kay: how do we measure Student Services and how does it fit into this model?

NJ: Usually Academics and Student Affairs have been separated.

Natasha referred Mary Kay to a study from University of Central Oklahoma as a model-how they mapped activities and experiences and how that impacted Student Affairs.

Exposure? Participation? Reinforcing or developing? Mastery and attainment?

May change the PPP a bit to fit into Student Affairs. In PPP, there will be a new data source for Advising.

Track: declare a major

Is their pathway clear, are they aware of their pathway, if they change their pathway, what happens?

"Students don't like parking and they don't like Advising."

NJ: Satisfaction surveys for Advising don't provide meaningful information. Focus groups generally give you better information.

Advising can keep ongoing reflective portfolio on a student.

Ask "What did I get out of this" as opposed to "How satisfied were you with the Advising process?"

Heidi: does an advisor keep a portfolio on a certain student. We could track this student's journey.

NJ: this is where you can do crosswalk to the equitable part. Lead with the questions you have.

Benchmark checks:

- What is evidence that would make you come together and respond to a need.
- What process would you put into place that would give you information but also help you improve your processes.

Give NJ a copy of the 8-week advantage survey. Did we?

NJ: students get hit with too many surveys—suggested a marketing campaign to highlight "You said, we heard" as in: 70% of you said xxx in the survey, so this is what we are doing to address your concerns.

RECAP of work done so far:

- Vision
- Mission
- Core Themes
- Related to different CLOs

NJ: Stress that we are being able to do these things *because* we have such a strong foundation.

Objectives

NJ: Objectives seem to be what NWCCU didn't understand the most

The parts in the document now are steps to make it happen (tasks: develop and improve educational model)

NJ: Once you start to move this out to campus, will need explanations on why these activities support these goals.

Jeri: Across campus, there is confusion among tasks, activities, and goals

NJ: Whatever you do in your Strategic Plan document that goes out to college. There is tension between Northwest and what we need to do internally.

Heidi: would it be helpful to define the terms?

NJ: you could go either way—will be a long and complicated process. If you want to put it in as a strategic tactic to distract from other things...go for it.

You could turn the table into questions:

- What are we going to do?
- How are we going to know when we've arrived

The group discussed defining tasks/responsible parties, resources, timeline, indicators of achievement for Objectives—captured in Strategic Plan document.

Feedback from Natasha Jankowski NILOA Coach Visit 3/28/19:

- Write a reflective journey of the assessment process—everything we’ve done, where we were, where we’re going. This can be used as evidence for the accreditation report, as well as information for the campus, etc.
- Connect common course outlines/requests for faculty to complete to 8-Week Advantage & purpose, plan, path
- Use 8-Week Advantage & PPP to structure revised assessment process—what information do we need to collect in order to show attainment of these goals?
- Ensure that my focus is primarily on CLOs, curriculum mapping, ensuring that signature assignments demonstrate CLO attainment
 - Set targets for CLO attainment in strategic plan. Aim high at first since there is no base level and then see what happens.
 - Should be measuring how many students demonstrate “mastery” — however we define that.
 - Faculty should assess signature assignments with institutional rubric and then report to me their results. I will aggregate those results to show percentage of students attaining mastery
 - Ensure that all language related to this uses “CLO” not “institutional”
 - Signature assignment approval process: make sure that people submit the actual assignment, not just the summary info currently asking for on proposal form
 - We need an approving body to vet signature assignments
 - Should create a fellowship program (based on people who “get it” at mapping retreat). This could be assessment champions and group that approves signature assignments, etc.
 - Give official letter recognizing people’s participation in fellowship program and include mention of how it supports mission fulfillment.
- Per conversation on strategic plan, work on renaming some of the CLOs, esp. “Workforce Readiness” and ensure that the “assessment criteria” language is changed to function more as framing language.
- CLO alignment: Continue having faculty align to CLOs
 - Not every program/course outcome should or will align with a CLO.
 - Make sure that alignment makes sense and that assessment is actually taking place
 - Goal is to ensure that students touch each CLO at least once during their time here. That means that not every class might address a CLO.
 - Need to decide what our values are in terms of this. *If* every class should include a CLO, how to we monitor that and ensure compliance, especially with signature assignments?
- Course-level assessment should be monitored at the program level. Programs should be responsible for course-level assessment and developing assessment plans.

- See if the database can push out notifications and reminders to faculty when they need to conduct course- assessment
 - My focus re: program assessment should be to look for trends within programs and for college-wide trends/issues that arise. Also, I would want to incorporate program assessment data into an institutional assessment report (see McKendree U's program assessment process)
- Individual instructor self-evals should go directly to supervisor—these are not my problem
 - Get rid of online fillable form
 - Per Division Directors conversation on 4/3/19, DDs will work to incorporate this into the faculty evaluation process instead of having it be a separate item/process
- Join PODnetwork.org Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Ed; has a SIG for SOTL and a grad student SIG
- Go to assessment institute in October: will waive my fee
 - Submitted professional development request
- Find out if/how program assessment can be tied to program review process:
 - per Larry, 4/5/19, the program review process has been revised in order to quantify program success in order to support prioritization. He will invite me to their kick-off meeting in September, but it is not likely that program assessment will fit well with program review's charter and process.
- Review U Hawaii Manoa's assessment website for good examples of database, process, reporting, etc.
- Review Stockton University's toolkit on mapping:
 - http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/MappingToolkit_StocktonUniversity.pdf
- Facilitate a mapping and signature assignment workshop:
 - Purpose is to reframe the value and purpose of assessment
 - Gap analysis
 - Define what “introductory, reinforce, mastery” mean and begin process of aligning outcomes to those labels
 - Discuss best practices for assessing outcomes
 - Plan CLO committees
 - Divide faculty into groups based on CLO: develop/verify CLO rubric, determine assignment design parameters, make a plan for sharing awareness and understanding with the campus (see McKendree's process)
 - Make institutional map a GDoc so that it is a living/active document
- Need to make sure that we figure out a way to make documenting qualitative data a habit campus-wide.
 - Anecdotes, HIPs, Stories, etc.
 - One method is to ensure that all dept./division meetings have assessment as a standing agenda item