

## Minutes for the Called *Carolina Core Meeting*

April 2, 2019, 2:00-3:30 pm

Thomas Cooper Library, Room 204

### Members Present:

Sandra Kelly (Administrative Co-Chair), Sabrina Andrews (ex-officio), Claudia Benitez-Nelson, Susan Beverung, Sara Corwin, Ron Cox, Tena Crews (ex-officio), John Gerdes (ex-officio), Doug Meade, Donald Miles (ex-officio), LaTrice Ratcliff-Small (ex-officio), Andrea Tanner, Jenn Tilford (ex-officio), Ernest Wiggins

### Members Absent:

Pam Bowers, Nancy Buchan, David Cárdenas, Rob Dedmon, Brian Habing, Cliff Leaman, Paul Mackenzie, Manton Matthews, Chris Nesmith, Ginger Nickles-Osborne, Claire Robinson (ex-officio), Marco Valtorta (ex-officio),

### Specialty Team Chairs Present:

Karen Brown, Daniel Freedman, David Hitchcock, Judith Kalb, Matthew Kisner,

### Specialty Team Chairs Absent:

Kathryn Edwards, Mindy Fenske, Nicole Fisk, Sarah Williams, Jeff Wilson

### Guests:

### **Handout (double click to open):**



OIRAA Assessment  
Information.pdf

### Overview of the Current Assessment Status of the Carolina Core (Sandra)

Sandra provided a brief history of the Carolina Core. We assess the Carolina Core because we are required to do so. The Carolina Core was put into practice in 2013, and the first assessment report came out in 2014. For each of the 10 learning outcomes, there is a specialty team that is involved in the approval of courses for Carolina Core and on the frontline for assessment. They work with those teaching the courses in their specialty area and gather artifacts. They rate student artifacts with a rubric. Because it was unsustainable to assess every year, a rotating schedule was decided upon for assessment every two years. There is a deadline coming up in 2020 for the SACS review.

### Closing the Loop Before Fall 2020 in Preparation of SACSCOC Visit (Donald, LaTrice, Sabrina, and Sandra)

The University is coming up for reaffirmation. The last time our general education process was evaluated was in 2011. What can we expect? There are two stages of reviews.

1. In September 2020, our offsite report is due. We are looking to tell our story of what's happened with Carolina Core over the last few years. A group of 10-15 people from peer institutes will do a review based on a report that we submit to them to determine if we are in compliance with SACS Standard 8.2.b listed on the OIRAA Assessment Information handout. They will be looking for whether the institution has identified expected outcomes for students and if we have a process in place for measuring those outcomes. We've assessed each of the cores at least twice, at this time. In the report, we will describe how we use the results of this process to make continuous improvements. We need to show SACS that we've developed a process and that we've learned from it. We need to document the improvement process through discussions with faculty and administrators. After we submit the offsite report, they decide whether we're in compliance. If we are out of compliance, then we'll have a chance to respond.
2. They will be onsite in March of 2021 for the second stage of the review. This will be a separate group of individuals than the group in stage one. They'll have our original report and the response (if any). They will probably speak with some from the Carolina Core Committee.

LaTrice is now taking the lead on program assessment and Carolina Core assessment. LaTrice, Donald and Sandra have met to discuss the possibility of a more streamlined way of assessing the Carolina Core going forward. This may include having fewer learning outcomes. For now, we will focus on closing the loop on assessing the current 10 learning outcomes.

Sabrina went over the information on page 2 of the handout that shows the process of assessment. SACS is looking for how we have made improvements over the last few years using the evidence that we've collected.

Sandra added that we need to be more targeted on our discussion of the results. For some learning outcomes, such as CMW, it may work to have the discussion at a faculty meeting. The GFL assessment process may be a little bit different because they don't have inter-raters. For others, it may require a wider discussion among a diverse group of departments. Sandra has talked to Augie Grant, who has agreed to reach out to the faculty for a particular learning outcome and coordinate meetings in CTE (as administrative support). The plan is to start this fall having discussions of assessment results. There is an issue of inter-rater reliability that should be included in the discussion. SACS is interested in seeing how we're closing the loop. We need to be able to document how we're moving forward, and we can do that with these discussions.

There were concerns about what is expected, what constitutes evidence, and what is success in the assessment process. Donald responded that many of the SACS standards are very vague because they are meant to apply to various institutions. They have revised the standards (84 originally) and grouped them into 15 areas. It's up to us to describe how we've met the standards. OIRAA is going to talk to other campuses that have already gone through this process in order to prepare. We need to make sure that we are following our own policies. It's important for us to have meetings to document the discussions that we're having. This meeting counts as evidence. We want to show that faculty are thinking about this. They want to see that we are moving forward and that we are talking and thinking about assessment and improvement. They want to make sure that students are getting what they're paying for when they come here. We have assessment results, but are now looking to get input on what to do with those results to close the loop.

Rather than expand the Carolina Core Committee, we want to expand the Specialty Teams and get faculty together to discuss the assessment results and moving forward. The concern was raised about being able to get everyone together, and some important points were made:

- OIRAA will put together and distribute a list of whose teaching Carolina Core courses.
- How many T/Fac's and graduate students teach these courses and what kind of training and communication do they receive about this process?
- Many courses have course coordinators that organize all of the sections. In some cases, it may be helpful to use them to disseminate information.
- We could also involve the department chairs and undergraduate directors to get the best points of contact for discussing each component.
- Technology can help with this process in being able to send out basic information to any new faculty teaching these courses. That way everyone would be getting the same information about what the goals and learning outcomes are for the course.
- Target the full-time instructors and faculty as points of contact for continuity.
- The associate deans in the colleges could be a point person and do follow-up.

The outcome is to improve the academic experience for students. Sandra asked the Specialty Team Chairs to think about how they want to do this process for their team.

There was a discussion of course learning outcomes and syllabi. The Carolina Core learning outcomes should be included in the course syllabus. John Gerdes mentioned that there is no follow-up on syllabi after the original one that goes through APPS with the course approval. John also offered to provide information on a syllabus standardization process that all faculty that teach a course could use to include consistent basic information about the course, including learning outcomes.

We are not gathering artifacts in the fall. We want to complete what we've already gathered up to this point.

#### Pilot Study (Sandra)

There is a flaw in the current process that we don't have a pre and post assessment. Currently, we gather information in the middle of the semester. There is an ongoing pilot project with the English department to gather the very first draft of student writing (Freshmen essays) as a pre-assessment. This will give us a much more qualitative approach in assessment. We are also looking at ways to evaluate capstone courses. Additionally, we are looking at consolidating learning outcomes into possibly

three outcomes (i.e. critical thinking, problem solving, and communication) that would be covered by a variety of courses. The idea is to have some pilot data to show that we are working on ways to improve our processes. We are working on trying to hire people to be raters over the summer for the pilot. Overall, we are looking for an assessment process that is more sustainable. This will also show SACS that we are looking at new ways to assess.

#### New Budget Model (Sandra)

There is a new budget model that is being implemented, in which tuition dollars follow students. One hundred percent of tuition dollars go to a college if a student is taking a course in the college of their major. A portion of tuition dollars go to a college when students from another college take those courses. Going forward, we have to be careful that no one proposes courses that are outside of their ability to teach. Sandra and Cheryl Addy are reviewing these courses to make sure that units agree. Anything approved to meet a Carolina Core learning outcome must be accepted by another college to fulfill the Carolina Core.

#### Announcement (Sandra)

The state legislature is looking at our Carolina Core and wanting to impose some regulations. It is related to the Constitution and founding documents. So far, UofSC is not in complete compliance with the current law. It is probable that the modified law will be passed this year and will impact the Carolina Core. It is a 3-credit course with specific content. We have a 1-credit module that covers the Constitution, founding documents, etc. It may be possible to have several courses incorporate this online module into the courses. We also have a 3-credit course that is called "The Founding Fathers." AP/IB and dual enrollment credit for HIST 111 and 112 will be accepted. 9,000 of our current undergraduates have credit for HIST 111 or 112. We will have one year to be in compliance.

**NOTE: The latest update is that the law may not pass this year, but some version may pass next year.**

#### Conclusion

The meeting was adjourned at 3:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jenn Tilford.