Professional Ed Assessment Committee Minutes  
December 14, 2004

Present: Sue Moore, Beth Handler, Anne Blackhurst, Jean Haar, Jeff Pribyl, Mike Miller, Tracy Pellett, Clark Johnson, Sandi Jessen, Sandra Mullins, Judith Luebke, Kitty Foord

- Welcome and introductions to new members
  New and returning members were welcomed to the committee. The committee purpose was reviewed. This group reviews policies related to assessment and provides guidance on unit level assessments. The committee was thanked for its role in the accreditation process, both for its past work and for its meeting with the reviewers during the site visit.

- Core assessments update
  Tracy provided a list of core assessments currently in the database system. He asked questions about whether the core assessments were accurate and reflected what programs are using. Faculty need to be aware of using clear titles so that it is easier to locate the rubric and data in the system. Faculty should also be aware that this summer’s crash caused some of the rubrics to be deleted from the system. We have been putting them back in the system and are using the most up-to-date versions of the assessments. Some departments are still not represented, however. Mike is concerned that the numbers of core assessments are too high in some departments. The assessments are meant to be representative rather than comprehensive. These are designed to show trends. The dean is concerned that with too many core assessments, the data may not be entered. Sandra is concerned that people understand the purpose of the database is clear to people. If the idea is not to have one per course, then departments need to be aware of it.

- Next steps with using the database
  A schematic of the University Assessment Database was presented by Tracy. Several components within the system are working well (registration, clinical placement, background checks, Praxis). A major improvement this semester is the ability to define assessments beyond the course level. This is particularly important for grad programs. This can be the program, department, college, unit, or university level. Self-evaluation is also a new improvement. Surveys are started, but the use of them will be much improved this next semester. Reports are available on individual students on a limited basis. This includes performance and placement information. Reports can also be generated for courses and across courses using the same rubric. Reporting is the major focus on improvements for the next several months. Kitty would like to see all of our assessments aligned with components of the domains (for initial licensure) and see how an individual is performing. Mike asked when we would be able to look at the relationships between the data. We will need more data to be able to move to this function. But the reporting function will allow us to do the statistics related to the main questions that would regularly be needed. Paul asked about whether we were able to have information about students’ Praxis performance be generated from the database. The information about both Praxis 1 and 2 is
available right now. This is also true for the specific input on the core assessment data. Sandra is expecting that programs will want to use this information to make program improvements, and she is wondering how often resulting changes can be made to the assessments. Mike suggests that we could have the noted changes in the database itself. Mike suggests that the actual assignment given to the student should be storable. Tracy will look into how this might be done. Right now it is not set, but we might want to develop another place for this kind of information. Beth is wondering whether we can come up with a code to help us tract elements such as service learning.

• Recommendations from NCATE and BOT
The dean commented that the feedback that we received from both groups relates to use of the data. Even on the advanced assessment system and the need for more data, this recommendation came because we are so far ahead on having an advanced assessment system. We do need to get our data in the system and then look at what the data tells us. From there we can examine the standards and what the data tell us. To frontload all the standards seems punishing. Beth suggests that we could use a code to link to the standards. The question is if we are not going to be comprehensive about the standards, should they be part of the database system. Kitty suggests that we could analyze by standards already by making queries. Mike suggests that it may be too much to have all of the standards included, but instead use the representative ones to see how we are doing on are performance. Kitty also suggests that schools will not recognize the 125 Standards of Effective Practice. Jean suggests that broader approaches are more appropriate for their area. Anne suggests that we focus on the purpose for doing this rather just answering to outside organization. The broader questions seem to be most important. How do we help people be good teachers? Sue suggests that it would be helpful for the EEC faculty to sit together to examine and pare down their assessments. It would be exciting and unifying to have the conversation.

• Plan and timeline for assessment development and use
Mike suggested that we need to become habituated to the system and data entry. He would like to create a graphic that shows people a schedule over the next three years. It would include a time to enter data each semester (with reminders), a time for reports, and a time for examining data and asking questions about it. Then faculty would be more interested in working with the data. At some point, the university and college systems need to become one. The process could be portrayed through several cycles to show expectations. Tracy would need to meet with chairs and Secondary Ed Coalition to get some ideas of deadlines that might be appropriate. We also will need a plan to look at our next steps with respect to assessments and development. Tracy and Maureen will work on this timeline and bring it back to this group in a draft form for next semester’s first meeting for feedback and approval.

• Clinical and field experience evaluations
Kitty presented the summative evaluation for student teachers. The rubric scale was identified as a problem by our NCATE consultant. The language for “basic” is not
consistent with expectations for a competent beginning teacher. For this semester, a “satisfactory” level was needed for passing. Schools use a four scale rather than a five scale rubric. Plus the schools use some other elements from Charlotte Danielson that we could include in our evaluation. This would help us factor out the specific areas of concern under **Student Background**. Kitty would like us to have a dialogue between MSU faculty and schools about the instruments they and we are using. We could gain an understanding from our school partners about what they value. Additionally, diversity is not able to be pulled out from the components in a clear fashion that enables us to examine how our candidates are performing. We would like to have a task force to examine these issues. Whatever was developed would impact the earlier clinical evaluations as well. Clark suggests that we should also look at the research to guide which were more important. He is concerned about adding more details to the evaluation when teachers are already feeling like we have too much. If there is a problem where we are seeing low scores, then we could get at the information in another way. Maureen commented on the follow-up surveys and how they showed that diversity is one of our ways that we are not preparing candidates as well as we could. The dean also would like to caution us about adding onto components when we can modify the use of the evaluation tool instead. We do not want to overwhelm school people. Kitty suggested that we could have a task force that looked at going to a four-point scale and clarifying language on the rubric. Mike cautions us to be careful about changes because they affect faculty in departments also. We will make sure we have both faculty and school people on the task force.