Core Curriculum Meeting

October 30, 2019

3 p.m. KL 330

In attendance-

Dr. Stephen Duffy

Dr. David Allen

Dr. Debra Scaggs

Destine Holmgreen

Dr. Bernice Sanchez

Jessie Shaw

Fei Luo

Dr. Juan H. Hinojosa

Andy Hilburn

Jonathan Murphy

Angelique Blackburn

Dr. Duffy-Getting input on what steps we will be taking next. I have heard back from several members and several departments about the upcoming. I want to make sure everybody here has spoken to their department chairs. You don't want to get to the stage that department chairs are saying that they didn't know about this. Does anyone have the list of classes for the fall? I sent out the schedule and the rubrics. We do know what is going on. Also, I would like to get a list of identified assignments. As we go along, so we can create a master list so that we can be as consistent as possible. We can track changes. I don't want to corner any department into being stuck with an assessment assignment that we can't use. We also want to show SACS that this is a process and that when we change these assignments, we are not doing it arbitrarily. There is a reason for it. Because we are trying to get this off the ground and moving, in the fall, I don't care what the assignment is. But I want to know what it is. You can pick whatever assignment you want. So that we can start talking about whether it stays the same or it needs to change.

Dr. Scaggs-Is there any concern with the Coordinating Board, SACS or anyone at this institution having a group assignment fees used to address any of the core curriculum outcomes? In the past, there has not been.

Dr. Duffy-David?

Dr. Allen-I have not seen anything one way or another with that.

Dr. Scaggs-Cause the whole idea was to use one assignment for everything if we can. So we did that. There has been discussions that may be a problem.

Dr. Duffy-Among whom?

Dr. Scaggs-Among me and some of my colleagues.

Dr. Duffy-We checked with SACS. We don't remember seeing anything there. It shouldn't be a problem.

Dr. Scaggs-Just wanted to verify, I wanted to share this information.

Dr. Duffy-Part of it team work, has to be group dynamics. You can't do teamwork with only one person on the team. Can you?

Dr. Allen-SACS perspective on assessments, they don't tell you what to assess. We just help you to assess it. How you do it is pretty much up to you.

Dr. Scaggs-We have done it in the past, it hasn't been a problem. The question has emerged.

Dr. Duffy-I don't see it as being problematic. It's also something I think if we have done it in the past, we can continue to it just fine. If there is some compelling reason for or against, then this is something we can look at. There has to be some sort of justification for moving away from it. I understand group projects are more difficult to get students to do. It's more difficult to say students are doing this or that. Just because something is difficult, doesn't mean to say that excludes it.

Dr. Scaggs-Agreed.

Jonathan Murphy-I wonder if you have a group and one student tends to lead it, then are you assessing the group or are you assessing the best student?

Duffy-It depends on what area you are assessing. If you are assessing teamwork, then obviously, you have a group that is being dominated by one person, you are not doing your teamwork well. In that case, they are getting a low rating. When you are dealing with teamwork, it's not the product, it's the process that you are looking at. Once again, that fact is such as that it would depend on what it is that you are looking at the group for. It it's something else, if it's got more to do with the product, that might be not necessarily be an issue. It depends.

Angelique-We have a couple of sections that are early college high school. Are they supposed to be assessed with everybody else?

Dr. Duffy-They are part of the core curriculum , include them in the sample. I did a couple of semesters for Early College High School in history 1301 and 1302. Both of those classes were better than my regular sections.

Dr. Scaggs-Technically they are university students.

Dr. Allen-Taking for college credit.

Jonathan Murphy-Especially for humanities, every course that is in the core, is that what we need to assess? French, Germany?

Dr. Scaggs-Will should have forwarded the document to you.

Dr. Duffy-No languages. We only look at the core curriculum as it is layed out and approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, which is the one in the catalog. Languages used to be there, but they were removed. The only Spanish that was in there was 2350. In the package that you should have received, there was a schedule of when those classes will be assessed. So everything that is in the core curriculum will go through an assessment cycle at some period of time. We don't assess all the core curriculum courses every semester for every domain. We deal with different domains at different times for three-year period. Whatever is coming up, then you sample. You shouldn't accumulate hundreds and hundreds, you do thirty percent. About one hundred or so should be alright. Any other questions?

Angelique-Do all of the sections have to have the same assignment for a given course?

Dr. Duffy-At the moment I am not too fussy about this. We are just trying to collect data. As we move to it, as we look at it next year, when we look at the list of what the actual assignments are. I would at least, what we were aiming for, is at least what the assignment would be similar in its construct. I will give you an example, hypothetically, the history 1301 was dealing with personal responsibility and it was a position paper. Whether that position paper is on the American Civil War or on Shade's Rebellion, or the American Revolution, I don't care. The content is immaterial. The assignment would be similar in as much as someone has to take a position and say something on personal responsibility. There is flexibility in that because this is not content driven. We are looking at the skills that the students are acquiring more than the content. Which is one of the things we needs to discuss later on when we talk about people doing the rubrics and things like that. Next semester we will deal more directly with calibration of the rubric. Sometimes I think instructors tend to misinterpret what the rubric is supposed to be. We are all seduced with the content of grammar when we are dealing with writing. We can look at something and say we are dealing with critical thinking. The fact that there is coherent sentences and tend to do that more. The ones that tend to have less flowing grammar or if there is context we are interested in, we read it more closely than if it is content that we don't care about. So we are looking at how they do things rather than the actual content of it. Any other questions?

Jonathan Murphy-How is it working in terms of who is doing assessment? We have multiple disciplines-History, Philosophy, English and Spanish. So is it full time faculty and it rotates from year to year? Who is assigned to run the assessment?

Dr. Dufffy-Well it just depends on the department chair. Institutional Assessment-we are here to get these things done so we are in compliance and to gather the data to help analyze it. How you go about collecting it that is up to you. I remember when I was chair of that particular department, we had a group of people that we would divide up. The Spanish stuff tended to be with the Spanish faculty. That's up to them.

Jonathan Murphy-I was thinking it might be good that people that do core assessment be kind of excused from regular assessment. Then the core assessment be separate.

Dr. Duffy-You can do it any which way you want, as long as it gets done. That's your decision that you want to make. It's up to you. You are going to have a whole bunch of stuff to assess. So I would suggest to try to get a coalition of the willing. There isn't a professor in any given level that doesn't deal with products of the core curriculum. If someone thinks they are too elevated in their academic

standing to deal with this, then you should just shut them down on their opinion of the quality of the students in their classroom. The more willing participants, the better off you are. The better the analysis is going to be because we have to have a plan of action. If there criticisms of how well trained or well developed the students are coming into the upper division classes, then we will have to look at core and say what does the data tell us about this and what will we do with the core part of the assessment.

Collecting artifacts-which is another issue, how do you collect them. We prefer electronic documents. One way to deal with this is to have them upload their assignment to blackboard, which is fine. If you have people using final exam questions, which is perfectly legitimate, then you can have them to scan question into the blue books so that they can have PDF. We would prefer at the moment, and I would insist later on that if you going to scan PDFs, that they get scanned before the instructor starts writing on them. We can sample them on a different level and look at it. At the moment I won't be too fussy about this. As we delineate the process more precisely, we will be more deciduous about this. At the moment, we will take what we can get. Later on that is not going to be the case. So if you can convince them now that is great.

We sent out the revised rubrics. David and I listened to the concerns that we had the last time about the rubrics. David was kind enough to go in there and take care of those. So do we have any feedback or did anyone see anything that is problematic that we have to revisit? Do they work? We can revisit them again after we go through this period. One of the things David and I have found is about trying a fixed process is here are these obvious type things that people are having problems with, we fix that and then we find out we are having minor problems with something else. Rubrics themselves are not cast in stone, these are things that we can look at. We want to keep them as close as possible to the ACU value rubrics so that we have a natural standard we can look at.

Anyone get feedback on adjustments to the assessment schedule that was sent out? Andy wants to move up a couple of domains of geography. Just let me know what those are and I will adjust the schedule. In Andy's case, Geography 1303 was essentially set up originally to use one artifact to look into all the domains in one semester. Andy would be more comfortable if this was spread out looking at these domains. People want to move things around or condensed I am okay with this as long as they get the appropriate responses within that timeframe. We want to be as flexible and user friendly as we can. Sometimes this has come up before that for whatever reason, we couldn't run proper assessment, don't panic, we can run that assessment in the spring, but we have to know about it. Any document that we have would not be accurate. The documents have to be updated. I am adverse to flexibility. I am adverse to not being told about intended changes. Just so we can keep everything so we don't lose anything. This is just the effort of building communication. Which sometimes is the most challenging.

Any comments?

Dr. Hinojosa-I am looking at the rubric that we have to enter, is there a way to instead of having to enter for each one of these assessments the department name, the instructor who doing it, the year for each one that we do. Is there a way to just do it one time?

Dr. Scaggs-We asked about this before, refreshes automatically when you submit but has everything you put in. I can't remember.

Dr. Allen-I don't know if Survey Monkey will do it.

Dr. Duffy-This is something unfortunately that can't be done. That's something we want to look at. We will make the transition to AEFIS, hopefully by the spring, if we can. In which case we won't have these problems. This is just a survey monkey problem. We will do what we can with it. At the moment, the answer is probably not. But I am sympathetic, if we can we will.

Dr. Allen-I found on something like that if you have a word document, especially if you have dual monitors, have it written out copy paste, control c, control d, it saves a lot of time.

Dr. Hinojosa-Even in the drop down menus?

Dr. Allen-I don't know about that.

Dr. Duffy-The only way around that is to do a Survey Monkey for each domain for each different course for each different department. We would end up with I don't know how many surveys.

Dr. Allen-There would be people putting the wrong stuff in the wrong survey.

Dr. Duffy-It's problematic. We will look at it. It's a work in progress. We will try to make it as efficient as possible.

This is the next step this is what we are trying to do really for the next-this is what is going to come to fruition by the end of spring. We want these issues solved by the time we come up to April or early May next year, that is to redesign the review process. The process that submitted initially is unrealistic and the drift since first implemented has meant that the process is rudimentary at best. The final product of what we want. The final product is an AIER for the course, which will deal with data and the action plan. The AIER will contain the data that we have collected from survey monkey/AEFIS in the different domains with the different learning outcomes. Then just like a regular AIRE, it will have an action plan. This is what we found and this is what we intend to do next time. The core curriculum AIER will look exactly like a program. In this particular case it will also be accompanied by a white paper. We will do an updated white paper each year. Which will give context and analysis for this. The AIER is much more a utilitarian document and the white paper is more of an overview of that. What we can do is to compare the white papers, this is what we found last year, and this is what we found this year looking at it from a broader perspective. Now this is the first time we will be producing an AIER for the core curriculum. We don't have anything to compare it to. Obviously as we go on, that's how we can build our documentation. Both of these will be posted on the website. Dave and I are working on the Institutional Assessment website so that we can put up all these materials up there. There already is a lot of documentation there already. We want to get some of these white papers and documentation up there so it can be accessible to faculty and whoever wants to look at it.

Any questions about that?

2.2 This is the thing that everyone wants to see and this is loop closing. This is open to discussion. This is a dialog that we got to have between now going to April/May of next year. By the end of that we would have everything sorted. It goes to questions like Jonathan was talking about. How do we gather evidence on departmental review of the core curriculum in which the department discuses.

What kind of faculty does the assessment? How do you divide the assessment duties? By doing that we can show:

A. Show that we are developing a process

B. Establish some rules so that we don't have a guessing game that we have had in the past

People are more comfortable with how this is set up and they have greater understanding of what is going on. I think there ought to be a step inserted which doesn't exist at the moment and that is evidence of college level review. Obviously, the college is COAS what we are talking about. Education and nursing don't have anything to do with it. We have COAS and University College which have two courses. Business I think has one or two classes.

Dr. Allen-I think it is one.

Dr. Duffy-University college and for Business it is going to be relatively straightforward because they are dealing with limited number of classes. I think there should be some college level discussion about the core in general.

On a department level, we have English, History and Philosophy. The more people that actually participate would be better because the following year there would be a same mix of people assessing the same type of artifacts. If you get one person doing one, or another doing the next year, or only one person doing a period. The results less reliable. Too much variation. On a college level, the same thing applies.

Dr. Duffy-I do not want to be stuck with one definitive model of doing this. I think that there are different ways of doing this that are equally effective. You might want to have departments that want to do an application on rotations or something more general. It doesn't matter, there's different models. Just as long as we know what model are being used by the department. In the college level, it might be an interesting discussion. For instance, looking at math scores, to take one example, for the engineering faculty to have some kind of awareness of what general level of math is out there. One of the things that we often find is that sometimes some types of professors are surprised that they don't know this or that. I am often surprised that they didn't know that the students didn't know this and that. Having some kind of awareness or some kind of interaction at least with the assessment data would benefit numerous people in managing their expectations. That could be another outcome for that.

For lack of a better word we are the university level core curriculum assessment committee, Just to brighten your day.

The other thing we have to work out at these different stages beyond the department going up to college and then to university level, we have to be looking at disciplines and areas, we have to work out appropriate sampling. We don't want more than 10 or 20 artifacts across the board. At each level we need to decide what the appropriate sampling level would be. At the university level we are not dealing with programs or with, we are dealing with is a broad overview. We are not concerned if a student is an engineering student or an English student, or whatever, what we are concerned with is how do students in general at TAMIU perform in college algebra in these domains or math in general. We are looking at the domain rather than the individual program. What we are doing is we want to know how well they communicate in general. As you get further down then you can get more

microscopic in these areas. This is something that we are trying to change. Dave and I have been working on this. This is just a general thing. The previous assessment culture has thought that it should have hands on focus what programs do. Institutional Assessment should have hands on focus on what programs do. That's not what we do. We are looking at the university level stuff. What goes on in the program is the concern of the department chair or people in the program. What goes on in the college level should be the concern of the deans and stuff. What we are doing here is looking at the university as a whole. That's one of the issues that we need to address. How do we sample, how do we get a picture of how TAMIU students are capable of doing in these areas.

Dr. Scaggs-You are doing a very good job of explaining. I am still a little confused. I need something clarified. So the artifacts will come in on a department level and they will do their assessment. There will be a sampling of the same artifacts come to us or go to the college level and a sampling of those will come to us. We won't look at the reports?

Dr. Duffy-We will be looking at the reports. We look at the data across the university. The data says they are scoring at three. Then we look at anonymous artifacts. We are looking at them and say it's alright. Then we know that the data is working and things are calibrated right. If however, if at the department level they are making fours , but at the college level they are twos or whatever then we need to look at the particular area what is it about the rubric or what is it about the assignment that is leading to this disconnect?

Jonathan Murphy-Assessing the assessment.

Dr. Duffy-We are just calibrating. We are just making sure that everyone knows what the scale means. That way we can check the authenticity of the data as far as we can tell and we can also check the rubrics are appropriate. Sometimes it gets skewed because the rubric is not layed up. That's why we need a list of assignments sometimes if there is disconnect, people are using the wrong kind of assignment for this kind of assessment. Sometimes you go back and say hang on a second, why is this not right. You look at it, here's this communication deal and they are using multiple choice. That's part of what we are supposed to be doing anyway. We start to speak the same language as far as assessment is concerned. People have a tendency to use terminology interchangeably that has different meanings.

Dr. Allen-The core should be common across the university. This will help get to that.

Dr. Scaggs-Thank you for clarifying that.

Dr. Duffy-This is something new that we are doing. That is why we need feedback from the departments about how we should do this. What do people think is appropriate? I do not want to be in a situation, I want this to mean something. We have to do this anyway for the Coordinating Board and SACS. We might as well get something out of it. We might as well learn something. I do notwant a situation where departments or certain areas think that somehow or other we are picking on them. We want to have it that we input from these people about what they think is appropriate for the process. So that when we do come across some incongruities, we can put them right. Not be because people are being punished, but because we can help them get data so that they can understand more clearly what is going on in their program.

Jonathan Murphy-That second stage, probably, you would probably get better insight from the second stage than from the first stage. The question is why do the first stage? Is it just the matter of the sheer number of artifacts so that it is just the matter of the second level that you don't think it is false samples so no one is over-burdened. It would make sense for departments to have one representative on this committee. Then just do it at a fixed level. You see what I mean? Is it just the matter that there are too many artifacts for one committee to handle?

Dr. Duffy-We will get hit with hundreds of artifacts. We are dealing with human beings, the most powerful motivation is self-interest and the most powerful instinct is self-preservation. The thing about this is-you are always going to get people that are less cooperative than others. If we try to rely on everything coming in to one committee, the committee would be overloaded. We don't get this dialogue, we get this imposition. I want dialogue coming up and down this chain from people who give a damn about what this data says so that we can get this core curriculum as effective as possible. For us the sampling is for calibration. It does not need to be extensive. We just need to be able to understand what it is that is going on in general at the institutional level. By the time it gets to the department level, you do need want to know what is going on in History 1301. It's just not an issue at teaching U.S. History at TAMIU, sometimes you are going to see outliers. Now it evens out at the end when you are looking at the institutional type of data. Why are these two people misreading this?

Dr. Allen-At the institutional level, if we just look at it here, we are not going to have a sufficient end count to find out where the problems exactly lie, and it's not about assigning blame. It's about finding where finding the areas that are weak so that we may make improvements. There has to be a department level to find out when we see there is something wrong at the high level, we can narrow down and help our students. That's what it all boils down to.

Dr. Duffy-Sometimes the issue is simply as simple as don't do this assignment, do this one. It's not criticism per say, it's more appropriate if you do it here so that we can get better results.

Alright, multi-disciplinary participation-one of the things that the Coordinating Board and SACS is multidisciplinary participation in this assessment. At TAMIU in general, in humanities we had that anyway because it is a multidisciplinary department. Most of the departments had some type of multidisciplinary. That's also something else we can do at a university level and at the college level, we can demonstrate that we have people from multi-disciplines looking at this. We have scientists looking at communication and writing. We have people from liberal arts at least trying to understand the assessment data. It ticks that box.

Any more questions. I would like to have one more meeting this semester. At that meeting so you can be thinking about it from now until then I want to confirm assessment activity. I want to hear back from the departments in some shape or form that they say we know we are supposed to do this and we are ready.

Also any issues, so we can try to set them right before it is too late. If it turns out that we have to wait until the spring to do something in one class that was supposed to get done this fall, I want to know about it before we are sitting there waiting for data that was supposed to arrive but it never arrives.

We will also discuss a meeting schedule for 20-20. We are going to be busy here in Spring. I want to get the process finalized before we go into Fall of 2021.

Dr. Duffy-We are using Survey Monkey as a stop gap. There are things that we can talk about in November. How many training sessions do you think we need to set up with OIT to get as many instructors trained on AEFIS as possible. Then we will talk to OIT to set up these trainings in January. We can then put it on AEFIS. AEFIS is relatively straight-forward. You still have to get people to learn the basics. We want to go there as quickly as possible. I also need to know a rough estimate for how many training sessions we need.

Any other questions or issues?

Math-If we have 1000 artifacts, we only need to assess 30 percent and only 30 percent of that 30 percent?

Dr. Duffy-Up to 100.

Dr. Scaggs-Thirty percent up to 100.

Dr. Duffy-Thirty percent up to 100 artifacts per domain. You can sample all across all the sections up to 100 artifacts. Thirty percent is a rule of thumb. We want to hit the sweet spot where people where we get enough sample but it is small enough to get people to do it.

Dr. Hinojosa-If the artifacts are already on Blackboard, do you want us to extract them?

Dr. Duffy-You can leave them there but copy them into a folder.

Dr. Scaggs-You want them to extract and save until, or submit them.

Dr. Duffy-We don't know yet. Do whatever you feel most comfortable with. As long as everyone realizes that some point in time we are going to have to access these samples. People can experiment, they can find what is more convenient at this stage. What I am after is people participating. We can look back and decide what is better. I want people to know that this data is important. You can ask me for advice and I will give me the best that I can in general. The advice I might give you might not be applicable. There are going to issues that are universal and there are going to be issues that are discipline or department specific.

Sample size is something we need to look at. Faculty are looking for direction. They want specifics. That's why you want to give them a number that they can understand. Up to 100 artifacts. They can get their head around that. We need to get something meaningful. The data that I have seen, the institutional level data we generated, is not always bad. Assessment is not always there to find something wrong, it is also to show what is right. There are some things at this university that we do better than our peers. We are really, really, good. Our metrics are going up. I am proud of this place.

Well that's it.

Core Curriculum Meeting
30-Oct-19
Sign In

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Pat Martin
JESSE SHAW
Destine Holmgreen
Angelique BLACKBURN
J. H. Hinojosa
Fei Luo
[illegible] Jonathan murphy
[illegible]
Deborah Scaggs
Bernice Sandy
Andy Hilburn