

Agreement between William Paterson University and AFT Local 1796

Regarding

Departmental Assessment Initiatives

February 12, 2009

Preamble

The Administration and the AFT Local 1796 recognize that the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (Standard 14, *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education: Eligibility Requirements and Standards of Accreditation*, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2002) and of Institutional Effectiveness (Standard 7) are essential components to accreditation in the upcoming decennial review (2010-2011) by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

In order to ensure compliance with accreditation standards at the time of the next decennial review, faculty involvement is needed to ensure that:

1. All course descriptions and syllabi are current and contain appropriate statements of student learning outcomes; and,
2. All course-level statements of student learning outcomes are related to program-level descriptions of desired student learning outcomes; and,
3. Assessments of student learning outcomes are conducted regularly with instruments chosen by faculty for that purpose; and,
4. All information gathered in the assessment of student learning outcomes is shared collegially and used responsibly in the process of continually improving teaching and learning; and,
5. The process of such improvement is open and transparent and shared with the constituent of the University Community.

The University recognizes the need to devote resources, even in a time of scarcity, to support the work of academic departments to complete these tasks.

Agreement on Departmental Assessment Coordinators

While encouraging all faculty members to engage in the process of program review and assessment, the University will create a pool of separately budgeted faculty development and released time opportunities for departmental assessment coordinators to develop and coordinate new initiatives in assessment of student learning outcomes and to update existing plans and methodologies.

Specifically, the University will allocate funds for the purpose of enabling faculty to participate in conferences and workshops related to assessment; provide release time and overload opportunities for departmental assessment coordinators, in consultation through the appropriate committees, councils, and administrative units, to develop and implement plans and or to update existing plans. Such release time shall be provided on a short term (e.g., one-semester-only) basis, and be subject to review and recommendation of renewal or reallocation by appropriate deans, in consultation with the department chair, to the Provost. This stage of activity is referred to below as "Initiation Stage." Once a

departmental assessment program has been established (activities enumerated below completed), assessment activities shall be considered an ongoing part of the work of the department. This stage of activity is referred to as "Maintenance Stage" (see below).

Initiation Stage

Compensation for a Departmental Assessment Coordinator at the stage of initiation shall be no more than three (3) credits onload or overload in one academic year in a cycle no more frequent, in the case of Major Review, than to coincide with preparation for decennial Middle States Accreditation Review (during or just prior to the period of Self-Study) or with a specialized accreditation review; except when, in extraordinary circumstances, it may be required at a different interval by the administration of the University. It shall not apply in cases where assessment processes involve the accreditation of an entire college rather than specific departmental programs. In extraordinary cases, after consultation between the Dean of the respective College, the Department Chair, and the Provost, additional credits may be given for special extension projects of limited scope within the framework of assessment to ensure completion of all enumerated tasks. These will not exceed one (1) credit per semester for one (1) additional academic year.

A faculty member shall be chosen to provide leadership to a department committee in the initiation phase of program assessment in a department, to work with the committee, and in consultation with department colleagues and with the College Assessment Coordinator, and with Director of Institutional Research and Assessment as needed, with the following responsibilities:

- (a) to create, review, and/or revise statements of Student Learning Outcomes in departmental course outlines; and,
- (b) to create review, and/or revise statements of Student Learning Outcomes for each academic program within the purview of the department; and,
- (c) to create, review, and/or revise charts and illustrations of the relations between statements of Student Learning Outcomes as expressed in descriptions of courses and programs, and in University-wide documents; and,
- (d) to create, review, and/or revise instruments for measurement and assessment of student learning outcomes; and,
- (e) to create, review, and/or revise processes for the use of assessment data and its interpretation for the purpose of program improvement.

Implementation

The administration and the Union will review in Spring 2009 the status of departmental assessment initiatives and determine the following:

1. If a department is at the initial stage of development and, consequently, a departmental assessment coordinator should be assigned to conduct the activities described above with the agreed upon compensation, and authorize the department to do so; or,
2. If a department has already completed the initial stage of development and whether or not the department assessment coordinator was compensated for activities (a-e) necessary to attain a second stage (maintenance).
3. Where the initiation process was completed without the departmental assessment coordinator receiving appropriate compensation, such compensation will be provided retroactively to the faculty member responsible and to the semester of completion.

The announcement of specific assignment of credits resulting from this review will be made by March 30, 2009.

Maintenance Stage

The ongoing process of the assessment of student learning outcomes in the maintenance stage should be conducted collegially under the auspices of the appropriate departmental committee(s). Such activities shall not be separately compensated; however, the activities will be documented and may be recognized for purposes of consideration as service in retention and reappointment, promotion, range adjustment, and other processes, and faculty involved with the maintenance of departmental assessment activities shall be given opportunities as they arise for professional development in the area of assessment through support for travel to conferences and for research in assessment.

College-wide Coordination

At this time, the College of Business and the College of Education have college-wide coordinators who fulfill the responsibilities related to their specialized accreditation processes. Should circumstances change or should the workload change due to special requirements specifically for the Middle States Accreditation process, the Administration and Union will negotiate compensation.

Agreed:



For the University

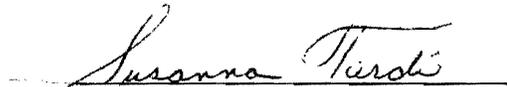
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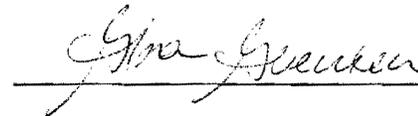
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