I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Jim Richie, Chairperson at 1:04 PM in Zilber Hall Rm. 470.

II. Attendance:

Members Present: Jim Richie (Chair), Edward Blumenthal, Peter Toumanoff, Gary Meyer (ex officio), John Su (ex officio), Chris Shaw, Sandra Cleveland, Alex Lahr, Debra Oswald, Stanley Harrison, C. Terrence Anderson, Stephanie Quade (ex officio), Sarah Feldner, Joan Whipp

Also present: Sharron Ronco, Director of University Assessment

Members not present: M. Behnam Ghasemzadeh, and the Academic Senate Liaison

III. Reflection: presented by Peter Toumanoff

IV. Approval of Minutes of September 5, 2012 – Chris Shaw recorder: Chris Shaw moved to approve, and the minutes were approved unanimously with no changes.

V. Announcements–none

VI. Discussion of the University Core of Common Studies: John Su and guest Sharron Ronco

John Su had previously distributed electronically to the committee the 2012 Annual Report of the Core of Common Studies, the draft Knowledge Area assessment plan, the draft Core Learning Outcomes assessment plan, and the response of the CCRC to the UBUS report to the Academic Senate on the Core of Common Studies.

John Su began by indicating that the CCRC is largely in agreement with the recommendations of the UBUS. Regarding recommendation 1, the CCRC is developing a two-tiered assessment process that is detailed in the handouts. Before the accreditation visit, 2/9 knowledge areas will be fully assessed, 2/9 will be largely assessed, and the assessment of 3/9 will be in the planning stages. Full results will be available from the assessment of 4/15 capstone courses and initial results will be available for the remaining 11. The CCRC would welcome input on potential modifications to the core learning outcomes and other larger issues. Regarding recommendation 2 on better integration of the core, the CCRC feels that the four issues listed on p. 3 of the response handout must all be addressed together. Regarding recommendation 3, the CCRC agrees that the 9 knowledge areas are appropriate but that the Diverse Cultures requirement might merit further consideration or refinement.

Jim Richie then asked how the assessment of the Core has gone so far. Sharron Ronco thought that the process could be more structured, with more guidance for faculty. John Su stated that the Rhetoric assessment was more successful and gave more guidance for potential improvements in courses, while the Math assessment was more of an assessment of baseline proficiency and did not point out paths for improvement. He said that this difference reflected the enormous amount of time and effort committed by the English department and doubted that it was realistic to expect the same amount of
effort from all units. Sarah Feldner pointed out that the math assessment was more complex due to the larger number of courses involved. She also thought that the assessment process had been hampered by turnover on the CCRC and the diversity of backgrounds among the members of the CCRC.

Gary Meyer asked whether the accreditation body (HLC) would be satisfied with the current progress, given their concerns during the last round of re-accreditation. Sharron Ronco answered that the HLC would be most concerned about whether departments actually used the assessment data to make improvements, and that it was too early in the process to know. There was some discussion about the distinction between assessing learning—whether a given course taught students what they needed to know—and performance—whether students ended up knowing what they needed to know, with general agreement that performance was more important. John Su said that if performance is the goal, then he feels that the current process is adequate for assessment.

Edward Blumenthal asked about the importance of integrating core courses, given that in Biological Sciences students have little flexibility in the timing and choice of their core courses. Others indicated that this is not typical—most students have a great deal of flexibility in their timing and choice of courses, and that this poses a real challenge toward fulfilling the common core outcome of integrating this knowledge into a life view. John Su suggested that the UBUS might want to consider a defined sequence of core courses to overcome this problem.

Jim Richie then asked about the pilot study on capstone courses and the Core learning outcomes: is this process about assessment or about integrating knowledge from the core? John Su responded that the CCRC is just starting to think about how to both assess and achieve these goals and would welcome input from the UBUS regarding priorities and resources for both assessment and achievement. Sharron Ronco added that undergraduate programs are being asked to look at their own programs in light of the core learning outcomes to see if the goals align. There followed a discussion about whether the core learning outcomes should be revised, and by whom. There was agreement that any revision of the learning outcomes should be done with assessment in mind and that some of the current confusion stems from the fact that this was not done when the current outcomes were devised. Several suggestions were made regarding whether changes to the core learning outcomes should be considered by the UBUS, the Academic Senate, the Assessment Committee, or the Strategic Planning Committee, but there was no consensus on the most appropriate venue. Gary Meyer indicated that the Provost’s office would not object to a re-examination of the core learning outcomes. However, Sarah Feldner suggested that maybe the real issue is not the outcomes but the content and delivery of the core courses.

John Su ended the discussion by asking the UBUS for guidance on in issues on which the CCRC should focus during the approach to the upcoming accreditation deadline. It was agreed to discuss this topic further at the next meeting.

VII. Discussion pertaining to the Academic Integrity Report

A copy of the Academic Integrity Subcommittee Recommendations and Final Report dated June 17, 2011, was previously distributed electronically to the committee.

Jim Richie began the discussion by pointing out that in November 2011, the UBUS voted to pass all four recommendations of the subcommittee, but little action on this issue had been evident since. He asked what we should do to promote this process.
Edward Blumenthal questioned whether the subcommittee recommendations were too “top-down”, but Peter Toumanoff pointed out that the proposed education program (recommendation 1) was not top-down and the other proposed changes were intended to generate conversations on campus about academic integrity. He reported that he would be meeting with student leaders this month to start that conversation among student organizations. Gary Meyer raised the possibility of including academic integrity in the University Mission Statement in response to recommendation 2 and offered to discuss the matter with Stephanie Russell. Stephanie Quade pointed out, in response to recommendation 3, that the University Registrar’s office is now receiving information on academic misconduct violations from the individual colleges and putting this information into students’ confidential files, thereby improving coordination of such cases. However, she also pointed out that the largest stumbling blocks to improving enforcement are the reluctance of individual faculty to pursue cases and the lack of uniform and well-publicized consequences to cheating. Sarah Feldner noted that in order to promote a cultural change on campus, it would be good if faculty change the way they talk about integrity—in terms of students respecting their peers and enhancing their learning. What’s in it for students not to cheat? Could this be included in orientation? C. Terrance Anderson questioned whether students really understand what is acceptable behavior and what isn’t, especially in terms of research.

Sandra Cleveland suggested making specific recommendations to the Academic Senate regarding which groups should be responsible for the next steps in responding to the subcommittee report. It was agreed that this should be taken up at the next meeting.

**VII.** The meeting was adjourned at 2:39PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Edward Blumenthal