

Minutes
LEARNING OUTCOMES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (LOOC)

October 15, 2008

3:00 p.m.

Alumni Center Board Room

In Attendance:

Marilyn Barbour	Anne Hubbard
Gary Boden	James Kowalski
John Boulmetis (for Karen McCurdy)	Jayne Richmond
Joanna Burkhardt	John Stevenson
Catherine English	Judith Swift (Chair)
Bette Erickson	Kathleen Torrens
Elaine Finan	Bryana White
Deborah Grossman-Garber	Chip Yensan
Sandy Jean Hicks	

(Provost DeHayes was unable to attend.)

Committee Chair Judith Swift called the meeting to order; minutes were approved as written.

1. Presentation of General Education Learning Outcomes Assessment effort

John Stevenson, Anne Hubbard, Sandy Jean Hicks

John Stevenson began the presentation sharing a bit of the history of the effort:

- In 2005, a report on the General Education Program which looked at core area courses led to a report that CB Peters authored which proposed URI General Education Learning Outcomes; faculty senate approved and since that time, they are available in the catalog
- Various folks involved in the implementation and measurement of the Gen Ed learning outcomes have been attending conferences and workshops on how to assess general education for quite some time.
- Sandy Hicks – URI has a pretty complex general education program. It looks at critical thinking, problem solving, using skills of a good citizen in life and work. We are looking at a hybrid of two different areas – (1) outcome objectives, and (2) general education content areas. URI also requires students to develop integrated skills, publishing all this language in the catalog). The goal is for students to bring what they have learned in their general education courses to their majors. Faculty needs to get this message to each other and students.
- J. Stevenson – AAC&U discussed presentation by Stanley Katz – think about how to apply knowledge, problem solving, et al.
- Anne Hubbard reviewed the summer 2008 effort to examine Gen Ed assignments to broadly look at examples of what students are exposed to/asked to do in Gen Ed courses via assignments. (The group included John, Anne, Sandy and Deborah Grossman-Garber, Elaine Finan, two graduate students). A hand-out was passed to the group: Classification of General Education assignments into Learning Outcome Objectives.
- In the fall of 2007, the team collected 55 assignments, 34 specifically from core knowledge areas, not in skill areas. Faculty had been asked to provide 9 examples of assignments they would classify as exemplar (3), average (3), and approaching acceptable (3).
- Anne Hubbard handed out Learning Objective Task Description for more information.
- J. Stevenson reminded the group that SAGE (Subcommittee of the Assessment of General Education) is back up and running this Fall, and he is currently the chair. SAGE is very dedicated to moving forward and pushing the process forward. It is in the process of forming 5 focus groups. Currently, faculty is being recruited to begin the effort of applying the current assessment rubric to the core areas looking for the validity of the rubric to measure learning in those distinct areas.

- John Stevenson handed out: Next Steps in General Education: Proposed Process for Continuing Progress and emphasized the LOOC column. He mentioned the Gen Ed reports are due to OHE on 10/20.
- John Stevenson on looking ahead with the effort: Must consider finding money for summer recontracting for summer 2009 acknowledging that during the summer 2008 is where the most progress was made. Need financial resources.
- Anne Hubbard on a summer finding: There were some exciting, creative assignments students were asked to do, and some assignments/syllabi were not as clear as they could have been.
- John Stevenson said he would like to be able to attend conferences to learn and to present. He, Anne and Sandy will be attending an AAC&U conference in Baltimore this spring and host a seminar: What is the value of General Education?

Discussion followed:

Judith Swift: Asked John Stevenson, Sandy Hicks and Anne Hubbard to e-mail her their presentation/report. She would like to present it to Provost DeHayes on behalf of resource allocation.

- Requested the breakout of Gen Ed courses by instructor type; mentioned some of the implications of this with per course instructors who teach at multiple institutions. Jim Kowalski referenced a graph that calculated the percentage of general education courses/by instructor type in the fall 2005. (He later emailed the information to LOOC members).

Bette Erickson: Mentioned that most per course instructors don't realize they are teaching courses that have skills attached to them.

John Stevenson: Suggested the best way to get to all faculty is through their Department Chairs.

Judith Swift: Mentioned that many per course instructors are insistent on their academic freedom, which can cause challenges for Department Chairs.

Marilyn Barbour: Suggested it might be helpful for SAGE to correlate the measurements and outcomes to the requirements posted for courses applying for general education status.

John Stevenson: The group developed our outcomes by examining several different objectives/outcomes from several other universities.

- Suggested these data, in addition to NSSE/FSSE/Wabash are all very relevant.

Judith Swift: Thanked the SAGE representatives for their presentation, and reminded the group of the presentation on November 19 on FSSE/NSSE/Wabash.

2. Subcommittee reports updates and discussion:

- Nurturing and Monitoring the Assessment Process –(English/Finan/Barbour/Hames/Richmond/McQuaide). Goals/tasks were discussed; questions and areas of confusion were sent to Judith Swift.
- Promoting University-Wide Engagement – (Anne Hubbard/Boulmetis/White). How do we get the university community engaged? We need a vision holder. Do we need to bring things to light or be cheerleaders? Should we create a web site or blog and highlight a department of the month. What is the student voice in engagement?
- Judith Swift's input: University wide engagement should be before Nurturing. Promoting is first step and getting everyone on board: How to continue or jumpstart the momentum? Once you have that, then nurturing and monitoring. If you have effectively developed a culture of assessment, tenured faculty need to be kept interested/engaged. Per course instructors/lecturers need to be aware of assessment and its culture. Students need to be introduced to culture of assessment; however, we need to be careful when we bring the students into this.
- Bette Erickson: Most departments have two or three people doing the initial assessment work.
- Judith Swift: We should have more core department workshops; give a **variety of models** and let them choose how they want to do it. Let them know that by the end point this is what they have to accomplish to allow faculty different ways to choose from to get results. We need levels of promotion, but we should be working to figure out when to do it and who our audience is. It is important we get tenure track faculty onboard. Students seem to be requesting rubrics more often.
- Jim Kowalski: Perhaps the LOOC committee should create a rubric for itself, its goals and performance.
- Judith Swift: Suggested the idea of **rubrics** for the subcommittees.
- Jayne Richmond: Supports **promotion** of assessment as maintaining a vision holder - promoting is a very key part.

- Anne Hubbard: **Responsibilities** are confusing: Are the committees out doing things or do they just make the recommendations? Judith envisions the subcommittees to **reinforce**, not duplicate.
- Judith Swift: LOOC develops **policy** and determines how to give it “legs”. Every subcommittee should develop a policy on how to celebrate accomplishments, too.
- Marilyn Barbour: What is the **monitoring**? “How we can help?” Support and promote support.
- Judith Swift: Monitoring is making use of the **data**, giving appropriate access to data at different levels, determining appropriate uses (never punitive). Important to consider **reporting cycle** within the University as well as OHE. Give departments an opportunity to determine their own cycle which may be affected by accrediting bodies, etc.

3. Review of goals for upcoming meetings:

Judith Swift: The next LOOC meeting will look into NSSE/FSSE/WABASH; reports from subcommittees. We will then have another discussion at the December meeting. The January meeting will have policies to give thumbs up/thumbs down. That will give us time to get some of the policies to the Faculty Senate for approval. Last year we were feeling our way, and this year we need some things approved and published.

4. Miscellaneous

Bette Erickson: Concerned about the state of SLOAA with Deborah Grossman-Garber on leave to the Office of Higher Education. Judith Swift stated that we are working on it.

Assessment Issues: general education, co-curricular activities and student affairs activities should be considered components of program assessment. Judith Swift suggested the Committee may want to think about adding another student affairs person to LOOC.

5. New Business:

Judith Swift –a LOOC LISTSERV will be available by the November meeting.

Jim Kowalski – presented a follow up with regard to new SET’s: Budget issues? Consider expanding the group of folks? Expand a trial run? Use the extra question set to address assessment? There is an instructional CD that takes about an hour. Perhaps get department heads to use it first.

Cathy English: Is there a way to run a correlation between the old and new system?

Jim Kowalski – yes, but must determine who would do it. Tabled for further discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.