

**LEARNING OUTCOMES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (LOOC)**  
**Minutes from Wednesday, November 19, 2008**  
**3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**In Attendance:**

Marilyn Barbour	Mark Higgins
Gary Boden	Anne Hubbard
Faye Boudreaux-Bartels	Jayne Richmond
John Boulmetis	John Stevenson
Joanna Burkhardt	Kathleen Torrens
Catherine English	Bryana White
Elaine Finan	

Deborah Grossman-Garber attended to provide information for transition purposes and to discuss Wabash results and future.

Committee Chair, Judith Swift, called the meeting to order. The minutes of the meeting of October 15, 2008 were approved with one correction: Sandy Hicks was in attendance.

**1. Presentation on available Data Sources**

**Gary Boden, Institutional Research, in collaboration with Elaine Finan, Office of Student Learning.**

Prior to the meeting, Gary emailed the presentation materials, entitled, "*Instruments for Assessing Learning Outcomes at URI: Descriptions and Preliminary Findings*", for the committee's review. Gary provided a review of the many data sources used at URI during the last 10 years, and shared preliminary findings with the group. Some of the

**A. Data source highlights include:**

**FSSE** survey is a complement to NSSE. Faculty members are asked to give their input based on their classroom impressions of their students. URI has done one implementation of FSSE surveying 732 instructors in spring 2008 and getting a 45% response rate.

**Highlights:** Gary Boden noted some FSSE items are similar to items in NSSE, but phrased differently.

**NSSE** results are also on the institutional research website; 23% response from students in 2007. It was also completed in 2002, 2005, with plans to implement in 2008 cancelled due to the Wabash Study being held second semester. The Wabash Study includes the NSSE and will be given to a subset of the student volunteers from first semester: 1236 freshmen (about 37% of the current freshmen class).

Jayne Richmond noted that NSSE asks about the environment, but not student learning.

**Highlights:** NSSE aggregates their questions into five (5) benchmarks.

**The Wabash Survey of Liberal Arts Education** is a more comprehensive instrument as it contains NSSE, but there are also other surveys involved. Wabash uses CAAP, CAAP essay, DIT-2, a student survey with various scales used to rate the students experience in many ways. The first year of Wabash there were 26 participating higher education institutions; there are now 60 institutions that participate nationally and internationally.

John Stevenson: Cautions that Wabash is a smaller liberal arts college and we must be aware of the limitations of peer comparisons.

Deborah Grossman-Garber noted we need and should use information that compares us to peer universities.

**Highlights:** In 2007, 650 students were surveyed, and 300 returned for the second part. They will be re-surveyed in the spring of their senior year.

### **SET's**

Student evaluation of teachers goes back to the 1970's as a response to students wanting to grade faculty. This evaluation is conducted by enrollment services. It was analyzed only once in the 1980's for validity. The evaluation is grouped into four areas. The results have not been reviewed to show trends.

### **Orientation Surveys**

Jayne Richmond: University College conducts surveys with orientation groups and in URI 101 as a follow-up. The results are used to improve URI 101.

### **Exit Surveys**

Students formally leaving the university are requested to take an on-line exit survey. About 50% of the students complete it.

### **Career Services:**

**Recent Grads** – asked to participate in an online survey (graduates between six and nine months back) are asked for their impression of their URI experience and education. The survey is designed to help enrollment services improve the service they provide to students.

### **Student Affairs - Student Quality of Life**

Over time there have been various themes. A 2004 sweep of surveys they conducted asked students about the campus climate and in particular, diversity on campus.

### **B. Questions/Discussion**

Anne Hubbard (CCE, Providence) observed that most of the surveys are of the Kingston campus student population. There may be some Providence and CCRI students in NSSE, but very few since NSSE is a survey for degree-seeking, typical freshmen, first-time students.

Bette Erickson and Jayne Richmond asked about NSSE being administered this year. Elaine Finan answered that we opted out of NSSE this year because the Wabash survey includes the NSSE instrument among others. Board of Governors requires that NSSE is completed on an every other year cycle.

Judith Swift noted the lengthy list of surveys and questioned: Is there a central mandate for any of these groups to provide data? Is it data gathered as a courtesy? Is some of the information duplicated? Can any of it be done more efficiently?

Gary Boden suggested we merge surveys that can be merged.

Catherine English noted we should be sure to know what we want to measure.

Judith Swift suggested we discuss surveys as a committee in the future.

**\*\*Committee NOTE: Jayne noted that on December 5, 2008 Dr. George Kuh is doing a free online webinar about Student Success.** Jayne will forward the information to members of LOOC.

### **C. Next Steps/Follow-up**

Need to evaluate instruments/value/worth/actionability.

Judith Swift asked Gary Boden if he would be interested in looking at the efficacy of some of these surveys.

John Boulmetis: the first question should be where do any of these findings relate to URI, its stated missions and outcomes, as well as this committee?

Deborah Grossman-Garber: there is a possibility of following up with Wabash cohorts this year and last year with interviewing survey participants, perhaps training graduate students to do. Wabash has a training package and this information may be telling and complement the survey data.

Judith Swift thanked Gary Boden for his report.

Jayne Richmond said she will send LOOC committee members a copy of the survey they use at University College.

Catherine English likes the concept of 20 questions pulled out each year to look at long term and observed that several colleges have a number of entry and exit surveys they use. Do we want to do anything like that?

Judith Swift noted that we can get buried in a lot of information.

Mark Higgins noted the College of Business Administration has a survey students are required to fill out before they can graduate.

## **2. Report from Subcommittees:**

### **a. Nurturing and monitoring assessment progress** (presented by Jayne Richmond)

Objectives and goals outlined which will be forwarded to the LOOC committee members.

Judith Swift asked LOOC members to note comments on the page they receive from Jayne and forward their changes to Elaine Finan (efinan@uri.edu). Jayne asked members to keep it simple.

Judith Swift asked Elaine Finan to consider what it will take to accomplish the outline of responsibilities mentioned by Jayne - How much work will be involved? What resources?

### **b. Promoting University-wide engagement** (presented by Anne Hubbard)

Promote who/what/when/where/why of assessment.

- University needs to develop a clear statement of commitment to learning outcomes as part of the culture of learning and assessment. Needs to be publicized and promoted through the President/Provost/top administration.
- Widely publish outcomes statements for all levels of the institution.
- Department representatives might be able to come together to work.
- Encourage development of students to talk about how outcomes assessment affects them.
- Outcomes for Student Affairs should be published widely.
- We need a strong statement from within the institution about what assessment should be.
- The LOOC committee should send a very strong letter expressing what we stand for and asking that we clarify how committed the university is to assessment as compared to mandates?
- There should be a vision and everyone should share the vision. It is ownership from within.

Judith Swift asked Anne to write her committee's notes into a letter, send to LOOC members for review and input.

Catherine English noted there is a sense of change going on in the university within the next couple months. Sending out something now says how important learning outcomes are. Outcomes should be connected to the university changes.

Mark Higgins noted that to maintain accreditation we have to use assessment on an ongoing basis.

### **c. Making use of the Data and the Processes** (to be presented by Mark Higgins)

- Will report at the next meeting

**Meeting adjourned at 4:17 p.m.**

**Next meeting:** December 3, 2008

- SET forms discussion by Jim Kowalski.
- Don DeHayes plans to attend.