

**LEARNING OUTCOMES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (LOOC)**  
**Minutes from Wednesday, February 4, 2009**  
**3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**  
**Green Hall**

**In Attendance:**

Marilyn Barbour	Mary MacDonald
Laura Beauvais	Robert Shea
Gary Boden	Judith Swift (Chair)
John Boulmetis	Bryana White
Bette Erickson	Chip Yensan
Elaine Finan	

(Judith Swift called the meeting to order; minutes from December 3, 2008 approved as submitted.)

1. **Committee update:** Judith Swift introduced and welcomed Laura Beauvais to the committee as the new Provost's Office representative. Laura was invited to share an update on the Office of Student Learning (SLOAA) and the IDP Office.
2. **SLOAA Update:** Bob Shea agreed to join SLOAA as the half-time Acting Director, with continued responsibilities in the IDP Office. Elaine Finan will continue as the Assessment Coordinator. Laura acknowledged Elaine's effort to successfully keep the office together since September, and confirmed support for Bette Erickson in finding resources to keep IDP adequately staffed during this interim arrangement.  
Judith also thanked Elaine for her work, noting she had not been empowered to move things ahead due to a very slow decision process regarding personnel. Judith reminded LOOC of their advisory capacity to SLOAA. SLOAA must communicate which issues of policy would benefit the assessment effort on campus and should have support from LOOC. Judith noted that, per Sheila Grubman, the Faculty Senate would like a report from the LOOC committee. Judith mentioned that it might be valuable to take a look at the original charge of the committee, and the committee agreed that a report could come later in the spring.  
Elaine & Bob will provide a SLOAA summary update, including a future plan and goals at the LOOC meeting, 2/18.
3. **Wabash Update:** Team Visit, Data, and Study Administration

**Wabash Visit**

The Wabash Center for Inquiry has been invited to send a team of representatives to campus on April 1, 2009, to discuss our first year's cohort data (fall '07/spring '08). We have an opportunity to develop an agenda and create goals for the visit. LOOC was offered a special meeting with the visiting team, time to be confirmed, on 4/1. Note: RIC declined to participate in the Wabash Study, but CCRI is completing their first year and will also host the Wabash group.

**Wabash Data**

- Bob Shea presented a Data Utilization plan, (hand-out provided), proposed in 8/08, which includes strategies, constituencies, and goals for data usage. He noted that plans for sharing the data were well developed, but office transitions and delays by Wabash in producing the reports stalled the data plan. Elaine noted that full year change data from the first cohort of freshmen student participants ('07-'08) will be available the week of 2/9 and should provide for richer discussions and goal-setting.
- Suggestions were made regarding the sharing of data, i.e. aggregate audiences such as the Council of Deans and Vice Presidents could be meeting and asking questions. There should be representation from all areas that could benefit from this data. Suggestions to include the Executive Committee, JSPC, and Faculty Senate as helpful groups. A recommendation was made that all groups involved in data discussions should receive the information in advance of the meeting;
- Great interest in using student focus groups, and perhaps groups of students and faculty.

Gary Boden - John Boulmetis asked if we had examined the survey questions from the perspective of linking the answers directly to our intended outcomes. Gary Boden offered his review of various survey instruments the university uses with respect to identifying appropriate links to the overall university outcomes in addition to the general education outcomes (hand-out). He focused primarily on the Wabash and NSSE instruments:

- Looked for fits and gaps in the generalized learning outcomes areas. His main conclusion is that the surveys we use for assessment are directed at student engagement. We ask students to give us their *perceptions* about themselves and their college experience rather than asking about their achievements or evidence to support their perception.

- There are no questions asking how the student acquired the information to write a paper; no questions asked about thinking independently and providing proof/examples of how they understand their growth in various areas.

**Wabash Study: Part II:** (hand-out provided)

**Survey sessions: March 23, 2009 – April 2, 2009**, with 15 sessions available to returning students. There were 1,236 participants in the second cohort from the fall '08. Elaine emphasized the tremendous incentive value in providing early registration, and solicited additional suggestions from the group regarding getting the majority of these students to come for Part II. Facebook, Listserv, and URI 101 instructors are some of the ways used to communicate with the freshmen participants. Cash incentives are also being considered. Elaine noted that this year's fall cohort, which represents 1/3 of the entire freshman class have a more representative profile, in terms of majors, than the first year's group. There would be tremendous value to the data results if we can connect with these students, provide incentives and support to have them return. We'll need the campus community behind the effort with publicizing the value of the study to URI. Additionally, the importance of student participation in Part II is underscored by the impact it has on the group who will participate in the final survey session, senior year.

Additional ideas to get students back for spring Wabash:

- Mass e-mail *text* messages to students
- Host a party, i.e. "Wabash gone wild"
- Have a raffle, i.e. give a student their most expensive textbook?
- Students don't translate money as much as things – make the translation such as \$100 on a RAM card to *purchase* pizza, *buy* a textbook, etc., something tangible.

Elaine Finan - Reviewed the survey content: the first part of the survey asks questions about the student, demographics, etc. and one unique assessment tool is administered. The second part is incorporates NSSE, and a repeat of whichever fall assessment tool was used. Assessment tools include: CAAP, critical thinking; DIT-2, moral reasoning. A sample of this year's cohort also received the CAAP writing assessment. As seniors, the students take the same assessment tool as in the 2 previous surveys. The goal is to track the change in answers.

Bette Erickson noted the dangers of sharing information that can be misinterpreted and recommended sharing items that are more positive.

Judith Swift – transparency can be a good thing! If there is negative, it can be as important.

- Capture the interest of the Council of Deans to support the second round of Wabash.
- Involve students from Student Affairs, Talent Development and Student Senate.

Marilyn Barbour – Suggested it would be important to have the survey instruments available to faculty and staff. Elaine noted the report includes questions, answers and statistics and will be available shortly, but will investigate having the instruments available as .pdf's on the assessment website. (Awaiting confirmation from ACT.)

Judith Swift – Students may define words differently and that will impact our interpretation of the data, i.e. students do not always think reading and homework is 'studying'; they feel studying is reading and memorizing. This supports using student focus groups to discover meaning to words used in the Wabash Study. Elaine mentioned that students can be solicited at the time they take Part II, with an incentive and reminder.

Marilyn Barbour – Asked about the goals we want to achieve with Wabash coming. Feedback would be welcomed by SLOAA to refine the goals for the visit.

Bette Erickson – Suggested involving Student Affairs and faculty – perhaps open meeting forums.

#### 4. New Business

Gary Boden – Collaborated with Bobbi Koppell, Career Services, to refine their survey of recent graduates to include indicators/perception of the achievement of URI outcomes by the graduates. Results will be available later this fall.

Laura Beauvais:

- SET's used in assessment – at the next meeting. New product, IDEA, is replacing the old SET, and is rolling out this semester. Plan to have IDEA tied to assessment (perhaps in the customizable area on the form).

#### 5. Old Business

Data retreat was unable to be scheduled, and the suggestion will be revisited later.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Next Meeting: February 18, 2009, Alumni Center Board Room