

LEARNING OUTCOMES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (LOOC)

Minutes from Wednesday, September 17, 2008

300 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

In Attendance:

Marilyn Barbour	Mark Higgins
Gary Boden	Anne Hubbard
John Boulmetis (for Karen McCurdy)	Andrew McQuaide
Joanna Burkhardt	Deborah Rosen
Don DeHayes	Jayne Richmond
Cathy English	Robert Shea (for Bette Erickson)
Elaine Finan	John Stevenson
Deborah Grossman-Garber	Judith Swift
Carolyn Hames	Kathleen Torrens
	Bryana White

As the new Chair of LOOC, Judith Swift called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone to the new year of LOOC, and thanked everyone for their time. Attendees introduced themselves and members with meeting conflicts were acknowledged. J. Swift suggested the committee members use Meeting Wizard when trying to set up the sub-committee meetings.

Deborah Grossman-Garber: reported on the progress of the assessment effort at URI

1. The Office of Student Learning, Outcomes Assessment and Accreditation (SLOAA) is in its second year, supported by:

- A Director, Assistant, graduate students
- Clerical support
- Grant funding

2. SAGE (Student Assessment of General Education)

- A subcommittee met throughout the summer, supported by staff from SLOAA, to begin the process of developing an assessment strategy and process for assessing the General Education program to be evaluated by faculty. More on General Education at October's meeting.

3. Campus-wide Assessment success

- Each college has an assessment committee with a structure and a format begun. Programs are in many different places in their effort.
- Student Affairs is committed to getting assessment going.
- Last year we had a Summit on Student Learning (August 23) which prompted discussion about student learning and student development while at URI.
- The Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education is in its second year at URI. The study provides data on a variety of outcomes including critical thinking, moral reasoning, etc. We will discuss data from this survey at our November meeting.
- URI also participated in the FSSE survey: 41% of faculty responded to questions about faculty and student engagement at URI. (Bob Shea noted that there was more agreement than he had expected looking at the NSSE/FSSE comparison report.)

4. Office of Higher Education (OHE)

In the last year about 68% of our undergraduate programs have reported to OHE. 48% have been accepted at a Level I approval rating. Deborah passed the results to the committee. D. DeHayes asked who reviews the information before it goes to OHE. DGG stated that she looks at things first. DGG also had OHE take our information off their website.

DGG – in terms of reporting she negotiated with OHE for colleges to be able to focus on *one* area for assessment during the first cycle, to learn how to do reporting well.

John Stevenson noted he did not see graduate programs. Deborah indicated an agreement was made that graduate level assessment would take place in 2008. Coastal Institute has been doing ongoing Assessment. J. Swift suggested putting together a rationale for reporting otherwise it will be dictated to us.

Deborah congratulated John Stevenson, Ann Hubbard and Sandy Hicks for their fine work in assessment of GenEd. John noted Deborah and Elaine Finan were also involved in supporting the effort, as were two graduate students: Kristen Weissinger, Cynthia . Through the analysis of general education assignments, students in nearly all fields were noted as seeming to have trouble analyzing and systematically solving problems. Students seem to be having trouble applying their knowledge to the courses they are taking.

Deborah commented that there have various workshops this year including a rubrics workshop hosted with IDP.

5. Accountability to the public: Where are we?

Deborah noted that AAC&U, AAHE and NEEAN, all have asked for participation from URI this year and congratulated everyone on getting the word out.

Deborah noted we have brought in nearly one million dollars of funding – some (for first time startup of assessment, some for student learning enrichment, and some for ongoing projects including funding for electronic portfolio and outcomes assessment to improve student learning, access and retention) from NSF, Teagle Foundation, FIPSE, etc. J. Swift noted that the funds were in large part already dedicated to supporting existing and ongoing efforts in place for assessment on campus, and not to be confused with funds that were readily available to spend.

6. Academic Roadmap

C. English gave a summary of the roadmap project: It is a web-based electronic means to provide to students the information they need to select a major and consider a career path. It is linked to e-campus, and should help students make better choices, enhance retention and smooth the transition for students from CCRI to URI by involving students in their academic and career planning. The roadmap has been presented around the country and evaluated by students receiving a great support.

7. Miscellaneous Items

- J. Swift wanted it noted that Deborah considerably underplays her important role in promoting and supporting the assessment effort, both on campus and nationally. Deborah has been presenting and promoting outside the university is recognized as a leader in assessment.

- D. G-Garber announced that she has been offered the position of Interim Assistant Director of Higher Education and that she is looking forward to the opportunity to begin 9/28, while taking a leave of absence for one year from URI. The committee congratulated Deborah. J. Swift acknowledged that Deborah will be a champion for all institutions in her new role.

- There were questions about the transition with regard to the function of the office, funding, training, etc. Deborah noted that we are running out of money for workshops and such. The committee will need to work closely with the Faculty Senate and Provost as well in terms of how/what can we accomplish with the current financial situation at URI. Also, there will be continued efforts to find grant funding. Deborah noted she has had very productive conversations in the Provost office regarding funding for GenEd. D. DeHayes is putting plans together to make sure there is someone in this role to keep the work going forward. He is trying to keep some of the funding set aside for this to keep it going. We need to look at the expense side of things but also the revenue side. There are new ways we need to do business at URI, ways that will build off assessment and URI student learning.

D. DeHayes - Faculty Senate and Provost's Office will be presenting a forum: **"What should an educated citizen in the 21st century know, represent, be able to do, believe in?"** This will be about building community. The forum will be held in the late afternoon on October 16th at the U-Club, followed by a reception. In the spring, there will be a research and scholarship forum.

8. Overall assessment effort commented on:

Assessment should not be about reporting dates and timelines at URI

J. Richmond - We need to get a culture of assessment. We need to get unstuck from the things that are not important.

J. Boulemetis – Suggested that URI needs strategic planning around the assessment process to continue with a culture. Reporting needs to be met with a response to the reports so that there is an engaged feedback loop established. Not dissimilar from the formerly supported academic program review, but focused on improvement and success. It is important to consider assessing the very process we now use for assessing and measuring our student outcomes.

J. Swift – We need to think of this from the perspective of adding areas to our assessment and to review what we have already done: how we have improved from previous reporting?

M. Higgins – It is important to collect *some* information from everyone every year, not necessarily *all* information from everyone.

C. Hames – Reporting on everything in one year will not happen. It is not possible.

D.GG – Mentioned that Bob Shea is leading True Outcomes effort which will help with promoting assessment. Abigail Baker is a graduate student primarily responsible for supporting True Outcomes.

J. Swift announced that all members of the committee will belong to a LOOC subcommittee before they leave the meeting today. Judith will attend the subcommittee meetings if requested.

Subcommittee membership:

- Nurturing and monitoring assessment progress
– Marilyn Barbour, Cathy English, Elaine Finan, Andrew McQuaide, Jayne Richmond and Carolyn Hames. (Elaine will organize the first meeting.)
- Promoting University-wide engagement:
- Kathleen Torrens, Anne Hubbard, Joanna Burkhardt, John Boulmetis, Bryana White. (Ann Hubbard and Johanna Burkhardt will organize the first meeting in Providence.)
- Making use of the Data and the Processes:
- Gary Boden, Mark Higgins, Deborah Rosen, Faye Boudreaux-Bartels, Jim Kowalski, John Stevenson, Bette Erickson, Sandy Hicks. (Mark Higgins will organize the first meeting.)

9. Closing comments

J. Swift encouraged members to request their students to attend the honors colloquium relocated to Edwards Auditorium urging all to, "Please promote a culture that it is OK to be intelligent on the campus of URI!"

Ann Hubbard offered a parting farewell to Deborah on behalf of the committee, "We as a committee want to wish you (DGG) well and we thank you for the report you made. You are the reason that we are where we are, and we will work hard to keep things going."

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM followed by dinner at the U-Club.