Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 20, 2013
3:30-5:00 p.m.
Room 207, Pharmacy Building
7 Greenhouse Road

In attendance:
Marilyn Barbour (Chair)        Anne Hubbard
John Stevenson                Brian Heikes
Elaine Finan                  Joanne Burkhardt
Gary Boden                    Laura Beauvais
Libby Miles                   Cathy English
Mary MacDonald                Mercedes Rivero-Hudec

I. Approval of January 30, 2013 Minutes

Minutes approved (pending announcement below).

II. Announcements

• SLOAA will remove the handout from January meeting and the latter information on the minutes from the website until a broader discussion has taken place.
• The LOOC committee will be in need of a new chair in the fall; those committee members who are eligible are all great fits for this role.

III. SLOAA Update

• National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) started yesterday (2/19/13). As of today (2/20/13), response rates are at 341 completed, and 140 partially completed. Our goal is to exceed the rates from the last administration, which were 21% of freshmen and 24% of seniors. They survey ends on May 1st.
• Wabash meeting and luncheon invitations were emailed to department chairs. LOOC is invited to the luncheon at 12pm at the UClub on March 28th. Please RSVP to assess@uri.edu. Elaine will send out an email to LOOC committee with a formal invite.
• We are currently performing an audit on types of assessment currently used in student affairs.
• In regard to the multi-state collaborative, many other institutions are having the same questions that we have. URI will attend an additional meeting on March 6th. SLOAA will have an update at the next LOOC meeting on March 20th.
• Information Literacy (IL) rubric discussion:
  o Mary and Jim presented at a brown bag a couple of weeks ago.
  o The rubric is getting face time at UCGE. There will be an invite all instructors of general education courses that have an IL skill outcome to participate in using the rubric. In the next 6 weeks, training will be available for those who will be using the IL rubric.
  o Depending on SAGE and UCGE, we may be able to post results for use on general education project.
  o In the future, IL rubric will be distributed to programs and instructors with a toolkit. This will provide faculty with the tools necessary to use the IL rubric.
  o Ideally, this project would be a Library faculty/Librarian/SLOAA/LOOC endorsed rubric template.
  o Suggestion to place a URI/SLOAA logo on the rubric to make it more official.
  o Discussion on “endorsing” the IL rubric:
    ▪ The entire LOOC committee must have the most current version of the rubric in order to vote on endorsing it. If there are objections to voting online, the issue will be dealt with at that time.
    ▪ Does LOOC endorse? Recommend? Require?
      • What does endorse mean in this case?
      • What are the differences between these terms?
    ▪ What does it mean to put the SLOAA or LOOC logo on the rubric?
    ▪ What is posted on the website as of now? What should be posted on the website? What does posting the rubric on the SLOAA or LOOC website mean?
    ▪ Are we in charge of the process of developing the rubric or the actual product?
      • The IL rubric is a unique rubric due to its process.
    ▪ What is the implication (if any) for other rubrics in use?
  o Mary will send out the rubric to the committee and they will vote for an endorsement online.
  o Mary will also send out a paragraph (perhaps including good points and bad) describing the process. This information could potentially be posted on the SLOAA website as a justification of endorsement.
  o These minutes will be sent out ahead of Mary sending out the rubric as to give the committee some context of how this conversation took place.

IV. Continuing Business—Goals for 2012/2013

A. Enhancing the Learning Outcomes Assessment Climate at URI: continued discussion and planning (see minutes from January 30th meeting and running list of email suggestions included below in the agenda).
• How do we get the University to value assessment? We need to get back to thinking about the big issues. The Climate Survey produced an opportunity to see where the greatest issues were.

• Conversations are essential: How do we create concrete ideas and plans to move the University along? At the end of the last meeting, we were to start an email conversation providing these concrete ideas and plans.

• There was a suggestion for a website similar to the SLOAA website, that was very clear/direct/obvious as far as what different departments can do.
  o Do we have the tools obvious enough? LOOC review of the SLOAA website:
    - There are numerous examples of assessment work for graduate and examples for undergraduate (particularly in the showcase).
    - It would be helpful to make the website searchable, because there is a wealth of information. SLOAA would be in need of a web master to put in text searchable box.
    - Upon review it was found that the information was there but it needs to be more accessible and we need to find a way to let people know about it.
    - Resources are in the website. How do we get people to move toward using them?
    - Overall, it is thought that this is primarily a publicity and communication issue.

• Next on the agenda is incorporating changes to the report form that have been listed during the past review processes. It is thought that cleaning up any vague language will limit the possibility that reviewers will come in with their own opinion about what the language means. There is a way in which the peer review process plays a role in subjectivity, but the process is very positive in many ways.

• There is difficulty in assessment for interdisciplinary programs and general education. For now, the programs are just assessing courses that they own, but this will not serve as a program evaluation in the long term.
  o SLOAA has completed some research on interdisciplinary program assessment, but there is limited, inconsistent research in this area.

• We need a strategic plan that involves all the stakeholders:
  o Provost → deans → departments/chairs → SLOAA & LOOC → faculty → students (why we are doing this in the first place!)
  o Faculty credit for doing assessment is no longer offered in A&S.
  o There is no resource allocation for assessment, no promotion and tenure linked to assessment work, and assessment in not tied to workload credit. This may be potentially a dean’s level problem.
    - Are deans reacting to messages by implicitly devaluing assessment work?
  o We need to figure out who has responsibility for doing what and who is accountable.

• Why do we do assessment and why is it important?
  o Assessment is part of program review in departments.
There are expectations from the entire university and what we need to put forward in learning outcomes assessment.

However, these expectations are not verbalized down to the department chairs and faculty as far as they could be.

- It is possible to emphasize the importance of assessment through recommending workload release.
- There is an important connection to academic program review
  - Are we all concerned about learning outcomes or is it a check off?
  - What happens to the assessment results and how seriously do we take whether the departments are using those results?
  - Are departments changing their curriculum from assessment work?
- Would sending assessment feedback to the dean as well as those doing the assessment work generate greater interest?
- There are currently two forums with the Provost and department chairs. Could we hold similar forums with those who are involved in assessment? The people involved in assessment would be those who could potentially be earning workload release time or those who are in charge in the department.
- Academic program review pieces:
  - This is a self-study over a 6-year period.
    - Important to note that some departments are not going up until 2018.
  - Learning outcomes is listed in the self-study and in the appendixes as “learning outcomes assessment plans and reports.”
  - However, departments may not have gotten to this piece yet.
- How do we stress the importance of assessment to individuals? We need to think about what is important because people should care, particularly as this is about the students. It is important to note that individuals may care but they do not believe that their leaders do.
- Assessment is a key element to service to the university, going beyond just teaching.
- Combination of research (data collection, research, and use of results), scholarship (for faculty), and service to the university.
- Note that LOOC members should continue this conversation on the email listing.

Meeting adjourned at 5pm.

Next Meeting: March 20, 2013  3:30-5pm
Pharmacy Building Room 207