I. Approval of October 24, 2012 Minutes

Minutes approved.

II. Announcements

1) First LOOC spring meeting Wednesday, January 30, 2013 - Discussion on results of Chairs’ Learning Outcomes Assessment Survey.

2) Masters of Oceanography new program proposal. A small group of LOOC members will review the program application after it is received from SLOAA.

III. Summary of NEEAN Presentation: Anne Hubbard

This research was made possible by the RELAAY grant program, and has a focus on students in a transition (bridge) program for adults in advanced ABE/ESOL programs. Decisions of adult students to re-enroll each semester are influenced by barriers in their lives. Existing literature has developed a 4-factor decision-making model based on enrollment barriers using exploratory factor analysis. The four themes included a pathway to a better life; reflective learner; synchronizing learning, earning, and living; and match with academic life. A weak fifth factor, institutional support, was added in more recent research. The current study used a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from ‘not influential’ to ‘very influential’, to rate several statements on adult education. Current research found four factors that were consistent with existing literature. Qualitative data was collected from students, much of which fell into the same factors indicated by the quantitative exploratory factor analysis data. Implications of this
study include additional training in the peer mentor training program, development of a peer mentor intake sheet to collect data from peer mentors, continuation of data collection with learning specialists and instructors. In summary, after further data collection, we may be able to improve existing support systems.

IV. Deborah Grossman-Garber, Associate Commissioner RI Office of Higher Education

1) Future of Learning Outcomes Assessment in Rhode Island
Most programs have undergone between 2 and 5 cycles of outcomes assessment. Quality of learning has been very important. Methods are sophisticated and findings are exciting, particularly in writing in general education. Due to Department of Education ramp up of higher education, URI will report enrollment rate of graduates, what value is added in postsecondary education, etc. Methods to assess outcomes vary greatly, but the central piece is still student learning and value to the state. Though there is a great market in standardized testing, many with knowledge on assessment do not believe that standardized testing is a true indicator of student learning. Thus, URI must have a narrative to defend existing assessment techniques. Currently, RI has allowed programs to choose when to assess and what questions to assess. However, this has led to a limitation in a lack of end-point assessment, primarily by non-accredited programs.

There is going to be a new board of education in RI and the members are not yet known, though there will likely be fewer members. This board is likely to consist of some members of the present K-12 and higher education board. It is currently unknown if there will be subcommittees, and if there are, how they will operate to govern higher education. Transition is estimated to last approximately one year. It is likely that higher education will be its own subset of the department of education but with substantial overlap. There may be advisory boards to each of the three public institutions. Expectations of higher education will likely greatly increase.

2) Multistate Collaborative of Learning Outcomes Assessment

Vision 20:20 in Massachusetts is emphasizing assessment of student learning outcomes, and looking at the possibilities of doing institution-wide assessment looking at student learning without imposing a change in curriculum or common assessment task. This is related to the Multistate Collaborative of Learning Outcomes Assessment, in which URI can participate. If we participated in the collaborative, URI would be able to compare itself to another medium sized research university. The collaborative represents a group of states attempting to show that assessment is possible using authentic student evidence across the board without standardized methods.

The collaborative is a proposal to participate in a 3 year pilot project, joining with about 6-7 states to work together to create a study design that would be meaningful, simple, and that would utilize the good work that has already gone on in student learning outcomes assessment. Ultimately, the collaborative will bring teams together from the state to
collect student evidence and to grade it against the VALUE rubrics (writing, critical thinking, and quantitative literacy). There is no intention to compare community colleges to research universities or four-year schools, and includes undergraduate programs only. At this point, the collaborative is just a proposal; nothing is set in stone or permanent. This collaborative is not meant to hinder campus assessment work, as the campus work must continue to stay strong. This represents a genuine effort for faculty to participate in SoTL across institutions and across states.

RIC and CCRI are in the midst of discussions, generally positive. Each institution would have an individual in the team. Pursuit of funding through a state-level Davis grant has been proposed to support the multi-state collaboration. There is a meeting in Colorado in February for states who have decided to join in. This is part of the exploration stage.

Vote of endorsement of moving forward to the exploration stage (providing that funding comes through and RIC and CCRI join in): 8 yes 1 abstain.

Elaine will bring up the collaboration proposal to the General Education committee in the next two weeks.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45pm.

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