Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2012
3:30-5:00 p.m.
Room 205, Pharmacy Building
7 Greenhouse Road

In attendance:
Marilyn Barbour (Chair)  
Elaine Finan  
Bette Erickson  
Valerie Maier-Speredelozzi (Guest)  
Joanna Burkhartd  
Anne Hubbard  
Diane Goldsmith  
Mary MacDonald

Brian Heikes  
Cathy English  
Anne Veeger  
John Stevenson  
Gary Boden  
Deb Rosen  
Laura Beauvais

I. Approval of March 7, 2012 Minutes

Minutes approved.

II. Announcements

Welcome to Cathy English (CELS), Brian Heikes (GSO), and Kristina Monteiro (SLOAA).

III. Brief Overview of LOOC Activities to Date

Handout 1: Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee- Overview of 2009-2012 activities

Review of LOOC charges: (1) create policies for URI learning outcomes assessment, data distribution, and frequency of measurement at the university-wide level, with approval of the Faculty Senate and Provost (2) provide advice and guidance to SLOAA office (3) develop an ongoing process of review for learning outcomes assessment.

Spring 2010: LOOC policies were created and approved.
Spring 2011: Developed policies for undergraduate reporting.
Spring 2012: Assessment cycles and interlaying undergraduate and graduate program assessment plans and reporting.

IV. SLOAA Update and Highlights

Assessment showcase (5/2/12): The showcase celebrated the assessment work of programs that received mini-grants, via Davis Grant funds, to implement pedagogical, curricular, or assessment changes resulting from outcomes assessment work.
Assessment review: LOOC volunteers for program review were very helpful in providing feedback this past summer. The next cycle of program reporting is 2014, which includes both undergraduate and graduate programs. Summer LOOC assessment work will continue next summer (2013) with funding provided by the Provost.

NEASC: The NEASC report summarized all of the assessment report and was completed over summer 2012. The report itself looked very impressive. A report at the Deans’ Council meeting scheduled this fall will include sharing the NEASC report, program ranks, and a mention there will be a learning outcomes assessment survey distributed to chairs later this semester.

Changes in assessment reporting: With the next cycle of reporting, undergraduate accredited programs are now required to complete the same assessment reporting form as the non-accredited programs. Accredited programs are not asked to complete additional assessment work, but rather to document in the standardized way.

Ongoing projects: This is the final year of the Davis grant; Elaine, Diane, and Laura are looking for additional funding. Presentation of Wabash results has a tentative date (March 28, 2012). URI is also a part of Wabash 2.0 project, one component of which is Mary MacDonald and Jim Kinnie’s Information Literacy project. “Cross Campus Collaborations” will be presented at a conference in October. NSSE is occurring again in the spring of 2013, URI has added two additional modules of questions, including information technology and academic advising.

Update on graduate assessment: Six of the seven graduate pilot programs (3 accredited) have completed the assessment plan, assessment report form, and have received feedback. Cohorts for graduate programs have been formed. A three-series workshop is available to help graduate programs start assessment reporting work. Mini-grants of up to $1,000 were given to 12 of 13 programs in the first cohort of graduate programs that are beginning their assessment reporting work.

New program application: New program applicants must contact the SLOAA office for advice on completing the learning outcomes portion of a new program application, using a standard form. LOOC has the final approval of these outcome assessment forms. The process is outlined in the University Manual and Faculty Senate website.

Survey of Department Chairs on assessment climate: A repeat of this anonymous survey from 2009, with very minor adjustments. It was suggested that respondents are asked if they completed the survey in 2009.

V. General Education and Learning Outcomes Assessment (guest Valerie Maier Speredelozzi, Chair, UCGE Committee)

Valerie would like to determine a way to align general education assessment with assessment that is already happening on campus within programs or other special interest
groups. The 2011-12 OHE General Education report focused on the Grand Challenge courses. It was noted that during that same assessment reporting period, there was other student learning assessment work that was completed in the area of general education outcomes including information literacy, writing/communication, and math/quantitative skills. Valerie suggests that as the individual program assessment reports go forward, LOOC/SLOAA should have them indicate on the reporting form if the program assessment involved the assessment of general education courses. There is likely some overlap between program outcomes assessment and the assessment of general education outcomes and it would be good to capitalize on the work already being done by.

LOOC members had suggestions and comments: 1) Talk to faculty and let them know that there are outcomes for each individual program and also for general education, in an attempt to support and identify overlap. 2) Being efficient about assessing general education outcomes is very important. The UCGE committee, who are defining the general education outcomes, should take a look at what other departments (e.g., biology, writing, math) are doing. 3) Recognize that there are different interpretations of writing skills and mathematical skills among majors. 4) It is important to look at what the general education course had specified that they would be analyzing regarding integrated skills. Being efficient may include having the UCGE committee look at the program outcomes and having the programs look at the general education outcomes and try to match up the assessment work that is already done. 5) If the program wants to assess writing, both the program and the general education course need to use the same language. 6) The individuals in those departments may be asked to be consultants.

Future design of general education: The new general education program advocates assessment upfront. Faculty need to become aware that if they are teaching a general education course, that they are responsible for providing some of the data for assessment purposes. Assessment review forms would automatically indicate if the program is assessing a general education course. At the time that the programs are collecting data, they should be able to assess general education outcomes and program outcomes at the same time.

It was agreed that more discussion on the topic would be beneficial.

VI. 2012/2013 LOOC goals

Limited time was available for discussion of goals for the year but Marilyn pointed out that it was time for the committee to create a data sharing policy. At this point, data is shared to individual departments. Deans are now receiving summary reports. Important to discuss and decide upon a plan. Other suggestions for the year are invited.

Meeting adjourned at 5pm

Next Meeting: October 24, 2012 3:30-5pm