

# Program Review and Assessment Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 28, 2008  
UL 1126  
1:30-3:00

## MINUTES -

Members Present: Robert Aaron, Peter Altenburger, Sarah Baker, Trudy Banta, Polly Boruff-Jones, Elaine Cooney, Donna Dunn, Yao-Yi Fu, James Johnson, Susan Kahn, Hea-Won Kim, Timothy Lyons, Joanne Orr, Gary Pike, Lisa Riolo, Ingrid Ritchie, Elizabeth Rubens, Jackie Singh, Joshua Smith, Kathryn Steinberg, Mark Urtel, Russell Vertner, Ken Wendeln, Nancy Young.

Guests: Noelle Goodwin, Josh Morrison, Snehasis Mukhopadhyay

1. ***Approval of the January Minutes***
  - a. January agenda approved, unanimously, without edits.
2. ***'Reaching Higher with Accountability' Working Paper***
  - a. T. Banta offered background and perspective on the aforementioned paper. Additional context was given as it relates to Indiana institutions of higher education generally and IUPUI in particular with regard to being "...pressed to assess with a standardized test" versus an electronic portfolio.
  - b. T. Banta continued with some history on this initiative and how the near future may look if testing is started. Topics include (a) a tentative data set number (100 freshmen & 100 seniors) (b) a three-year trial project (c) the fact that IU President McRobbie currently has this under advisement (d) how the various IUPUI stakeholders could look at any proposals (i.e. Faculty Council, PRAC, IMIR, Testing Center ) and (e) current status of the e-portfolio.
  - c. A Q/A session ensued that reflected the following (a) clear timeline for starting this, (b) which test would be used, (c) increasing the sample size, (d) practicality of this type of longitudinal study at IUPUI given our unique demographics, and (e) what is actionable when we get the results.
3. ***Newly awarded PRAC grant recipient question and answer session***
  - a. S. Mukhopadhyay and J. Morrison, using a power point presentation, identified the premise behind their project, which is entitled '*Assessing Computer Science Majors using the Capstone Experience*'. They gave an overview of the project, the context in which it will occur, and the assessment tools to be used, then entertained questions from the committee.
  - b. N. Goodwin, with handouts, similarly explained her project and rationale. Included in the handouts was the actual assessment tool [College Success Factors Index] and a sample of a piloted and scored instrument. Goodwin also entertained questions from the committee.

4. ***The Working Paper revisited.***
  - a. Discussion ensued within the committee about the concept of standardized testing to demonstrate accountability at IUPUI. Topics that were talked about include (a) faculty apprehension over giving a test, (b) the fact that the same group that administers the test also recommends funding, (c) some faculty would embrace this as a chance to validate what they believe or some faculty are less enthusiastic as it may distort and not reflect actual student learning, (d) an inquiry as to the current campus status of the e-portfolio, (e) the nature of the 'college portrait' that would need to go on-line, (f) how much discussion has the IUPUI Faculty Council had on this topic recently, (g) the actual monetary cost to IUPUI to administer this test, (h) the actual test itself (modules, categories, etc) and finally, (i) related discussion about private vs. public institutions of HE regarding accountability.
  
5. ***Sundries***
  - a. The last item, discussion on subcommittees versus taskforces, was tabled.
  - b. Ideas about the next step on addressing the working paper were offered. These ranged from inviting state or university experts to attend an upcoming PRAC meeting to forwarding to the committee written updates or reports as needed.
  - c. No action items were noted.

\*\* The meeting was adjourned at 3:06pm

\*\* Reminder, next meeting: **March 27<sup>th</sup> - 1:30pm - 3:00pm – UL1126**

Respectfully submitted by M. Urtel, Vice-Chair PRAC.

**REACHING HIGHER WITH ACCOUNTABILITY  
WORKING PAPER\***

December 12, 2007

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\*This working paper is a supplement to the Commission's *Reaching Higher: Strategic Directions for Higher Education in Indiana* adopted in June 2007. The working paper was prepared to elicit further discussion and define action items for moving forward with strategic directions on accountability.

## Reaching Higher with Accountability

In June 2007, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education adopted *Reaching Higher: Strategic Directions in Higher Education for Indiana* as its plan for the future of higher education. Two central and cross-cutting components of the plan are quality and accountability. Specifically, the plan calls for “deliberate attention to developing and implementing various transparent and widely reported mechanisms and measures that not only advance the system as a whole, but also support and build upon the strengths of the specific institutions.” As such, the purpose of this document is to further frame and advance discussion regarding the development and implementation of an accountability system for higher education in Indiana.

### *Overview*

Discussions regarding accountability in higher education have been ongoing at the institutional, state, and federal levels for several years. The historical movement behind higher education accountability began in the 1980’s with voluntary, internal, and institutionally developed performance reviews. The 1990’s brought an increased concern for productivity and efficiency coupled with a heightened interest in economic development, leading to the emergence of mandatory, statewide institutional reporting in some states. A few postsecondary institutions saw the forthcoming trend and launched early stages of performance assessment.

In 2000, the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education created a state-by-state report card for Higher Education, the first of its kind. The Measuring Up Report Card was designed to provide policymakers and educational officials with a common and clear tool to assess higher education as a nation and at a state-level as a means of informing decisions and policy direction related to higher education. Thirty indicators were used to calculate five out of the six grades in the categories of Academic Preparation, Participation, Affordability, Completion, Benefits (the category of *Student Learning* has been deemed immeasurable and each state given an “Incomplete” grade).

In 2004, the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) convened a National Commission on Accountability in Postsecondary Education, which was co-chaired by former Oklahoma governor Frank Keating and former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley. Their report concluded that better accountability is a national imperative for higher education and issued a series of recommendations to improve student preparation, public investment in educational priorities, teaching and research, cost-effectiveness, and the availability of key data. For governors, legislators, state boards and executives for higher education, the Commission recommended the following:

- *Create statewide data systems to help inform policy and budgetary decisions that will close achievement gaps,*
- *Make the transition from high school to college a focus of accountability,*
- *Make investments and improvements in teaching at every level a higher priority, and*
- *Design state policies for appropriations, tuition, and student aid to maximize successful enrollment in higher education.*

Most recently, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings initiated a new round of discussions about higher education accountability through the work and report of her Commission on the Future of Higher Education. The Spellings Commission was very critical of the lack of accountability and transparency in higher education especially in reporting outcomes and called for the following:

*To meet the challenges of the 21st century, higher education must change from a system primarily based on reputation to one based on performance. We urge the creation of a robust culture of accountability and transparency throughout higher education. Every one of our goals, from improving access and affordability to enhancing quality and innovation, will be more easily achieved if higher education institutions embrace and implement serious accountability measures.*

*We recommend the creation of a consumer-friendly information database on higher education with useful, reliable information on institutions, coupled with a search engine to enable students, parents, policymakers and others to weigh and rank comparative institutional performance.*

In response to the Spellings Commission's call for greater accountability and transparency, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC), with support from the Lumina Foundation, embarked on a joint effort, which, during the spring of 2006, resulted in outlining "a mechanism through which public higher education could become more accountable for student learning and student development while providing additional information to students and families to aid them in the college selection process." This effort is known as the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), which includes a College Portrait designed to serve as an institutional report on a combination of student demographic and outcomes-based information such as enrollment, degree completion, cost, student experiences and perceptions, and student learning.

### ***A System of Accountability for Indiana***

Billions of state and federal dollars are invested in higher education annually, and as such, there should be a means to measure and report on the results of these investments. The commitment of Indiana's colleges and universities is crucial if accountability is to be used as an improvement tool. If the institutions do not view the measures as relevant or constructive, it will be hard to use them as motivators. The following text provides a basic framework for designing Indiana's higher education accountability system, but institutional involvement will be necessary at every step if accountability reporting is to impact performance improvement.

#### ***I. Defining the Purpose of Higher Education Accountability in Indiana***

The purpose of Indiana's accountability system could be defined as:

"Higher education accountability in Indiana should provide students, legislators and policymakers, education and business leaders, and other interested parties with accurate and consistent information on system-wide progress toward the goals in higher education as outlined in *Reaching Higher*, including details that support policy development and return on investment."

To support this purpose, the Commission envisions a **two level approach to accountability**. First, higher education should be assessed at a state level, creating a benchmark to which the State should aspire. This state-level assessment will be dependent upon a second, more direct form of accountability on institutional performance. The primary task will be translating and aligning college and university performance more closely with state goals. This will require aligning institutional priorities and state goals, and then accurately and consistently informing interested parties on statewide progress toward those goals in ways that provide a basis for making new or measuring current policy decisions.

## II. Developing a State-level Dashboard of Key Indicators

The Commission's recent 2007 *Reaching Higher* document outlines the goals for Indiana's system of higher education under categories of access, affordability, student success, college preparation, and contributions to Indiana's economy. These goals should frame the accountability system.

Typically there is a tendency, for the sake of completeness, to report on multiple measures under each broad category in one document. Due to the resulting complexity and lack of focus, many of these documents are soon forgotten after they are published. Indiana would be better served by identifying ten to twelve core metrics that can be broadly communicated over time. These metrics will capture the core objectives of the *Reaching Higher* plan. It should be noted that these ten to twelve core metrics would serve as guideposts from which additional data and indicators may be generated to better understand and analyze issues.

To initiate further discussion toward an agreed upon dashboard, the following metrics-to-goals are put forward for consideration. It should be noted that the text on each category and the corresponding goal is direct text from the *Reaching Higher* document. It also should be noted that it is not the intent of this document to identify or develop specific initiatives under each category, but rather to initiate discussion on some key broad indicators that would provide a snapshot of the status of each category. **The “potential indicators” identified below are not definitive, but rather listed as a point for further discussion.**

- 1) *Access - Offer quality education to Hoosiers – in a variety of desired formats, locations, and times.*

*Indiana must aspire to lead the nation (Top 5) in the college-going rate of its recent high school graduates and make substantial progress (Top 10) in the number of adult, minority, and low-income students successfully pursuing a postsecondary education by 2012.*

### Potential Indicators

- Percent of high school graduates going directly to college
- Total enrollment of resident first-time students aged 25 and older as a percentage of the resident population aged 25 and older

- 2) *Affordability - Ensure all academically qualified Indiana residents are able to study at the postsecondary level irrespective of their financial circumstances.*

*Indiana must aspire to increase its commitment to need-based financial aid, and be a national leader in having a coordinated, transparent, and easy-to-access financial aid process for all students by 2009.*

### Potential Indicators

- Percent of median family income needed to pay the net cost of college by postsecondary sector
- Enrollment rates of 21st Century Scholars and Pell Grant recipients

- 3) *Student Success - Prepare all students with the knowledge, skills, and credentials necessary to succeed in the workplace, in the community, in further education, in living enriched lives, and in being globally competent citizens.*

*Indiana must aspire to dramatically improve the number and timeliness of college graduates, and become a national leader (Top 10) in retention at each grade level, on-time graduation rates (an associate degree in two years and a baccalaureate degree in four years), and reportable three-year (associate degree level) and six-year (baccalaureate degree level) graduation rates, and particularly in graduating at-risk and underrepresented students in higher education (achieve Top 10 status) by 2012.*

Potential Indicators

- Number of course completions
- Number of degrees awarded
- Graduation rates (four-year and six-year graduation rates for baccalaureate colleges and universities, and two-year and three-year graduation rates for community colleges)
- Number of students who transfer credit from a community college to a baccalaureate campus and complete a degree

- 4) *College Preparation - Contribute to ensuring that all recent high school graduates are prepared to immediately start, and succeed in, college-level courses.*

*Indiana must aspire to dramatically decrease the need for remedial education offerings for recent high school graduates at the college level by 2012, and increase the number of college-ready graduating high school seniors to reflect at least 80% of the graduating class by 2012.*

Potential Indicators

- Percent of recent high school graduates enrolled in remedial education
- Percent of students enrolled in Core 40 and Academic Honors

- 5) *Contributions to Indiana's Economy - Contribute to a dynamic, cutting-edge economy by collaborating with government and business to create a well-prepared, world-class workforce; to advance human knowledge; to enrich the culture, and to improve the quality of life of Indiana and its residents through high quality research and creative activity, which where appropriate, will be supported by an increasing level of external funding.*

*Indiana must aspire to be among the top Midwestern states in both total and federal research and development expenditures per capita by 2012.*

Potential Indicators

- Attainment of a bachelor's degree or higher by the population aged 25 and over
- Royalty and licensing income received from technology transfer activities at the colleges and universities
- Number of invention disclosures at the colleges and universities
- Total federal science and engineering research and development expenditures per capita

In selecting dashboard indicators, the Commission should be mindful of data availability and current collection processes. Currently, Indiana's colleges and universities annually report a vast amount of high level data both to the U.S. Department of Education through the National Center of Education Statistics and to the Commission through the Student Information System. As much as possible, Indiana should leverage these existing collection processes to avoid duplication in reporting and added burden on university personnel.

Additionally, the accrediting organizations of Indiana's colleges and universities require the institutions to set performance goals and provide information on graduation rates, admissions, and other areas similar to state-level accountability. Although detailed accreditation results are usually not made public and accreditation is used to assess institutions (and not to measure progress toward state goals), effort should be extended to align, wherever possible, the accreditation goals and measures with the State's accountability system.

Some new data may need to be collected and assembled or linked in order to measure the progress toward the *Reaching Higher* goals. For example, the Commission's Student Information System does not currently collect completed student credit hours.

Recommendations/Actions:

- The Commission will **convene a group of institutional researchers and academic planners** to review, refine, and finalize a set of **state-level dashboard indicators** that are aligned to the *Reaching Higher* goals. To increase communication and potentially coordinate efforts, an invitation will be extended to the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement to participate in the group's deliberations. This group will give specific attention to:
  - Selecting indicators that demonstrate **trends** and allow for **state, national, and international comparisons** where available,
  - Selecting indicators that include the **public and independent** postsecondary sectors,
  - Leveraging existing collection processes and available data wherever possible, and
  - Developing processes for collecting data elements not readily available but required to support the reporting needs.
- The Commission will **report annually and publicly** the state-level dashboard indicators in a manner that resonates progress on the *Reaching Higher* goals in an easily understood format.

*III. Aligning Institutional Performance Measures with Indiana's Higher Education Goals*

Most colleges and universities annually produce a progress report or fact book specifically related or referenced to their institutional strategic plans. To provide a context for reviewing and analyzing performance, many of these reports include data on student demographics, state funding per student, enrollment, tuition and fees, a basic description of program offerings, and characteristics of entering students. This is particularly useful in comparing higher education performance for purposes of institutional peer review. Additionally, each college and university typically measures progress on indicators relative to their mission. It is important that a set of these indicators contribute to supporting progress on the *Reaching Higher* goals and align with the developing dashboard indicators as appropriate to that specific campus and its mission. It also is important that the State understand the level at which its investment in higher education is being used efficiently and effectively and the efforts being undertaken by the college and universities to ensure such success. These indicators should be reported through a formal process or reporting mechanism between Indiana's colleges and universities and the Commission.

In developing a reporting mechanism for Indiana, the institutional accountability reports should not be used to compare individual institutions or campuses within our state (particularly those institutions serving different missions). Rather, the collection of these reports will inform the relation of a particular institution to the state's goals and the progress being achieved as well as a comparison to the performance of institutions with similar missions. It should be noted that specific attention to highlight special achievements at particular colleges and universities or at the state-level may be desirable to preserve the



unique nature of Indiana's postsecondary institutions as well as assist in economic and policy development.

Working with Indiana's colleges and universities, the Commission will collect the information in a consistent, coordinated fashion that to the extent possible is aligned to the State's biennial budget process. Much of this information already may be collected through existing processes at both the state and federal levels, and such data will be used to the maximum extent possible. Other items may need to be included and collected through the biennial budget instructions. In any respect, the information collected will be strategic and coordinated to avoid undue burden being placed on the colleges and universities.

#### Recommendations/Actions:

- The Commission will support efforts by Indiana's colleges and universities to participate, to the maximum extent possible, in the **Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA)** and specifically the student learning component.
- As part of the biennial budget process, Indiana's colleges and universities will provide the Commission with an **institutional progress report** that:
  - Outlines their **institutional goals**, how they will **measure progress** toward those goals, and **comparisons with their peer institutions**, noting those institutional goals and indicators that support the *Reaching Higher* goals,
  - Documents efforts to increase **institutional quality**, how they are measuring quality, and the results of these efforts and measurements including appropriate peer comparisons, and
  - Identifies **productivity, cost containment, and efficiency metrics** used by the institution and strategies for improvement.

#### IV. Performance Funding

Historically, most states have used input factors (enrollment) as a means of driving state appropriations to higher education. In recent times, some states have provided financial incentives on outcomes-based or performance factors (such as degree completion), but in most cases, the incentives are modest. In the 2007-09 biennium, Indiana adopted performance funding incentives for degree completion, on-time graduation, and two-year to four-year transfer activity. All of these incentives were based on change over time. These outcomes-based funding incentives are expected to encourage institutional behaviors. As institutions improve over time, they will be better positioned to reap the rewards of this funding. Although the annual increases may represent a small portion of the entire institutional funding, these strategies will yield substantial dollars once applied over a six to ten year period. In further developing an accountability system that is linked to outcomes-based or performance funding, Indiana must acknowledge and be mindful that colleges and universities are large enterprises and significant change and progress will take time spanning several budget cycles. Still it is important to develop a culture of focusing on outcomes and expect progress.

Performance contracts are another form of outcomes-based funding being implemented in a few states as pilot projects. Basically, such contracts provide a postsecondary institution with more flexibility from state regulations or restrictions in exchange for certain performance commitments made by the institution. By their nature, performance contracts actually require more, not less, accountability from the institutions. It should be noted that this concept was included as a potential strategy in the recommendations made by the Subcommittee on Higher Education submitted to the Indiana Government Efficiency Commission in 2004.

Recommendations/Actions:

- The Commission will recommend **performance funding incentives** (degree production, on-time graduation, and transfer) that began in 2007 in its biennial budget recommendations for 2009-11.
- The Commission will recommend the **research support adjustment** incentive for its major research universities that began in 2003 in its biennial budget recommendations for 2009-11.
- The Commission will consider additional ways to incorporate performance funding incentives into the state higher education funding formula (e.g., **course completions**) as part of the 2009-11 biennial budget process.

**Other Issues for Consideration**

*Inclusion of Indiana's Independent Institutions*

Working with the Independent Colleges of Indiana, the Commission needs to determine the extent to which independent institutions should participate in the accountability system. Indiana's independent institutions play a vital role in providing access to higher education for Indiana residents and should be included, to the extent possible, in the dashboard indicators. Further discussion needs to take place as to the extent of participation by the independent sector in providing information relevant to their institutional goals and metrics and their alignment to the *Reaching Higher* goals.

Furthermore, Indiana's independent institutions participate in publicly funded financial aid programs, and it is important for the public to understand the return on that investment. At a minimum, Indiana's accountability reports should include data about the independent institutions regarding the extent of their participation in publicly funded programs.

*Keeping Accountability Flexible*

As new priorities and better measures emerge, Indiana's accountability system should be flexible to change. Assessments of student learning, inclusion of independent institutional data, and employment data may change the picture that can be reported to the public and others interested in higher education.

Additionally, as noted in the previously discussed SHEEO recommendations as well as in the *Reaching Higher* plan, there is a call for ensuring that teachers produced by postsecondary teacher preparation programs are equipped in methodologies that are relevant, rigorous, and connected to engaging today's students. Indiana's Education Roundtable is discussing on this topic in relation to Indiana's teacher preparation programs and work to attract the best and brightest students into the teaching profession and ensuring that they have the skills needed to be successful in Indiana's classrooms. As this work moves forward, accountability measures may need to be identified in this area.

As such, Indiana's system should be monitored at least once every two years to ensure that it is meeting its purpose.

*Indiana Commission for Higher Education*

## Summary of Accountability Recommendations

- The Commission will **convene a group of institutional researchers and academic planners** to review, refine, and finalize a set of **state-level dashboard indicators** that are aligned to the *Reaching Higher* goals. To increase communication and potentially coordinate efforts, an invitation will be extended to the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement to participate in the group's deliberations. This group will give specific attention to:
  - Selecting indicators that demonstrate **trends** and allow for **state, national, and international comparisons** where available,
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  - Leveraging existing collection processes and available data wherever possible, and
  - Developing processes for collecting data elements not readily available but required to support the reporting needs.
- The Commission will **report annually and publicly** the state-level dashboard indicators in a manner that resonates progress on the *Reaching Higher* goals in an easily understood format.
- The Commission will support efforts by Indiana's colleges and universities to participate, to the maximum extent possible, in the **Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA)** and specifically the student learning component.
- As part of the biennial budget process, Indiana's colleges and universities will provide the Commission with an **institutional progress report** that:
  - Outlines their **institutional goals**, how they will **measure progress** toward those goals, and **comparisons with their peer institutions**, noting those institutional goals and indicators that support the *Reaching Higher* goals,
  - Documents efforts to increase **institutional quality**, how they are measuring quality, and the results of these efforts and measurements including appropriate peer comparisons, and
  - Identifies **productivity, cost containment, and efficiency metrics** used by the institution and strategies for improvement.
- The Commission will recommend **performance funding incentives** (degree production, on-time graduation, and transfer) that began in 2007 in its biennial budget recommendations for 2009-11.
- The Commission will recommend the **research support adjustment** incentive for its major research universities that began in 2003 in its biennial budget recommendations for 2009-11.
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