Program Review and Assessment Committee

Thursday, October 25, 2007
UL 1126
1:30-3:00 p.m.
Karen Johnson, Chair
Joshua Smith, Vice Chair

AGENDA –

1. Approval of the September Minutes ....K. Johnson
2. Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the PULs .... S. Hamilton
3. Discussion: Assessing Assessment at IUPUI............................... T. Banta
4. Discussion of PRAC Visibility .... K. Johnson and J. Smith
    and Strategies for Communication
5. Discussion of Agenda Items for 2007-08............... K. Johnson and J. Smith
6. Reminder about Subcommittee Membership ....K. Johnson
7. Nominations for Vice Chair of PRAC..K. Johnson
8. Reminder to Invite Colleagues for November 15 Meeting.........K. Johnson
9. Adjournment...K. Johnson

MINUTES –

Members Present:
Robert Aaron, William Agbor-Baiyee, Drew Appleby, Kate Baird, Sarah Baker, Trudy Banta, Karen Black, Elaine Cooney, Richard Edwards, Yao-Yi Fu, Sharon Hamilton, Michele Hansen, James Johnson, Karen Johnson, Hea-Won Kim, Timothy Lyons, Allison Martin, Melinda Meadows, Howard Mzumara, Gary Pike, Elizabeth Rubens, Katherine Schilling, Jackie Singh, Joshua Smith, Kathryn Steinberg, Russell Vertner, Ken Wendeln, Debra Winikates, Marianne Wokeck, Nancy Young.

Minutes from the September meeting were approved as written

Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the PULs (S. Hamilton)

The PULs were approved in May 1998. Their tenth anniversary is approaching and several people have been working hard to create ideas for celebrating. Frank Ross in the Office of Student Life has suggested using the Campus Center to highlight one PUL each month. Megan Palmer has indicated that the Center for Teaching and Learning would like to play a part, possibly by sponsoring workshops focused on one PUL per month. D. Appleby suggested that faculty and students might participate by sharing their perceptions of/work on the PULs. The campus will continue to discuss the various options. T. Banta, S. Hamilton, and Scott Evenbeck are offering $5,000 to showcase Effective and Imaginative Integration of the PULs. The deadline for submissions is

February 15, 2008 and committee members were urged to let colleagues know about the competition.

Hamilton described a study carried out by several faculty fellows in 2000 that resulted in data and material for the online institutional portfolio. The information on the site served as strong evidence that the PULs were the backbone of general education for the 2002 Higher Learning Commission re-accreditation review. The tenth anniversary of the PULs provides a timely occasion for an update on progress made toward embedding the PULs in the schools and departments. Hamilton provided a sheet with step-by-step instructions to be completed by each major program. The purpose is to describe how the PULs are taught, learned, and assessed in the major. A web-link to the matrix will be sent to PRAC members, who will in turn work with the appropriate department chairs to complete the matrix. After some discussion about the importance of allowing sufficient time to involve faculty, the group settled on a deadline of February 15 for the completed matrices.

K. Wendeln asked for more information about the purpose of the process and how he should convey this purpose to the faculty. Hamilton explained that this is an opportunity for the faculty to take stock of the status of the PULs and to update the institutional portfolio in preparation for the Higher Learning Commission visit in 2012. The portfolio serves as a public showcase of our approach to general education. Banta mentioned that in light of current discussions about requiring institutions to administer standardized tests, it is timely for us to get out in front and demonstrate student learning outcomes.

Discussion of Assessing Assessment at IUPUI

G. Pike noted that the survey PRAC members completed was focused on academic units. Banta added that she was particularly pleased with the responses to question 1; over 90 percent of respondents indicated that that there are student learning outcomes in at least some curricula. However, only one-third reported that all curricula had developed outcomes. Another third responded that student outcomes were related to the PULs and integrated with outcomes in the major. Approximately 62 percent of units use something other than the planning matrix as a guide to assessment activities.

Appleby gave an example of an alternative approach in the School of Science. He designed the process to fit with the inquiry model of science, hoping that faculty would embrace something written in their "language." Departments report progress along six stages of development in a linear fashion. The approach in the Psychology department is provided as an example. Banta noted that the PRAC planning matrix was designed as a guide and not as the only acceptable approach.

Wendeln described a selective approach used in the Kelley School of Business. The process allows faculty to identify two or three salient PULs and demonstrate how they are important to a course. Wokeck talked about the use of capstone projects as evidence that students achieve the major outcomes at the end of their programs of study. Banta referred to the ICHE Goal 6 report and populated the matrix using

Wokeck's capstone example. She emphasized the importance of describing how units use the information in the "responsive improvements" section of the Goal 6 report. The open-ended responses on the survey items #9 and #10 show the need to clarify the purpose of assessment and its value to units and the campus as a whole.

Discussion of PRAC Visibility

Johnson referred to the survey results in question 9 to open the discussion about how PRAC goals and activities are communicated to faculty in their respective units. R. Vertner described how Kelley established a senior exit survey and used the findings to provide timely feedback to various faculty members, advisors, and career center staff. The process increased the visibility of student feedback and pointed to areas needing improvement. Support from the dean also helped to create an environment that valued the use of assessment data. Pike noted that assessment initiatives usually go further and deeper once the dean becomes part of the assessment committee. W. Agbor-Baiyee wondered how to build and maintain capacity if the dean becomes a leading figure, cautioning that deans come and go. He also emphasized the importance of an institutional commitment. Banta recommended that units reflect on the five years of Goal 6 reports to see the extent of their progress over that time.

Strategies for Communication

Banta noted the importance of institutional commitment to assessment. The institution should establish incentives for individual faculty members; these should be connected to departmental as well as individual faculty reward structures. Moving toward a culture of assessment would help to ensure that everyone knows assessment is valued. The reward structure seems to be a particular challenge in professional schools and research-dominated units, where assessment is conducted primarily by professional staff and few, if any, faculty. PRAC might consider another road show with workshops to demonstrate to faculty how to implement assessment strategies that are effective and beneficial and not overwhelming in terms of time demands and new knowledge.

Discussion of Agenda Items for 2007-08

Johnson asked members to e-mail priorities for PRAC to the listserv or directly to her or J. Smith. She urged people to join a subcommittee if they haven't done so already. There were no nominations from the floor for either Chair or Vice Chair of PRAC for the coming election.

Johnson reviewed the details of the special session on November 15 and the meeting was adjourned.