Program Review and Assessment Committee
August 26, 2010, 1:30-3:00 p.m., UL 1126
Minutes

1.   **Members Present:** R. Aaron, W. Agbor-Baiyee, K. Alfrey, P. Altenburger, D. Appleby,
        S. Baker, T. Banta, R. Bennett, D. Boland, M. Brown, W. Crabtree, J. Defazio, E. Dill,
        Y. Fu, B. Gushrowski, M. Hansen, B. Hayes, L. Houser, S. Hundley, M. Irwin,
        K. Johnson, S. Kahn, J. Lee, L. McGuire, H. Mzumara, W. Orme, J. Orr, G. Pike,
        I. Queiro-Tajalli, I. Ritchie, R. Stocker, K. Marrs for J. Thompson, M. Urtel, R. Vertner,
        K. Wendeln, K. Wills, M. Wokeck, and M. Yard

2.   **Welcome Back and Introduction of Members**

3.   **Approval of May Minutes**: unanimously approved.

4.   **Overview of PRAC** – M. Urtel and K. Alfrey
   - A brief summary of the mission of PRAC and of the responsibilities of its members was
     distributed for discussion. This document is meant to help orient new and continuing
     members to the function of the committee and expected duties of its members.
   - In the discussion of service on PRAC subcommittees, it was suggested that there should
     be a better mechanism in place for reporting the good work done by PRAC members in
     these committees back to the deans of their units. This serves the dual purpose of
     recognizing PRAC members for their committed service and raising the profile of PRAC
     among the schools.

5.   **2012 Minimum Criteria/Expectations per North Central Accreditation** – T. Banta
   - As a result of an investigation into their accreditation of for-profit programs, NCA has
     established minimum standards for accreditation, described in their publication
     "Documenting Fundamental Understandings: Minimum Expectations within the Criteria
     for Accreditation."
   - One important change resulting from the establishment of minimum standards is that all
     programs **must** have defined learning outcomes.
     - These learning outcomes must be program-specific, a blending of general
       education/generic knowledge with **discipline-specific** outcomes (e.g. writing in
       the discipline, critical thinking in the discipline).
     - The learning outcomes should encompass those specific skills or actions that
       provide evidence that graduates can perform effectively in the discipline.
   - Sylvia Manning, president of NCA Higher Learning Commission, suggests that
     accredited programs should already be doing the things laid out as minimum expectations
     for accreditation; thus, the new guidelines serve primarily as an internal checklist rather

than as a requirement for additional documentation. However, if a program discovers it is **not** doing one of the things identified as a minimum expectation, it should work now to correct the deficiency (and provide evidence through an appropriate means).

6.   **PUL Assessment Report sample for review** – G. Pike
   - G. Pike shared preliminary results on student attainment of PULs. The data were collected in Spring 2010 in a two-part process:
     - Faculty evaluation of student performance on emphasized PULs in 400-level courses
     - Students' self-assessment of skills, as reported through a survey
   - Based on faculty assessment, attainment of PULs with a "major emphasis" in the course in which they were assessed is quite strong:
     - At the high end, 89.5% of assessed students were "very effective" for values and ethics
     - At the low end, 45.3% of assessed students were "very effective" for critical thinking
   - Moderate-emphasis PULs showed a somewhat lower attainment overall in the courses in which they were assessed:
     - At the high end, 95.6% of assessed students were "very effective" for information resource skills
     - At the low end, 33.0% were "very effective" for values and ethics
   - When the rankings of "very effective" and "effective" are combined, the results are quite strong: even for Critical Thinking, which had the lowest percentage of students scoring in those two categories, 78.8% of students scored at least "effective" in courses in which critical thinking had a major emphasis.
   - Overall, student self-assessments are positive:
     - All student ratings are > 3.0 (on a 4-point scale) except for quantitative skills (2.95 overall)
     - Disciplinary differences in students' self-assessments are generally in line with what would be expected: for example, students in science and engineering & technology gave themselves higher marks for quantitative skills, on average, than did students in other schools; informatics students likewise scored highest on information resource skills.
   - The School of Engineering and Technology has affirmed through faculty governance the reporting of PUL data at the program level rather than the school level, in order to get a clearer picture of PUL attainment across the school; IRB approval is pending.

7.   **Impact of PRAC Grants** – M. Urtel

This summer, M. Urtel undertook a project to determine the short-term and long-term impacts of previously awarded PRAC grants.

- 27 grants were awarded from Fall 2002 to Spring 2009, totaling about $68,000
- Several possible impacts were considered:
    - Short-term impact on assessment practices, as evidenced by a written report or potential presentation to PRAC
    - Changes to unit policies and procedures as a result of the grant
    - Evidence of faculty productivity resulting from the PRAC grant, such as a conference presentation, publication, or subsequent grant
    - Mid- and long-term impacts are not yet evident
- Previous grant awardees were contacted with a survey of 15 items; 20 respondents
    - 11 respondents had given conference presentations as a result of the grant, primarily on assessment (4) and teaching (5)
    - Five publications had been submitted at the time of the survey; of those, one was in print, and one was accepted/in press
    - Five respondents used results from PRAC grants to apply for further grants – 3 external, 2 internal, ranging from $5000 to $1,000,000. **All** of these applications were funded.
    - Changes to policies and procedures resulted primarily from the reporting of results to unit administrators and faculty. Some of these reports resulted in policy change, in particular in the areas of "curriculum strengthening/better alignment to professional standards," "curriculum review," and "course structure".
- Questions going forward:
    - How have PRAC grants impacted assessment and program review on campus?
    - How can we assess the impact of these grants?
    - How should these results shape conversations (about the PRAC grant program and about campus assessment in general) going forward?
- Based on these results, if publication is a desired outcome of receiving a PRAC grant, it should be made clear in the call for proposals and the grant requirements. Currently, the primary impacts of these grants are (and should continue to be) improvements in the recipient's program or unit.

8.   **Introduction to Subcommittees** – Continuing chairs and subcommittee members broke into small groups to explain the functions of these committees to prospective new members.

9.   **Adjournment** at 3:05 pm; minutes respectfully submitted by Karen Alfrey.