Program Review and Assessment Committee
October 28, 2010, 1:30-3:00 p.m., UL 1126
Minutes

1. **Members Present:** R. Aaron, W. Agbor-Baiyee, K. Alfrey, P. Altenburger, S. Baker, D. Bell, R. Bennett, K. Black, M. Brown, J. Defazio, C. Fitzpatrick, Y. Fu, B. Gushrowski, B. Hayes, S. Hundley, S. Kahn, J. Lee, H. Mzumara, J. Philips, G. Pike, I. Queiro-Tajalli, I. Ritchie, R. Stocker, C. Toledo, M. Urtel, R. Vertner, K. Wendeln, M. Yard, and N. Young

2. **Approval of September Minutes**: approved.

3. **Updates on items from September meeting** – M. Urtel, T. Banta, K. Alfrey
   - Mission and Member Responsibilities: Changes suggested at last month's meeting have been incorporated into the document; no additional changes were recommended at this month's meeting. The most recent version of the document will be posted on the PRAC website (http://www.planning.iupui.edu/43.html) to provide a brief summary of the mission of PRAC and the responsibilities of its members.
   - 2012 Committee: T. Banta provided a summary of the most recent meeting of the 2012 Committee:
     - Five criterion teams (one for each of the five NCA criteria for accreditation) have been formed to begin compiling the self-study; the chairs (or other representatives) of these teams will begin attending 2012 Committee meetings to coordinate writing those portions of the self-study with significant content overlap
     - Because it is still a new process, faculty continue to need <u>reminders</u> to submit PUL evaluations for courses scheduled to be assessed this term
     - CTL staff are happy to run workshops for individual departments or schools on PUL assessment or other learning- and assessment-related topics, as needed
     - <u>All programs</u> that offer a credential (from certificates to graduate programs) need to document program SLOs (student learning outcomes) in order to comply with NCA expectations for accreditation. Once these SLOs are defined, they will be reported in the IUPUI Bulletin.
   - Comments on PAII report feedback: At the September meeting, PRAC members had an opportunity to comment on what feedback they are interested in getting about the reports (such as the PRAC annual report) submitted to PAII.
     - Several members requested clear report-writing guidelines that answer questions such as: What is the question the PRAC report answers? Who is reading it and what are they looking for? How is the information used? What is the focus of the report supposed to be? What is the relationship between PRAC report and program review self-study?

- o Members indicated that they would be interested in feedback on their submitted reports, in particular on whether enough has been done and what areas need work; whether it provides clear and sufficient information; whether it is understandable and useful for campus-level decision-making; what kind of picture it paints of the strengths and challenges of the program; and how the reports shape up against others at the university. Some members suggested that they would also welcome advice on ways to improve their assessment processes, as well as examples of exemplary programs, processes, rubrics, or other resources.
- o The general consensus on the format of these reports is that our diverse programs and units – particularly non-academic units – are not well-served by a common one-size-fits-all format. Members appreciated the clearer guidelines last year to focus the report on <u>student outcomes</u>, something both academic and non-academic units address in diverse ways.
- o Members commented that if a subcommittee is convened to evaluate reports, it should be disciplinarily diverse; and that if a common rubric is developed for assessing reports, it should be very flexible to accommodate the diverse expectations of different program accrediting agencies.

4. **Discussion of PAII reports**
- T. Banta commented on the noticeable improvements in the reports submitted this year in comparison to previous years. She particularly acknowledged Informatics for filling in an existing gap in information on their assessment practices: their faculty, who are all involved in teaching and learning, approach assessment by determining what specific questions they want to answer, and going from there to determine what data should be collected (and how) to get at those questions.
- Banta provided some examples from this year's reports:
  - o Example of good practice, documented in the form of a matrix of outcomes: Alumni survey response suggested changing the scheduling of internships; the documented improvement, based on this outcome, is that this change has been made.
  - o Example of good practice, documented in a narrative format: Assessment of a course-level outcome found that few students could complete problems without mistakes; after faculty put together an instructional video, the percentage of students who could complete these problems correctly rose from 43% to 53%.
  - o A less-good example indicated that "outcomes are assessed by grading" (but did not report the results of this grading), and then reported a program improvement of adding a new course to increase options for study in a particular topic area – without drawing any connection to how the outcomes of assessment suggested such an improvement was necessary

- Although responding to "what we said we were going to do" in last year's report is not an explicit expectation of the report, a reviewer looking at reports over time should find evidence of continual improvement, particularly for programs whose outcomes stay constant
- The committee discussed the possibility of breaking into small groups at the next meeting to review last year's PRAC reports
    - Discussion indicated that such an exercise would be more helpful as a possible source of feedback to units than as an instructional tool for PRAC members, particularly because discussion at the last two PRAC meetings has already helped clarify expectations for report-writing
    - G. Pike suggested that convening a subcommittee may be more useful for providing feedback to report-writers
    - It may, however, be a useful exercise for PRAC members to self-review their own unit's reports during an upcoming meeting

5.   **PUL follow-up** – K. Alfrey and all
- Is it useful to make the major PULs mapped to each course more visible to students and/or faculty? In particular, would publishing these PULs in the bulletin help advisors direct students toward courses that might help them strengthen areas in which they are weaker?
    - For very prescriptive programs (such as engineering) with only limited opportunities for elective courses, this might be of limited use. Some such programs ensure that students gain practice with all PULs by embedding them directly into department-taught courses. This has the added benefit that if students are found to be weak in a particular area, the department can address it directly through their own courses rather than relying on another department to make improvements.
    - Some students might use published PULs to <u>avoid</u> courses that touch on their weaker areas – many would rather have a high GPA than a balanced education
    - Perhaps PULs should be addressed explicitly as part of a student's personal development plan

6.   **Student Learning Outcomes**
- Instructions have been sent to deans: all programs – certificate through graduate – should define SLOs and publish them in the bulletin
- Since we are working on something that directly impacts students, should we consider student representation to PRAC or other committees? It has been tried in the past, but students did not engage. Perhaps student reps might be invited to one or two meetings a

year when we are specifically discussing PULs or other undergrad-related issues; alternately, we might seek student input through focus groups or other means.
- Developing a glossary of assessment terms has been taken up by the Advanced Practitioner Subcommittee; resources compiled by Dary Erwin of James Madison University for the National Postsecondary Education Commission might provide a good starting point
- Graphic display of SLOs may help clarify how they are being addressed in a course or curriculum; one suggested resource is *The Graphic Syllabus and the Outcomes Map: Communicating Your Course*, Linda B. Nilson (Jossey-Bass 2007)
- SLOs should be defined in the context of the missions of our various units
- The following questions were provided for discussion/consideration:
  - Are SLOs for your unit defined/created at this point?
  - What has assisted with the process (professional organizations, accrediting body, etc)?
  - Have accompanying assessments been identified? If so, what type?
  - Who has been working on the process?
  - What conversations are still needed?
    - Do <u>minors</u> need outcomes? Not according to the minimum expectations of NCA
  - Current concerns or questions moving forward?
    - For information-heavy disciplines (e.g. informatics, dentistry), assessment is a moving target, and the SLOs should be considered a living document

7. **Old and New Business**
   - Graduate Issues subcommittee: Sherry Queener will attend December PRAC meeting to answer questions about the PGLs
   - G. Pike reports on a useful meeting with the IRB. Rules are changing that will affect how surveys are done and what data can be provided.

8. **Adjournment** at 3:00 pm; minutes respectfully submitted by Karen Alfrey.