Program Review and Assessment Committee

Thursday, April 8, 2021

1:30 – 3:00 pm

Meeting Minutes
[Link to Video Recording of Meeting](#)

Attendees: Karen Alfrey, Peter Altenburger, Leslie Bozeman, Nicholas Brehl, Camy Broeker, Christian Buerger, Julie Davis, Lauren Easterling, Tom Hahn, William Helling, Stephen Hundley, Rachel Kartz, Caleb J. Keith, Jennifer Lee, Wei-Shao Lin, Sara Lowe, Katharine Macy, Pamela Morrism, Sonia Ninon, Saptarshi Purkayastha, Jeffry Thigpen, Crystal Walcott, Scott Weeden, David Zahl

1. **Welcome, review and approve previous meeting minutes (5 minutes)**

   Tom Hahn called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM. Karen Alfrey made a motion to approve the minutes from March 2021; Scott Weeden seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the minutes from March 2021 were approved.

2. **"Centering Equity in Assessment." Guest: Verna Orr, Special Assistant for Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, Benedict College. (30 minutes)**

   <u>Stephen Hundley</u>: I would be delighted to say a few words about our guest. I'm sharing an announcement from Benedict College announcing Dr. Verna Orr's appointment as Special Assistant for Planning and Institutional effectiveness. I don't want to steal too much of her thunder because part of Verna's discussion with us today around centering equity and assessment is really going to talk about her journey as a student in a variety of settings, as a professional in a variety of settings, and as a leader in assessment and improvement nationally.

   And I wanted to just make mention that Verna is part of a great set of colleagues that partner with us at the Assessment Institute. And I'm going to paste a [link](#) in the chat for a shameless plug; Verna was one of our special guests for season 1, episode 9 that focused on [HBCU-CEEQA](#) (Historically Black Colleges and Universities Collaborative for Excellence in Educational Quality Assurance).

   https://assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu/overview/podcast-episodes.html

   Verna has been very instrumental in leading work around how to bring colleges and universities, specifically HBCUs, into the assessment community and really showcase and advance their work and provide them a venue for this work to occur and get showcased. And we're so privileged and pleased they are partnering with us at the Assessment Institute to do so.

   I'll turn the microphone over to Verna to provide some remarks and then we'll open it up to questions and answers from the group. Once that portion of the agenda concludes, we're going to get into some breakout rooms and talk about centering equity in assessment at IUPUI.

Verna Orr: I'm so excited to see that you all are interested in doing this kind of work. Lots of institutions are not and I just congratulate you all for being a boat. And, thank you, Stephen, so much for the introduction and for having me today. I want to start by giving you a little bit about my background and how I came to be a part of this work. So I am a first-generation college graduate. I attended Howard University in Washington DC. My undergraduate degree is in music education. My master's is in Administration and Policy for K-12 schools. And then I have a doctorate from Howard University in K-12 administration and policy as well. And so initially I was interested in understanding about the dynamic between the ninth grade year through 12th grade year, successfully transitioning young people at the point in their lives where they are making decisions for the rest of their lives.

But in the midst of my data collection for my dissertation, I was asked to be the President's confidential Assistant. So you see the good, you see the bad, you see the unbelievably unbelievable on a daily basis. And it gave me a very, very different perspective with regard to my student experience at the university. And so I was in that role for about 5.5 years until my president retired.

So I made the crazy decision to pursue a second doctorate at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. And that is where I really, really go into this assessment world. But I was intimately involved with assessment and everything that it definitely is. And so I don't know if you all have heard of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA). David. So my work there was three years as a graduate student and then two years as a post-grad. I was immersed in the world of assessment. This experience is the reason that I am able to stand before you all today and talk about equity and assessment, what that looks like, and how our HBCUs are really making a difference. And so I just wanted to kind of give that a quick context before I get into my very brief comments.

So as far as the conversational equity in assessment is concerned, in 2017, Montenegro and Jankowski wrote a piece called "[Equity and Assessment: Moving Towards Culturally Responsive Assessment](#)." The goal of that paper was to open up a dialogue about the relationship between equity and assessment—what that looks like. We've had numerous people to provide responses to the paper (including former IUPUI colleague, Dennis Rudnick's "[Culturally Responsive Assessment is Just Good Assessment](#)").

Thinking about how to move the conversation forward, several HBCUs came together to create HBCU-CEEQA. Basically, HBCU-CEEQA is an organization of like-minded professionals will serve HBCU and try to demonstrate the effectiveness of HBCUs about leveraging the expertise of assessment and institutional professionals. Basically, we are interested in telling the HBCU story. And so I present to you an opportunity to be involved with HBCU-CEEQA with us. The mission of HBCU-CEEQA is to demonstrate the effectiveness of HBCUs through the use of best-practices in assessment and evaluation by leveraging the collective expertise of assessment and institutional effectiveness professionals and other stakeholders.

I would like to end my talk with my hope it's for this conversation that we're about to have activate something that struck you years ago. Activate that.

SH: When you hear the phrase "Equity in Assessment," what does it mean to you and why is it important to all of us?

VO: Equity in assessment means giving students the opportunity to be successful. For example, the resources they need to be successful. It's up to us to provide different opportunities for them to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

I believe we cannot have the conversation about equity and assessment without talking about culturally relevant practices, right? So I think they are a good marriage equity in a culturally relevant because when you talk about culture, you're talking about a people, a village, an organization that has strong beliefs and different things. They also have strong beliefs with regard to what is for them and what is not for them, based on experience, experiences, and educational organization. This allows us to display the fundamental idea that public education is for all of us. Everyone deserves an opportunity to show what they can do.

Leslie Bozeman: My role is to provide guidance with regard to assessment of Global Learning. I like the question you posed – "What kind of experiences are you providing for students to demonstrate what they have learned?" I want to know if there are types of experience you have found to work best.

VO: Thank you for the question, Leslie, and I always refer back to one of the participants for my dissertation at Morehouse School of Medicine, where before their students come to campus, they have to take the Myers-Briggs Inventory. So what they do, they don't want to just understand about you. They the institution has put this in place so that when they receive your results, that they are able to put you in cohort so that you will find the most exhibit. You are able to, you know, how to work with these type of people. So Morehouse ensures their students are successful, meaning either graduation or they muster out.

Karen Alfrey: Your comments in your talk about what do we expect a student to look like? And does that match what our population of students actually does look like? It puts, puts me in mind of the idea of really survivor bias. I see it quite as much at the undergrad level, but certainly as students transition into grad school—I'm coming out of the School of Engineering and Technology, which tends to be very traditional in the way that it approaches material and math is math and the thing. And so there is a tendency when working with upper division undergrads and with graduate students of approaching it by saying, well, I was expected to do this bunch of ridiculous things. Therefore, it's reasonable to expect any student on this path to do exactly what I did. And I'm, I'm wondering if you have any strategies for helping those faculty members get to the point of being better able to embrace this idea.

VO: "Learning, unlearning, and relearning." You know, as a former faculty member, I understand about faculty dynamics, but, you know, a lot of us were not trained to teach. But as far as teaching, a lot of us get it on the job training, right? And so the way that we were taught, we just kind of expect it to be the same and it's not the same. And again, it doesn't have to be that way. So I would encourage you, as far as your colleagues are concerned about learning, unlearning, relearning, not just about students. What about ourselves and what we know we can do.

Caleb Keith: One of the questions that comes to mind for me is folks that are maybe new to approaching the work of equitable assessment or culturally responsive assessment. I think about the, the comment about how do you eat an elephant? It begins with the first bite, right? I guess I'm curious to know your thoughts on how folks begin to approach the work. What might be the first step to take, to arrange themselves and then to be able to have action?

VO: You have to get in there. If we're going to really, really do this work, you have to be an advocate for change. You have to be an advocate for young people who don't necessarily understand what self-agency is and how that manifests in their lives.

I wrote a piece called "Centering Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Making the Case for a Statement for the Field and Beyond." What I do is I go through very briefly the history of HBCU and then I ask questions in the end as an invitation for colleagues.

Sonia Ninon: In your experience, what are the most effective ways to engage underrepresented students at predominantly White institutions? And the second question, as a leader in this field, what advice would you give to minority professionals interested in this work?

VO: As far as like engaging underrepresented students, we have to stop assuming that they know things. And we have to assume that they know nothing. So they know things, but they don't know everything. They're not as comfortable with our college language. And I believe that college language is a gatekeeper. Students may think "office hours" is dedicated time to work in your office, not understanding it's time set aside for them to visit and ask questions. I would say, if you are really, really interested in this kind of work, reach out to some of your HBCU colleagues. They are willing and able to help with giving examples of different practices that they use. I've never heard of any of my colleagues at HBCUs say "figure it out on your own," because we realize as you all do, that this work is worth more than what we could even put into words, right? You are changing people's lives.

I'll give you my email address for all of you because I know you want to e-mail me. Verna.orr@benedict.edu I'm grateful to be here and thank you very much for this opportunity. Please email me.

3. **Breakout rooms / discussion (15 minutes) and report-outs (15 minutes) on this question: "What are some specific examples of how we 'center equity in assessment' at IUPUI?" (30 minutes)**

SH: Well, Verna gave us a great setup here and I think it connects nicely to some work that we've been doing at IUPUI, both broadly across our campus, but also in the work of teaching, learning assessment and improvement. And I'm going to ask, now, I'm going to paste a question in the chat for you. And I'm going to ask if we could break into some breakout rooms.

"What are some specific examples of how we 'center equity in assessment' at IUPUI?"

Group 1: Several group members are new to assessment and equity in assessment. Examples talk about utilizing the [Transparency in Learning and Teaching](#) (TILT) framework and how faculty can apply the TILT principles into their instructional roles. Instructors should have a conversation with students in the classroom to ensure they understand expectations and goals. Instructors can work with students to co-create/co-construct a rubric (as there are examples of rubrics being racist). COVID-19 has forced instructors to engineer new methods of teaching into courses (e.g., flexibility with due dates, recording instruction for on-demand viewing); student performance is improved. Asking questions if some students are placed at a disadvantage. Conversations about how to be explicit with faculty about assessment practices (e.g., how to be more inclusive for English learners); seeking alignment with national accrediting body. Disaggregating data related to outcomes.

Group 2: Sam Jones Scholarship, IEL program – participate in strengths-finders to help students and outcomes influence curriculum for individual students. Students are asked to reflect on ways the scholarship helped them and also asked other ways that they need assistance. Bonner scholarship is providing help for disadvantaged students. Using Universal Design for Learning (working with CTL) and integrating adaptive learning technology and individualized instruction. Provided a faculty lens considering the questions of equity in teaching. He sees a number of students with personal circumstances that hinder their academic success including family care responsibilities (parents, dependents), transportation issues, work, and other obligations. There is a need to ask students to do the same work, but providing support and accommodations to be successful. He thinks about a scholarship project that looks at the question of value of merit-based scholarships and if they help students who have strong financial needs driven by their life circumstances. Current work across all programs to remove implicit bias from syllabi and course assignments (including beginning work to TILT all assignments; capstone courses now using specifications grading and providing students with opportunities to self-select project formats that fit their learning strengths allowing them to co-construct their final capstone experiences. We talked about a scholarship project to explore whether or not merit-based scholarships are benefitting students. We explored questions about an emergency for scholarships to assist with hardships that may prevent students from engaging with learning experiences.

Group 4:
- Institution Level:
    - Reaching out to first-generation students through various programs and trying to understand them from the perspective of where they come from
    - Accessing data at IRDS broken down by equity-based information. The work that IRDS has done to make data "chunkable" by demographic categories.
    - Disaggregating data to figure how best to reach different students. Student Affairs is also disaggregating data to learn what groups of students are participating (or not participating) in activities.
- Course Level
    - Focusing on learning styles
    - Working with students and their circumstances (for example, being careful about the costs of texts and about finding alternative ways to access materials). discussion about students with financial constraints, leading to seeking openly available resources for courses.

- Being conscientious about breaking down assignments so that students can learn how to work with the particular expectations involved in assignments and even see them as steps leading to completion of both assignment outcomes and course outcomes

Group 5:
- Through evaluating portfolios; gives students the chance to put different pieces in depending on what they want highlight, leaving room for creativity and *choice*
- Be mindful of not having questions that are thought experiments when some people may have actually had the lived experiences (e.g. defunding the police)
- In Physical Therapy graduate program: In the application encourage students to bring their experiences and beliefs to bring to the program; try to bring equity into admissions process
  - Created diversity coalition – policies do not match structure
  - Next step; how are we assessing students?
- Like the idea of making sure our policies match what we believe
- We don't just evaluate academic programs; our assessments from other areas provide evidence of student value and student success outside of the classroom
- One program suggested holding diversity, equity, and inclusion discussion in and outside of the classroom
- One person's suggestion is encouraging students to share their student experiences when evaluating programs

SH: We'd like to be able to consolidate these and I'm imagining that from the discussions we've had over the last couple of PRAC meetings, this will richly inform some future agenda items over the next year, because we're just scratching the surface with a couple of our last discussions. So, I think we're surfacing a lot of good ideas, but a lot of them will require some deeper exploration over the next year in PRAC. So more to come on that—thank you for all of that.

4. **"Assessment at Ivy Tech Central Indiana: Current State and Recommendations for the Future." Rachel L. Kartz, Dean, School of Arts, Sciences, and Education and Associate Professor of English, Ivy Tech Community College Central Indiana (20 minutes)**

SH: Let's now turn to Rachel for a project she has been undertaking at Ivy Tech. And I will let her remind us again her background and the work that she's been doing.

Rachel Kartz: This was initially an internal research project as part of a leadership program that I'm in at Ivy Tech for executive leaders. I currently serve as the Dean of Arts, Sciences, and Education at Ivy Tech. But this month I will transition into a vice chancellor of academic affairs role at the Ivy Tech Hamilton County Campus, which is a brand new campus that is opening July 1st.

So just a little bit of an overview about the Ivy Tech system. You probably know a lot of this by Ivy Tech is a single accredited statewide community college system that was established as a community college system in 2005 though, if you've been in Indiana for longer than that, you know that Ivy Tech has existed in numerous different names and capacities throughout the history of education in the state. But we are a fairly new

community college and we received HLC accreditation; we just went through our reaffirmation process last year. So we have 18 campuses.

In my role, I serve on state-wide curriculum committees. But locally, I serve on a resource utilization committee where local budgetary decisions are made. So this project really came about from those experiences, that resource utilization committee and also in my academic world. So in the resource utilization committee, I participated a lot in planning, budgeting, and implementing. And in my academic role, I do a lot of assessment on the academic side. And one of the things that was kind of percolating in my mind was there really wasn't that assessment piece in the planning cycle.

I wasn't seeing how we were deciding if we were doing what we said we were going to do. I had a big idea for this project where I was going to recommend a structure for my Chancellor. We ended up pairing it down, because we thought it was important to understand how assessment was working in Ivy Tech Central Indiana. My question was "How do Ivy Tech Central Indiana Department Heads use assessment and evaluations to make decisions in their work?" I explored what others were doing (literature review, attended the 2020 Assessment Institute, and had conversations with Stephen Hundley and Susan Kahn). The bulk of my information came from interviews.

And so I ended up interviewing 74 department heads between October and January. So my participants, I divided them into two areas, academic and non-academic. Academic was really, do you have influence over what is happening in the classroom and assessment in the classroom? Or are you more support?

I had a lot of interest from the non-academic side. So you can see that I had 50 for people to choose from. And I ended up interviewing 48 of them. I only ended up not successfully scheduling an interview with one person. The academic side of the house was not as successful. Most of that came down to timing. I was still able to interview 26 of them.

There was a lot of different ways that I could have presented this information to my Chancellor and my provost. I decided to present this information through the [15 Elements of a Culture of Assessment](#) by Wendy Weiner. I did this one because I felt like it would help introduce to the college community this assessment language that I'm not quite sure we've adopted yet into. I think it was going to provide them with some actionable items that they can take forward. I think the key takeaway is that it's not just academic here. And this won't surprise many of you. It also involves administrative support and buy-in and support for sustainable plans, institutional effectiveness. This is really important for the full campus for me to see.

So I took those 15 elements and I took all of my transcripts and I started coding them based on where I was seeing these elements. I divided my findings into three buckets. The first bucket is where it suggests that we have a strong presence of a culture of assessment. And there were only two here that showed up at Ivy Tech Central, Indiana. It'll show you have a really strong work happening around student learning outcomes and co-curricular activities. In this probably makes the most sense. This is where our student life is really involved in and that's kind of the nature That's a lot of their training. And then also the academic side with the assessments.

The second bucket, were elements that suggested an emerging presence. Where I either saw some but not enough to suggest a strong presence. Or there was kind of competing where they're definitely not doing this element or I just didn't have enough data. So we definitely have some work to do around faculty buy-in and ownership, really developing practical and sustainable plans.

People didn't really mention the program reviews when they talked about assessment; it only came up nine times and all 74 of my interviews. We really have some work to do around there. And there was some connection between planning and budgeting, but not enough to suggest a strong presence.

[At this point, Rachel's Zoom connection froze]

SH: I think Rachel's providing a great framework and it sounds like what the sources of strength at Ivy Tech when she was talking about student learning outcomes and co-curricular learning. A lot of those are likewise sources of strength for IUPUI. The fact that there is such a central focus on student learning outcomes and really holistically supporting the learner through the co-curriculum as well. And it sounds like there are a lot of the work that they still have to do in terms of focusing on general education.

[Rachel joined the Zoom meeting again]

RK: I think the biggest takeaway though for my project—and maybe this is something for you all to think about—is what I got most out of my interviews was that people were ready to talk about their experiences. And this might have, but this might have been due to what was, what's happening. All of the things that are happening nationally, right? Maybe people just felt extra isolated, but they were extremely open with me. And these were, these were really an enjoyable part of this project for me, just to get to know my colleagues more and to let them know that somebody was listening to them.

These are my recommendations that I gave and I can review them really quickly. But the big three things that I took away from this project was they need to re-evaluate the model Institutional Effectiveness. I recommend establishing a campus Assessment Committee much like this one, and then definitely committing some time to further study. I recommended affirming and communicating assessment objectives. So there's a lot happening at the statewide level around assessment that doesn't get back to the campus. And that, as you can understand, is, is an issue for faculty and staff and then establishing new models and practices. So I gave them a couple of examples there, as well as recommendations for further study.

Thank you for letting me come and share this with you. I don't know if this is helpful at all, but I think if there is any takeaway, I would just remind you the importance of getting the voices from the people who are involved in assessment that might not necessarily be involved in completing your reports. And I'm happy to take any questions.

SH: If would love it if when the assessment committee is established, perhaps that group and PRAC could convene at least once a year for a large joint meeting to showcase collective ideas and strategies across all of our campuses and institutional contexts.

5. Announcements and adjournment (5 minutes)

Tom Hahn adjourned the meet at 2:57 PM

Future PRAC Meeting Dates:

- Thursday, May 13, 2021, 1:30 – 3:00 pm