

## Program Review and Assessment Committee

Thursday, January 14, 2021

1:30 – 3:00pm

### Meeting Minutes

[Link](#) to Video Recording of Meeting

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**Attendees:** Karen Alfrey, Marta Anton, Richard Bentley, Leslie Bozeman, Nicholas Brehl, Jerry Daday, Julie Davis, Joseph Defazio, Lynn Dombrowski, Paul Edwards, Anita Giddings, Steven Graunke, Dan Griffith, Tom Hahn, Michele Hansen, William Helling, Stephen Hundley, Susan Kahn, Rachel Kartz, Caleb J. Keith, Sara Lowe, Katharine Macy, Clif Marsiglio, Brendan Maxcy, Pamela Morris, Howard Mzumara, Sonia Ninon, Ann Obergfell, Tonja Padgett, Mike Poletika, Saptarshi Purkayastha, Elizabeth Wager, Marlene Walk, Scott Weeden, Jane Williams, David Zahl

1. Welcome. The December meeting was devoted to writing PRAC reports, so no minutes were taken.

Tom Hahn welcomed everyone and began the meeting at 1:31 pm.

2. Student Affairs Assessment – Robert Aaron, Executive Director of Student Affairs Assessment and Planning at Northwestern University.  
A copy of Dr. Aaron’s slide deck is attached.

Stephen Hundley provided a brief introduction of Dr. Rob Aaron.

Rob Aaron: Thanks everyone for having me. I worked at IUPUI from 2007-2014. When I left IUPUI, I went to Ohio State University. A few years later a position opened up at Northwestern University that was a hybrid between my work at IUPUI and the work at the Ohio State University. Prior to IUPUI, I worked at IUB for NSSE while working on my PhD. Prior to that I worked at Virginia Commonwealth University. My various roles have come together and informed my work in student affairs as a researcher.

I have a paper I co-authored with Katherine Busby that will be released as a NILOA Occasional Paper. It will be focused on trends in student affairs assessment.

I want to provide a bit of context about Student Affairs Assessment & Planning at Northwestern, as it informs some of the context of my presentation.

We do not have a set of institution-wide student learning outcomes, but we do have division-wide learning outcomes that help to unify the work of the division. We are working to create institution-wide learning outcomes. In our division of student affairs, we have staff members in various functional areas with varying levels of education, but our view is that multiple staff members are able to engage with the learning outcomes and collaborate with one another.

While student affairs does not own the co-curriculum, there are many opportunities to collaborate in student learning outside the classroom. Student affairs' leadership role may be in helping students in making connections of curricular and co-curricular learning. We can help them make connections, because that is the type of work we do. Because of the relationships and interactions that occur in student affairs, we are positioned to help them make connections, which leads to greater learning in their college experience.

Student affairs is experiencing a great deal of growth within the student affairs assessment profession. It is becoming a specialized field of its own. One incredible resource—in addition to those provided by [ACPA](#) and [NASPA](#)—is the Student Affairs Assessment Leaders.

Challenges in assessing co-curricular learning include a dearth of direct measures. There are a number of opportunities to perform assessment using indirect measures, but fewer opportunities for direct measures.

Emerging technologies allow for the merging of datasets. There is a creation of Student Engagement Database at Northwestern. We are certainly not the only ones to do this, but we are collecting student activity participation and engagement by swiping student cards. We then map activities in the database to learning outcomes and use identifiers to investigate the impact—maybe correlation—between participation and outcomes, especially when using data from national studies in which we participate. The latest hire in our office was a data scientist to assist in linking together the various databases that exist across the division of student affairs. We are using Tableau as an opportunity to create interactive visualizations, as opposed to writing lengthy reports.

We are bound by current events taking place, including the pandemic or other campus emergencies, along with the ongoing calls for racial justice. We are using surveys to gain insight into students for the use of campus planning. As assessment professionals, we need to be among the first to call attention to these issues and share information with our colleagues.

Future opportunities include continuing with academic-student affairs partnerships; disaggregating data, both physically and conceptually; and, aligning participation/satisfaction data, student information, and student learning.

Susan Kahn: What surprised you most when you arrived at The Ohio State and Northwestern about the ways in which they were doing assessment in student affairs? Can you also share differences in public and private institutions?

RA: At OSU, logistics were one of the biggest issues because of the size and scale. Everything at Ohio State is ginormous. And the focus of the shop at Ohio State because of the resources that it had: eight full-time staff plus grad students. That shop was charged with doing all of the work and had a very different administrative structure. All of the assessment in a very large division was only done by the Center for the Study of Student Life. It was not really a shared activity. At Northwestern, there are times it feels similar to an institution like IUPUI, but other times we behave in ways similar to a small private where everyone knows each other. So for instance, we're working on defining some of our basic data definitions here. Such as, do we all define first-generation college

student in the same way? We have differences on that. Northwestern is the first school at which I have worked where we do not study retention of first-year students.

There are there were times at IUPUI, I would recall that we would have an expectation of sharing certain data sources more widely, but we could be strategic about it, about what we would share. We often would share what things we were working on as a university—maybe where we're trying to improve our retention rates and these kinds of things. We might not share where a specific department is trying to improve the work that they do. At Northwestern, we do quite a bit of data sharing. But it is not necessarily consistent as we might, as you might expect at a private institution, because that expectation isn't quite the same. But I do think we find that when we, when we are sharing the data in a strategic way, the way that we would at IUPUI. Why, for example, we're getting a lot farther. We're having better communication.

Those are some unedited general thoughts.

Rick Bentley: So the idea of the difference between Northwestern students and Ohio, State and I'm thinking JD Vance's book, [Hillbilly Elegy](#) in 2016 it because I don't know what he represented in terms of the Appalachian population at Ohio State, but were you there at all when that book came out or is that one of the groups that he is a prominent group?

RA: I wouldn't say a prominent group necessarily, but it's certainly something that we had discussed there from time to time. It was right around the time that I was transitioning to Northwestern. It was it did come out while I was there, but I left in that year. There had been some discussions about different populations from around the region, around the different areas of Ohio. It's, it was very interesting living in Columbus knowing that unlike Indianapolis, like you could almost guarantee that—I don't mean to oversimplify, but I'm going to for the purpose of this discussion—so many people in Columbus were Ohio State fans. We would talk about some of the regional kinds of different regional patterns. We did not get into Appalachian students specifically during the work that I had done there, but one of the things that I find so, so very different is that it's there was such a state drive toward sending your kids Ohio State, whereas like living in Indianapolis for several years, you would see people going to Butler, to Purdue, or to IU or IUPUI. Ohio State, I don't know. It was just something about the bad flagship energy there. That was a little bit different.

Caleb Keith: I am going to jump in for a moment with a shameless plug on behalf of Stephen and myself. As Rob described the themes in student affairs assessment broadly, Stephen and I recognized they resonate with themes that we uncovered during the inaugural 12 episodes of the [Leading Improvements in Higher Education Podcast](#), about which we wrote a [NILOA Viewpoint](#) which came out in December of 2020. We just wanted to call folks' attention to that, because I think there are some parallels between some of national trends in higher education and assessment work, along with those that Rob just described more specifically for student affairs. And we encourage folks to read that because I think that the parallels are so evident, folks may find them interesting. [https://assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu/overview/podcast-files/viewpoint\\_podcast\\_12-2020.pdf](https://assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu/overview/podcast-files/viewpoint_podcast_12-2020.pdf)

Sonia Ninon: What advice would you give to help break silos between academic and student affairs?

RA: We have a lot more overlap that we often realize. Student affairs staff are not in the classroom and we can emphasize that student affairs professionals are able to support faculty and students with their knowledge of the student experience. Faculty can help student affairs due to their knowledge of what is taking place in the classroom and the curriculum. We are all here to make sure our students are doing alright and that students succeed. Let's support each other in that work.

Thanks for having me and best wishes to you all!

3. Excellence in Assessment (EIA): Overview, Process, and PRAC Engagement – Stephen Hundley and Susan Kahn  
Find out more about EIA: <https://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/eia/>

Stephen Hundley: I think what Rob said was terrific, as it was a common weave through many of the topics of the day. As you know, IUPUI has a longstanding tradition and culture—certainly as a result of Trudy's leadership for so many years—of infusing assessment and improvement work in all segments of our campus life. It is great to hear Rob speak so positively about his experience and we appreciate our own infrastructure and culture at the institution, especially supported by colleagues in IRDS, student affairs, and schools and units across the institution.

Folks may be aware of NILOA's designation for Excellence in Assessment. In 2016, three national organizations, the voluntary system of accountability, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, otherwise known as AAC&U, and NILOA, we talk a lot about them, the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment created a designation institutions could apply for talking about how they represent their assessment work, how they have the infrastructure, the culture, the systems and processes to support assessment and improvement at a campus level, and really have it pervasive throughout the campus. Campuses could apply for this voluntary designation, this external recognition of their work. They could apply at one of two levels: Excellence in Assessment and Sustained Excellence in Assessment.

The principal differentiator is that it was the length of time that the program had been underway. And at the cut-off point, I think, the line of demarcation to get to the sustained level you had to have the work under taken more than five years and of course, IUPUI certainly fit that category.

We were selected through those Susan's leadership and the support of Trudy, Michelle, and others that were involved in helping to produce this application. I was involved as well that the working on the team and we were able to be recognized with the inaugural class of EIA designees as a Sustained Excellence in Assessment designation winner. Now five years later, like all good things, there is a time to reaffirm that excellence. And so we are now going to be reaffirming that this year through the application for the Excellence in Assessment designation at the sustained level.

So, Susan is taking the lead on pulling together a group that includes Karen Alfrey, Tom Hahn, Caleb Keith, Sony Ninon, and myself to help us get our application

package ready for this year's submission. So let me ask Susan to talk about the importance of this work and how we're going to be using PRAC to help us tell our story.

Susan Kahn:

Let me say just a little bit more about what the Excellence in assessment designation is. It was created in 2015. That is the first set of applications were invited in 2015. And the first set of designators were named in 2016. As Stephen said, there are two tiers of recognition. They're not separate applications; it's the same application, but depending on the kinds of evidence and the persuasiveness of the evidence that the institution provides, institutions are recognized either as having regular Excellence in Assessment or Sustained Excellence in Assessment. So we were one of four institutions who received the Sustained Excellence in Assessment designation that inaugural year. And it was extremely convenient that the following year we had to make our interim report to the Higher Learning Commission on our compliance with the criteria for accreditation. And it was great to be able to include that designation as evidence of recognition of the kinds of work that we've done an assessment over many years at IUPUI.

To apply for the designation, you put together a packet and I've given you two of the main pieces of the packet. There is a letter from Nasser, which serves a double-purpose, both as an introduction and an assertion that assessment takes place at a university level. So you got Nasser's letter, the application narrative and the application packet from the sponsors for the designation. There's one other piece that I think was very important to making our case. I didn't include it because it's rather lengthy, but it deals with the offices and organizations around the campus that are engaged in outcomes assessment.

The designation relies on a set of eight criteria. Those criteria are listed on page three of the application packet. They want to see university wide engagement. They want to see diversity. They want to see student affairs people they want to see academic affairs, people, they want to see academic units. They want to see units that oversee co-curricular activities. And they want to see that all of those organizations are working toward common outcomes. They're particularly interested in how those outcomes interweave among the various levels of the institution. That is the institution wide level; the large units of the institutions like schools and administrative offices to the program level. And that's co-curricular programs as well as academic programs to the level of individual courses and even assignments. So they are looking for, for what they call cascade, the cascading down of university outcomes.

Assessment plans: they want to see a unified plan. They want to see what kinds of evidence of student learning you gather, and what kinds of evidence you use to reach conclusions about—strengths and weaknesses in student learning, use of student learning outcomes, results, and growth and improvement plans. So I will say that one thing that surprises me a little bit about full guidelines this year is that they're virtually identical to the guidelines in 2016. They've extended the length for imitation by 500 words on the application narrative. When we did it in 2016, we were limited to 2,500 words. And that's another thing I should mention: You have to make your case in a very, very concise and pithy way for this designation. They have very strict, and I think

rather short, restrictions on how long you can go on about what you're doing in all these areas.

We've been in discussions with NILOA. We are going to try to connect with the other institutions who were also designated as having Sustained Excellence in Assessment. And those discussions, I guess our ongoing work, we're going to try to get together with people at some of those other three institutions that were named for Sustained Excellence in Assessment. But it is challenging for us because we are such a complex institution and have very few consistent practices across the institution. It is also challenging because so much has happened in the world and at IUPUI since 2016.

We have a new general education program and we have redefined our learning outcomes for undergraduates at IUPUI. Those learning outcomes bring together our in-class and out-of-class learning outcomes. Now we have one set of overarching learning outcomes, which I, I think is a real strength and a, and a positive development. We have new Institute for engaged learning. We have taxonomies for High Impact Practices that can be used to help ensure fidelity to executing those practices in the most effective possible ways. We have the Record for a co-curricular learning. I'm sure that I'm leaving something out. Equity—I mean, there's been this whole Equity Movement in the assessment world anymore. Higher education world that a new emphasis on equity and diversity and a kind of reconceptualization of what we mean by that.

So that is the bulk of what I was going to say. I'm hoping that maybe next month after you've had some time to look through some of these materials, that we might be able to have a more substantive discussion about how IUPUI might gird itself and pull all of our information together in this very tight three-thousand-word narrative supplemented by the Chancellor's introduction and the list of groups and offices involved in assessment.

SH: We will continue to have this as an agenda item for future PRAC meetings this Spring. Additionally, this work will assist us as we prepare for our comprehensive visit with the Higher Learning Commission.

4. Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities for HIPS and the Profiles – Jerry Daday, Executive Associate Dean, IUPUI Institute for Engaged Learning

Jerry Daday: We are putting together a few professional development series for February and March. One is a professional development series put together by HIPS in the States all four Fridays in February (Feb 5, 12, 19, and 26) from 1-2PM. The goal is to put together proposal submissions for the upcoming Assessment Institute, focused on burning questions from previous conferences.

Burning Questions in High-Impact Practices, Registration: <https://go.iu.edu/3z0D>

Another series of four Fridays in March and April (March 12, 19, & 26 and April 2). We'll do some peer review and "TILting" to assist folks with aligning assignments and activities to the Profiles. We are also seeking facilitators to assist with these (contact Jerry at [jdaday@iupui.edu](mailto:jdaday@iupui.edu)).

Profiles, Interest form: <https://go.iu.edu/3z0G>

5. 2021 Assessment Institute – Stephen Hundley

SH: I'll be short. I'll call attention to the emails we sent today. We're trying to send one out monthly. We're also trying to have new content and there so there's a new podcast episode unreleased each month. The podcast this month is a little different. It takes a little different pathway. It's really advice from three executive search consultants. How to get a leadership job in higher education. So it's not quite, you know, assessment and improvement as we might describe it, but it gives us a little bit of an interesting topic at the beginning of the year to think about if people want to learn about the leadership executive leadership search process. It's an interesting one.

I will, of course, invite you to the [Assessment Institute website](#) to submit a proposal by March 1<sup>st</sup>, as that's our priority deadline. We would love to have as many people from PRAC partnering together or partnering with colleagues in your respective units to present. This year's conference will be virtual in October, and we're continuing the tradition of what we did last year. Registration is again complimentary to assist the higher education community as we continue to navigate resource constraints, travel restrictions, etc. I encourage you, as PRAC members, to share the Institute with your colleagues. This is a conference where you can't have a national exposure, really an international exposure. Last year we had more than 10 thousand attendees and more than 40 countries that registered. Not all of them showed up at the EPA day, but we certainly had a lot of colleagues that were your work would be showcased to a lot of colleagues that would perhaps normally not have the attention at our normal in-person event where we have more capacity constraints.

With that, I will also make an appeal. We have a number of colleagues, several of whom are with us today, who provide leadership as track leaders. We do have a couple of openings. If you're interested in serving as a track leader or joining the team, you wouldn't be all by yourself, you would have other folks there. We have one in the STEM education area, in particular. If you are interested in serving as a track leader, please contact me and let me know. Please visit <https://assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu/>

So, we'll look forward to seeing you in October at the Assessment Institute.

6. PRAC Report Consultations – Susan Kahn and Karen Alfrey

2 Breakout rooms were created for those who wished to confer with Susan and/or Karen. Participants were able to engage in consultations and ask questions in those rooms.

7. Announcements

Leslie Bozeman: So just wanted everyone to know that the Office of International Affairs is using a newly derived definition of Global Learning. We've had the dimensions of global learning for almost a year now, but we have actually just recently come together as an office to put together a definition of global learning that definitely is reflected in the dimensions of global learning. I wanted to share it with you all. I'll put it in the chat along with the link for the dimensions of global learning. And just a reminder that you can do using this information in your assessment efforts

<https://international.iupui.edu/global-learning/curriculum-internationalization/global-dimensions.html>

Tom Hahn adjourned the formal meeting at 2:50 p.m. Breakout groups continued to meet.

Future PRAC Meeting Dates:

- Thursday, February 18, 2021, 1:30 – 3:00 pm
- Thursday, March 11, 2021, 1:30 – 3:00 pm
- Thursday, April 8, 2021, 1:30 – 3:00 pm
- Thursday, May 13, 2021, 1:30 – 3:00 pm