

Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee Minutes #10  
Wednesday, February 13, 2013  
Taylor Room, Campus Center

Present: Peter Hansen (Chair), Art Heinricher (Dean of Undergraduate Studies), Chrysanthe Demetry (Morgan Teaching & Learning Center), Satya Shivkumar (ME)

Chair Peter Hansen called the meeting to order at 10:05am.

1. Acceptance of the Minutes for Meeting #9

Draft minutes of the meeting on 2/6/2013 were discussed and deferred until the next meeting.

2. Student Report on IQP Learning

The committee discussed a report prepared by Kent Rissmiller, Associate Dean of the IGSD, entitled "IQP Assessment Based on Students' Advising Reports" (8/18/2012). The report presents and analyzes data collected from about 3700 students who responded to the Student Report on IQP Learning and Advising upon completion of their IQP between December 2007 and May 2012. The participation rate has been quite high; only about 1% of students in that time period "completed" the evaluation by entering little or no information. Students are prompted to complete the on-line questionnaire when they electronically submit their final IQP reports, which is before their project grade is submitted. Advisors can only access the data after grades are recorded.

One set of questions asks students to rate their progress on IQP learning objectives on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent), with 3 described as "average." Other sets of questions pertain to advisor performance, issues specific to off-campus project centers, and "other project dimensions" including intellectual challenge, overall value as an educational experience, level of effort, and grade expectation. Because of its charge, UOAC focused just on data related to learning outcomes and "other project dimensions."

Students assess their learning from the IQP quite positively, with nearly 93% rating their overall learning either a 4 or 5. They also assigned high levels of value to the IQP as an educational experience, with 89% providing a rating of 4 or 5. Students report particularly strong progress on "learning how to set and meet goals for research and projects," "learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas and information," and "acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team." Students' self-reported progress on communication skills (i.e., oral expression and written expression) was lower than other learning outcomes, but mean ratings were still greater than 4.

Students completing projects off-campus rated their learning higher with regard to every learning outcome than those students completing projects on-campus, which is generally consistent with results of the most recent peer review of IQP reports. The difference in 6 of 7 outcomes was significant at a p-level of 0.05 and was particularly acute for "developing skill in expressing oneself orally," with mean self-ratings of 4.39 and 3.88 by off-campus and on-campus project students, respectively. The committee discussed how off-campus project teams give numerous presentations during ID2050 and once on-site. On-campus IQP students could be supported and expected to give a presentation in each term of their project, perhaps in thematic groupings around campus.

UOAC members revisited the numerous reasons for stronger learning outcomes, on average, in off-campus projects given that they typically earn 1.5 times the academic credit (due to the required ID2050/PQP preparation experience), receive support from sponsors, get more feedback and support from advisors, and occur within a “learning community.” Efforts to create on-campus IQP “learning communities” or “centers” are underway, and IGSD and UOAC should track whether they tend to result in stronger learning outcomes. Some concern was expressed about a possibly widespread assumption that *all* on-campus IQPs are not very good-- fearing that it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy in campus culture.

UOAC noted that self-reported learning by those in one-student on-campus projects was generally comparable to the learning reported by students in team projects completed on campus.

The committee briefly discussed how frequently this type of analysis of Student IQP Report data should be completed. Faculty review of IQP reports are done on a rotating 3-year schedule, so the IGSD and the Provost’s Office could discuss a similar schedule for analysis of student evaluation data. UOAC will be able to query the online database more frequently for any Student IQP Report questions that it decides to integrate into the Assessment Plan for Institutional Learning Outcomes (“the Matrix”).

Respectfully submitted,  
Chrys Demetry, Secretary pro-tem