

Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee

Minutes #2

Thursday, November 17th, 2011, 2-3 p.m. Gordon Library Conference Room

Present: Lance Schachterle (Chair), Tanja Dominko (Secretary), Dean Art Heinricher, Peter Hansen, Michael Egan (SGA), Jianyu Liang

Chair L. Schachterle called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

1. Acceptance of the Minutes of the meeting #1 on 11/3/2011

Minutes from the meeting #1 were amended and accepted by a unanimous vote.

2. Preparations for the NEASC visit (Heinricher).

The Gordon Conference Room will serve as the primary meeting space for both WPI's Self Study team and the NEASC visiting committee in the spring 2012. Dean Heinricher will serve as a liaison to the visiting committee and presented a working list of customary documents that will be prepared for review. The list will continue to be updated with additional relevant documents that may be informative. Hard copies of all the documents will be assembled, stored, and made available for review by the visiting committee. In addition, all the members of the committee will have access to digital versions of the same documents via WPI's web site. The majority of documents are available in a digital format; the remainder will be scanned and made available online as well. Temporary WPI accounts will be assigned to the visiting committee members for this purpose.

The minutes of all relevant WPI committees' meetings will also be available online and will be checked for completeness. The UOAC Committee felt that, if needed, the minutes of Trustee's meetings should be requested by the NEASC visiting committee directly from the President Berkey's office.

Dean Heinricher and Chair Schachterle will be meeting with the Chair of the NEASC visiting Committee Tony Collins on November 29th, 2011 to in preparation for the spring visit. Preliminary schedule of the visit will be drafted at this time.

3. Review of the Self Study (Heinricher)

The committee continued the discussion of the self study focusing on the Standard Four: Academic Programs. Suggestions were made by several committee members in order to improve the self study report, maintain accuracy and provide clarity. The Assessment web site

will be updated with previous self studies prepared for regional and ABET accreditations along with conclusion statements from accountability agencies, where appropriate.

4. Continued discussion of the latest EBI report (Heinricher and Schachterle)

Dean Heinricher presented an update to the WPI's Assessment plan that now includes 2006 and 2009 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) survey results for the time spent preparing for class (Question 9a). This was discussed in the context of the new federal definition of a credit hour which all accredited institutions have to comply with: 1 credit represents 1 hour class per week plus 2 hours of outside-class work per week for 14 weeks (42 hours). So a 3 credit course should require, on average, about 9 hours per week or 126 hours for a semester.

National trends in time spent on course/school work, as reported by NSSE, indicate that the majority of students in higher education spend far less than the federal expectation. For example, a student carrying a standard 15 credit course load should spend 30 hours per week in work outside of class (45 hours total), but an estimate for the average time spent (from seniors responding to NSSE 2009) is about 13 hours per week outside of class. The average for WPI students (again seniors from NSSE 2009) is more than 19 hours per week, but still short of the federal definition.

WPI's expectation for an undergraduate course is set at 15-17 hour per week per course (including class or lab hours). Survey results (Question 26) from the WPI Student Course Reports indicate that students do not meet this expectation. For example, an estimate for the average time spent on a 1/3 unit class was just over 11 hours per week last fall. It is not clear if students interpret this question as time spent outside of class or including both time spent in and out of class.

5. The next meeting will be held on December 1st, 2011 at 2 pm in the Chairman room in the Campus Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanja Dominko, Secretary

Biology and Biotechnology Department