

Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee

Minutes #3

Thursday, December 1, 2011, 2-3 p.m. Chairman's Room, Campus Center

Present: Lance Schachterle (Chair), Chrys Demetry, Dean Art Heinricher, Peter Hansen, Michael Egan (SGA)

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

1. Discussion of the Minutes of the meeting #2 on 11/17/2011

Dean Heinricher needs to add some data to the draft as distributed. The final draft will be circulated electronically for approval.

2. Continued discussion of metrics of students' time on task.

Both the NSSE survey and the WPI Student Course Reports provide opportunities for students to estimate how many hours they spend working on each course out of class (Question 26). However, both surveys ask the relevant question differently, and it's not clear whether students do or do not count time spent in class or labs when responding. Dean Heinricher offered to check on the questions and discuss the advantages at CAP of changing the WPI form to be uniform with the NSSE, or at least to make clear whether hours spent in class, conferences, and labs should go into the student responses.

The committee discussed other possible metrics of student learning outcomes in the current Student Course Reports. The consensus was that this document was designed to capture information primarily about student opinions on how effectively the class was run, and less on subjective views of how much they learned. It was noted that our "WPI Outcomes Assessment Matrix" does not call for data from the Student Course Reports.

Dean Heinricher mentioned data he had assembled on time on task students reported by department and program, and also by class format, especially two two-hour classes per week vs. four one-hour classes. Generally students reported fewer study hours outside of class in the former format.

The committee revised the question of paper vs. digital capturing of data for the Student Course Reports. Some students have requested a digital format to reduce environmental costs, and summarizing the data would be much easier than with the present mechanical scanning. Concerns remain, however, that statistically-valuable participation rates might drop if the forms are not administered during class.

3. Meeting with head of NEASC visiting team.

Dean Heinricher summarized Dr. Tony Collins's visit of 29 November to WPI. Dr. Collins will chair the NEASC self-study visiting team in March 2012. Most of the discussion involved logistics and meetings for the March meeting; no new learning outcomes data were requested.

4. Next UOAC Meeting will be scheduled in C term, 2012.

Because there was no call for new data or analyses from UOAC for the NEASC visit, the next UOAC meeting will not be scheduled until 2012.

5. Replacement of SGA member on the committee.

The committee thanked Mr. Michael Egan, '12, for his excellent contributions to UOAC during his year of service as the SGA member on the committee. We appreciated his helpful insights into many questions we discussed by providing the student opinion and point of view. We wish him well in his job search and career.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lance Schachterle, secretary pro tem

Humanities and Arts