

UOAC Minutes 2/28/2011

The Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee held its eleventh meeting of the year at 11:00 am on Monday, February 28, 2011 in the Morgan Room of the Campus Center.

Present: Peter Christopher, Peter Hansen, Art Heinricher, Lance Schachterle

1. The committee approved the minutes of the meeting of February 21, 2011.
2. The committee discussed any follow-up to the Food For Thought session on “how are WPI students learning professional ethics.” The presentations by Lance Schachterle (HUA), Steve Bitar (ECE), Ted Clancy (ECE), David DiBiasio (CHE), and Amy Zeng (Business) provided examples of embedding ethics into disciplinary courses and MQPs. The handouts and slides from this session will be posted on the Morgan Center website. The discussion that followed these presentations also highlighted the importance of the campus academic honesty policies as a model for a professional code of ethics while students are at WPI. The committee discussed prior efforts to propose an honor code at WPI.
3. The committee discussed the “Comparison of WPI Student Satisfaction Survey Results, 2006, 2008, and 2011.” This commercial survey from Noel-Levitz is commissioned by the Division of Student Affairs. Most of the questions do not deal with academic issues. The results have been discussed by the Trustees and by Department Heads. One area of concern is satisfaction with academic advising. The raw scores reported on questions related to interaction with “my academic advisor” have gone down from 2006 to 2011. In the absence of comparative data, it is difficult to discern the level of significance attached to this change in raw scores. The committee noted that the decline in student satisfaction with interactions with their academic advisor has taken place over the same period that the number of students enrolled at WPI has increased.

There are many areas of the survey in which WPI does very well. Among the questions with the highest raw scores in 2011: I am able to experience intellectual growth here; There is a commitment to academic excellence on this campus; The institution has a good reputation within the community; Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field. The Noel-Levitz survey is widely used at other institutions and it might be possible to benchmark against other four-year, private institutions. At present, we do not have such comparative data for this survey. Art Heinricher is seeking this, and he will attempt to disaggregate responses by major and by class year.

4. The committee will post its updated documents concerning the results of the NSSE survey and the EBI survey to the WPI Outcomes Assessment website: www.wpi.edu/Academics/Outcomes/

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Hansen, Secretary