

DRAFT: Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee Annual Report 2016-17

The Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee (UOAC) met nineteen times in academic year 2016-17. Its membership was: L. Mathews (co-chair), J. deWinter (co-chair; secretary), H. Ault, D. Olinger, C. Demetry, A. Heinricher, L. Desjardins, D. Samson (after October 2016), A. Donta-Venman (non-voting guest)

1. The committee was informed on the university's 2016 Interim Report to NEASC. ~~In its 2012 report to NEASC, However,~~ WPI's 2012 NEASC report contains the most explicit statement on education outcome evaluation goals and methods, under Standard Four, Academic Programs.

Global Learning and Great Problems: Part of WPI's mission is to help students gain a mature understanding of themselves and, most important, to form a deep appreciation of the interrelationships among basic knowledge, technological advance, and human need. In a world that is growing ever smaller and more connected, the ability to place this mission in a global context is crucial.

[WPI's Undergraduate Learning Outcomes] were developed, and adopted, along with an outcomes assessment plan that included a "matrix" defining criteria, *data sources*, an *evaluator*, and a *schedule* for detailed assessment of each learning outcome. With the assessment plan, the faculty approved the creation of the Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee (UOAC) as a standing committee . . . The assessment matrix includes a total of 46 criteria associated with the 10 Undergraduate Learning Outcomes and each criterion has an associated data source. Student projects, especially the final written reports, are reviewed regularly by the faculty and these reviews provide assessment data for six of the 10 outcomes. Faculty members who advise projects are also surveyed regularly to obtain their assessment of student growth in the appropriate learning outcomes (which cannot be assessed with only the final report) and their achievement of the outcomes. Student responses on national surveys (including the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), with comparison to an appropriate group of peer institutions, are reviewed regularly by UOAC. The results are reported to the faculty Committee on Academic Policy, the Department Heads, and the full faculty.

[In addition to outcomes for the IQP, MQP and ~~Humanites~~Humanities Requirement,] a list of learning outcomes has been developed for each major. These are the frameworks used by departments and programs in reviewing their curricula and the distribution requirements. The assessment plan usually maps key components of the undergraduate program back to the department's learning objectives.

NEASC's letter to the institution in response to the 2017 report states, "The Commission also commends Worcester Polytechnic Institute for its comprehensive reflective essay that articulates the measures it uses to evaluate student success, including: retention and graduation rates; career placement; student learning outcomes; and alumni perceptions of the impact of the educational program." (Letter, David Quigley, NEASC, to Laurie Leshin, WPI, January 12, 2017) In light of NEASC's continued acceptance of and satisfaction with the institution's student

evaluation efforts, UOAC deliberated on how it should best continue to fulfill its mission. (See Item 4 below.)

2. Heinricher shared with UOAC the ongoing work of identifying gaps and inconsistencies in project evaluations and surveys. WPI's new Office of Institutional Research Donta-Venman's office will be able to make these more uniform in format across departments and programs. Samson relayed to HUA the desirability ~~to finding a different~~of developing an evaluative mechanism for the final HUA Inquiry Seminar/Practicum ~~that is different from the from the standard - course evaluation-student course report survey and better reflects the goals and structures of the HUA requirement.~~
3. Worked through CAP/COG to make the Director of Institutional Research, currently A. Donta-Venman, a voting member of UOAC. She will re-join UOAC as a voting member in 2017-18.
4. UOAC gave over several meetings to issues of defining and assessing for global competence as defined by the university, with particular attention to WPI Undergraduate Learning Outcome #8, "Graduates of WPI will be aware of how their decisions affect and are affected by other individuals separated by time, space, and culture," and the Strategic Plan's goal, stressed by President Leshin, of "global competency for all." To address issues raised here, UOAC created the Global and Multicultural Competency Learning Outcomes Taskforce (GMCOT) to take the lead in revising WPI's standards for undergraduate global/intercultural competency. It was charged to "develop a global and multicultural competency undergraduate learning outcome for consideration for adoption by the Faculty of WPI . . . Any new or modified learning outcome(s) should be both (1) consistent with the academic community's understanding of the concepts of global and multicultural competency, and (2) assessable." The outcome presented by the task force should be applicable to all students regardless of their participation in a global project center or not, and obtainable by more than one means. UOAC recruited membership for and charged this taskforce to prepare a report during summer 2017 and report to the faculty by the end of A term 2017.
5. UOAC discussed ways in which it might work with the Department of Humanities and Arts toward better identifying and clarifying the outcomes of the WPI Humanities and Arts Requirement, and make the department's role and accomplishments more visible in the university community.

Respectfully submitted,

David Samson