

The Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee, a subcommittee of CAP, met 5 times in 2011-12. Members were Lance Schachterle, Chair, Tanja Dominko (secretary), Peter Hansen, Jianyu Liang, Art Heinricher, Chrys Demetry (project center assignment C 12), and students Michael Egan (fall) and Nancy Bezies (winter and spring).

As in the previous academic year, UOAC concentrated on working with Dean of Undergraduate Studies Heinricher in preparing assessment data from several studies for the NEASC visit, which was moved from fall 2011 to spring 2012. Information from these sources was used to update the faculty-approved "UOAC Assessment Plan for Institutional Learning Outcomes," which may be used as a source of data for the new NEASC forms on learning outcomes data.

UOAC's charge is to examine these learning outcomes data to determine, usually by comparisons with student responses from similar programs, if WPI students are reporting learning outcomes at a level significantly below peer groups. When such discrepancies appeared, UOAC discussed if the deltas were large enough for UOAC to suggest to CAP any changes in the WPI curriculum. As in the previous year, no data concerning student outcomes appeared to signal any problems requiring faculty action.

Principal sources of outcomes data and the UOAC discussion of them included the following.

*Educational Benchmarking Inc surveys. (EBI).* WPI administers the EBI survey to all graduating engineering majors. As in previous years, WPI students reported less exposure to societal issues than some peer groups, while their subjective opinions on their learning on technical subjects was generally higher than the peer groups

*The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).* WPI administered this survey several times annually when it began in 2000, and recently has done so in years divisible by three. NSSE is administered to second semester first- and fourth-year students in all majors, and we compare our data not only with all NSSE schools but with a peer group of engineering universities.

Review and discussion of all these data did raise some significant questions about student time on task in WPI courses. The accepted faculty expectation per 1/3 unit class is 15-17 hours of work per week, including time students spend in class, labs, conferences and the like. The data from both the two surveys and our own student course reports suggest students are putting in less time than we expect. This issue is of special significance both for the NEASC visit and for new Federal definitions of time on task expected for a 3 credit hour course (to which WPI equates 1/3 unit of undergraduate work).

After several meetings devoted to looking at time on task data from various sources, UOAC recommended to CAP that WPI alter question 26 in our student course report, to capture student self-reported data on time spent in all class activities (new 26a) and all out of class activities (26B). UOAC believes (as confirmed with some discussion with SGA) that the new questions will eliminate student uncertainty about the metrics of the current question, and also permit better comparisons with the surveys mentioned above. At the faculty meeting of 8 May, the faculty voted to implement our suggested changes.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee,

Lance Schachterle