

Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee Annual Report, 2012-2013

Committee: Peter Hansen (Chair), Art Heinricher (Provost's Office), Chrysanthe Demetry (Morgan Teaching & Learning Center), Tanja Dominko (CAP), Jianyu Liang, Satya Shivkumar, Neil Heffernan

The Undergraduate Outcomes Assessment Committee held 18 meetings during the 2012-2013 academic year.

The committee reviewed the report of the accreditation committee of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), WPI's response, and the NEASC Final Report on Reaccreditation. The NEASC Final Report asked for updates in the five-year interim report on several issues, especially student time on task and systematically using student projects to assess student achievement and improve academic programming. Question 26 on the Student Course Report, new this academic year, should provide more reliable data regarding student time on task that can be evaluated in the future.

The committee devoted significant attention to assessment practices of the MQP, which the NEASC Final Report noted were inconsistent across departments in the review and analysis of results.

The committee solicited examples of MQP assessment forms from all departments and programs. The assessment forms for MQPs used by different departments and programs employ different questions, diverse rating scales and varied criteria. Some departments use assessment forms completed by students, by project advisors, and by faculty and/or external peers who serve in ad hoc summer committees.

The committee held a reception with faculty involved in coordinating assessment activities in departments and programs. The participants in this discussion supported an effort by UOAC to develop a set of institute-wide MQP review questions that could be used during summer peer reviews. Each summer peer review could use these common questions along with an unlimited number of additional questions specific to their department or program. The participants also supported a set of institute-wide questions about MQP learning outcomes that each MQP advisor would complete simultaneously with submission of the final project grade.

The committee drafted a set of institute-wide questions for summer peer review of MQP reports. These questions were distributed to those departments and programs planning to complete summer reviews in 2013 in advance of an ABET visit in 2014. These pilot questions used this summer can be evaluated in the future. The committee recommends that all departments or programs complete an MQP peer review every three years.

The committee developed draft questions for the advisor's assessment of MQP learning outcomes. MQP advisors could complete this survey online when the grade is submitted. These draft questions will be brought to CAP for further consideration next year.

The committee discussed the new Student Report on MQP Learning and Advising and identified undergraduate learning outcomes in the Assessment Plan that can be informed by this new data. Results from this MQP Student Report (SR) should be assessed in the summer of 2013 and every other year in the future.

The committee discussed how data from IQP assessment could be used more effectively in the institutional Assessment Plan. The Student Report on IQP Learning and Advising has been in use for five years. The committee discussed an analysis of this aggregate data prepared by the Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division. In the future, summary data from the IQP Student Report (SR) should be incorporated in the Assessment Plan more regularly. The committee recommends that WPI complete a more detailed assessment of the IQP SR in the summer of 2014 and every other year thereafter (in alternate years with assessment of the MQP SR). A summer peer review of IQP reports is scheduled for the summer of 2013. The committee recommends that in the future WPI complete such a summer peer reviews of IQP reports every three years.

The committee recommends the department of Humanities and Arts develop institute-wide learning outcomes for the Humanities and Arts Requirement. Learning outcomes for the Humanities would correspond to institutional MQP learning outcomes and IQP learning outcomes.

The committee discussed the results of a large-scale survey of alumni examining the impact of the WPI Plan on alumni who graduated between 1974 and 2011. In the future, we recommend that alumni surveys be administered in a more regular schedule.

The committee discussed the annual results of the 2012 Engineering Exit Survey developed by Educational Benchmark Incorporated (EBI) Survey.

The committee discussed changes in the questions asked by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). WPI students complete the NSSE survey every three years (next in 2015). The committee identified the new questions that correspond to our undergraduate learning outcomes.

The committee discussed revision of the UOAC Assessment Plan for Institutional Learning Outcomes. The format of the Assessment Plan was revised to incorporate data and analysis of results more effectively. The revision of this Assessment Plan should continue during the next academic year.

Respectfully yours,

Peter Hansen