

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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March 13, 2008

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Ms. Jean Avnet-Morse
Middle States Commission on Higher Education
3624 Market Street
Philadelphia PA 19104-2680

Dear Ms. Avnet-Morse:

The Evaluation Team representing the Middle States Commission on Higher Education conducted a visit to the IUP campus March 19-22, 2006. The team recommended that the commission confirm the accreditation of IUP, and it further directed that a progress letter related to standards Two, Seven, and Fourteen be submitted no later than March 19, 2008. The letter is to report on IUP's progress in mission redefinition and the development of a strategic plan, as well as the establishment of a university-wide assessment process.

The university has made substantial progress toward the establishment and implementation of a university strategic plan and a comprehensive assessment system. The development of a new strategic plan provided the opportunity to reexamine and revise the mission statement and the core values of the institution. This was accomplished along with the development of a comprehensive university plan that includes the treatment of university and program learning goals. The Academic Excellence section of the strategic plan contains references to the new Liberal Studies curriculum and the alignment of efforts to accomplish goals through assessment of student learning outcomes.

Currently, the vice presidents and deans are reviewing the university-wide Strategic Goals featured in the strategic plan and are identifying specific measures to be used in determining progress toward these goals. The President's Cabinet will review a progress report on a quarterly basis. A copy of the 2007-2012 University Strategic Plan, *Advancing a Legacy of Excellence*, is enclosed, along with a report of its development.

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Assessment is another key facet of the strategic plan and is referenced under the "Continuous Improvement" section of the report. Efforts are well underway to establish a university plan that provides for assessment of learning at all levels of the university, uses the results for continuous improvement of programs, and accomplishes goals in a centralized systematic way. A draft of the university assessment plan, a report on its development, and the approved "Expected Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes" are enclosed.

Should you have questions, feel free to contact Dr. David Werner, interim provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, or me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Atwater". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "T" and "A".

Tony Atwater, Ph.D.
President

T/ANK
Enclosures

Overview of Assessment at IUP

Development of student learning outcomes goals

Development of student learning outcomes goals has taken place simultaneously at multiple levels over the past three years. At the time of the site visit, student learning outcomes goals were in place for the teacher certification programs and some, though not all, of the other programs. In most departments, these goals were developed through a “bottom-up” process to establish faculty-owned goals and thereby encourage active use of assessment in curriculum and program revision. In some instances, a similar process took place at the college level, with the outcomes being college-level student learning goals. In addition, a faculty steering committee had developed a draft of student learning outcomes goals for Liberal Studies that had not yet been approved.

Since the Middle States site visit, IUP has made considerable progress in developing student learning outcomes goals and integrating those department goals with the respective college goals. Within the Academic Affairs Division, the departments and/or colleges have submitted assessment plans, and each department now has student learning outcomes goals in place. Student learning outcomes goals have been articulated for most colleges as well. Further, the Liberal Studies Steering Committee presented a draft of general education student learning outcomes goals via a website and in Senate for public review and debate. Since the Senate comprises faculty, administration, staff, and students, the breadth of the academic community participated in critiquing and shaping these outcomes. Revisions to the original draft were made based on faculty feedback, and the general education learning outcomes goals were approved by the Senate on May 2, 2006 (Appendix A.).

The discussion on the Senate floor confirmed that these outcomes are appropriate for institutional-level outcomes and consistent with the university mission and values. Further, since the process had included a public discussion, the goals were widely circulated and informed the continued development of goals and assessment plans at the college and department levels. Current work involves ensuring a comprehensive integration of goals at the various levels so that they are organic and appropriate for planning and assessment at that level as well as solidly consistent with the other levels.

In addition, the Student Affairs Division reevaluated its set of eighteen student learning outcomes goals, established in 1998, in light of the university’s adoption of the May 2, 2006, “Expected Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes,” and made appropriate revisions. After the Middle States Team’s visit, the Student Affairs Division developed a Student Learning Outcomes Committee (SLOC) charged with the responsibility to oversee the assessment efforts within that division.

Written university plan for assessment

As noted previously, student learning outcomes assessment has been developed at multiple levels in the university simultaneously over the past four years. As reported in the 2006 Self-Study, IUP recognized the need for a written plan that would ensure a systematic, coordinated, and collaborative institutional process. In November 2007, the Provost’s Office generated a written university plan for assessment (Appendix B) that describes and summarizes the status of assessment planning activities undertaken at each level and outlines next steps for each component of the plan. This plan is integrated with the University Strategic Plan to ensure alignment with strategic goals, to maintain a strong profile in the university community, and to ensure a consistent and systematic process.

Systematic process for assuring that assessment informs curriculum and instruction

IUP has taken a number of steps to monitor assessment processes, promote use of assessment findings, facilitate coordination, and ensure adequate institutional support.

The existing position of associate provost for Academic Affairs, currently responsible for program review, is being revised to include responsibility for oversight of student learning outcomes assessment. The integration of oversight for program review and student learning outcomes assessment will ensure that programs provide evidence of incorporating assessment findings into program revision.

To support monitoring across the system, the Provost's Office is creating a database summarizing the status of each department's utilization of assessment in four areas: i) the data collection measures used; ii) a description of when and where the measures are administered; iii) a brief description of findings obtained; and iv) the specific ways in which findings informed curriculum development.

In Fall 2007 the provost appointed a faculty member with evaluation and assessment experience to serve as provost's associate. This individual serves as faculty liaison for assessment and provides coordination of assessment activities.

Further coordination will be provided by a University Assessment Committee, to begin in Spring 2008 and to be charged with identifying challenges as they arise and providing input on these and other assessment-related issues to the Provost's Office. Through this committee, faculty input will be sought on topics such as development of the data management system, faculty training and development needs, and procedures necessary for ensuring consistency in operations across the campus.

In addition to the ongoing institutional supports noted above, IUP has engaged a consultant, Dr. Barbara Walvoord, to review and critique each department and college assessment plan and provide additional training and support to departments on an as-needed basis.

Finally, along with other sister institutions in the State System, IUP is participating in the Voluntary System of Accountability as articulated by AASCU and NASULGC. In anticipation of this, IUP has instituted use of a standardized assessment instrument, the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). Administration of the CLA will not only permit the Academic Division to draw directly on the findings of this measure but will also enable IUP to determine how the university fares in comparison with peer institutions, thereby strengthening the rigor of our assessment and its use for teaching and learning.

APPENDIX A

Indiana University of Pennsylvania *Expected Undergraduate Student Learning Outcomes*

Informed Learners understand nature and society through forms of inquiry fundamental to the sciences, the humanities, and the arts. Learners are informed by knowledge and ways of knowing that extend beyond core concepts enabling them to link theory and practice.

Informed Learners demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- the ways of modeling the natural, social, and technical worlds
- the aesthetic facets of human experience
- the past and present from historical, philosophical, and social perspectives
- the human imagination, expression, and traditions of many cultures
- the interrelationships within and across cultures and global communities
- the interrelationships within and across disciplines

Empowered Learners are critical thinkers who demonstrate intellectual agility and creativity and the ability to manage or create change. They are able to derive meaning from experience and observation. They communicate well in diverse settings and employ various strategies to solve problems. They are empowered through mastery of intellectual and practical skills.

Empowered Learners demonstrate:

- effective oral and written communication abilities
- ease with textual, visual and electronically mediated literacies
- problem solving skills using a variety of methods and tools
- information literacy skills including the ability to access, evaluate, interpret, and use information from a variety of sources
- the ability to transform information into knowledge and knowledge into judgment and action
- the ability to work within complex systems and with diverse groups
- critical thinking skills including analysis, application, and evaluation
- reflective thinking and the ability to synthesize information and ideas

Responsible Learners are engaged citizens of a diverse democratic society who have a deep sense of social responsibility and ethical judgment. They are responsible for their personal actions and civic values.

Responsible Learners demonstrate:

- intellectual honesty
- concern for social justice
- civic engagement
- an understanding of the ethical and behavioral consequences of decisions and actions on themselves, on society, and on the physical world
- an understanding of themselves and a respect for the identities, histories, and cultures of others

Approved by University Senate 5/2/06

APPENDIX B

IUP PLAN FOR STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT STATUS REPORT February 2008

Prepared by Dr. Susan Boser, Provost's Associate

This document presents the plan for and status of student learning outcomes assessment at IUP in three sections: university infrastructure for supporting assessment, Liberal Studies assessment, and program level assessment. Each of these areas is first described in a brief narrative.

UNIVERSITY INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Development of the university infrastructure to support assessment encompasses three areas at the present time: creation of a University Assessment Committee; development of a centralized data management system; and IRB policy on human subjects review of learning outcomes measures.

University Assessment Committee. Assessment of student learning outcomes in academic programs is a faculty activity. As such, the Provost's Office seeks, in partnership with the Senate and APSCUF, to create a faculty University Assessment Committee. The tentative charge is as follows:

- Review and offer perspective on matters related to coordinating and strengthening student learning outcomes assessment across the university. This includes input into the design of the data management system; assessment policy; the content for a university assessment website; faculty training and support needs; and priorities for use of assessment resources.
- Through a subcommittee, provide active support to the Liberal Studies Committee in designing and implementing Liberal Studies assessment.

This committee will be primarily constituted by faculty, as follows: Two faculty members from each college, with three of these also members of the Liberal Studies Committee and three others also APSCUF representatives; a faculty representative from each regional campus; a faculty member from the Library; two Student Affairs Division members (one faculty and the division assessment coordinator); the director of Institutional Assessment; and the associate provost. The intention is to convene the first meeting in the spring of 2008; the provost's associate will serve as interim chair until the new associate provost is in place.

Data Management System for Student Learning Outcomes. A centralized data management system is necessary for storing student learning outcomes data and generating reports. Initial meetings among the leadership of the Technologies Services Center and the provost's associate have taken place to review what currently exists and what might be needed. A very broad concept for the system has been outlined. Given that this will need to be flexible enough to meet needs for all non-NCATE student learning outcomes data, yet still be structurally defined around some common elements, faculty input into the design is important. The University Assessment Committee will thus be asked to provide input, with some consensus around common design elements obtained in April 2007.

IRB policy on human subject review of learning outcomes measures. As student learning outcomes assessment has increased over the last few years, questions have emerged over the role of the IRB in reviewing data collection and analysis activities. In September 2007, an ad hoc group consisting of the provost, the chair of the IRB, the vice-provost for research, the dean of the College of Education, and the provost's associate developed a policy that exempts data collection for internal student learning outcomes assessment for program evaluation from IRB review. The provost's associate and the IRB chair drafted language for this in October 2007. This policy has tentative agreement among all parties, though needs to be finalized and implemented.

LIBERAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT

Key elements of the Liberal Studies Assessment Plan include the student learning outcomes, the data collection plan, and the plans for data analysis and for providing feedback into curriculum development.

Student Learning Outcomes: Developed through the leadership of the Liberal Studies Revision Committee, and passed by Senate on May 2, 2006.

Proposed data collection plan: The proposed data collection plan calls for use of three types of measures, strategically administered, to assess the full range of student learning outcomes. These are:

- **Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA).** Under a pre-post, cross-sectional design, the CLA is administered by the Provost's Office to a sample of 100 first-year students in early fall and a sample of 100 graduating seniors in spring. Analysis is based on the gains reflected across the two samples and correlated to student SAT scores.
- **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).** Some specific indicators will be selected as indirect measures on the achievement of Student Learning Outcomes.
- **Assessment of Fall 2004 writing placement exams/portfolios and of papers from Spring 2008 LBST Senior Synthesis courses.** Two random samples of papers reflecting the work of the graduating seniors will be collected from among: 1) the entrance writing placement exams and/or the writing portfolios from Fall 2004, and 2) papers that will be prepared as a part of required Spring 2008 LBST Synthesis course assignments. A faculty committee will develop a common rubric based on IUP's Expected Student Learning Outcomes and will evaluate both sets of papers against this rubric, with an aim to determine gains made over the past four years.

Administration of the first two measures is already taking place. The third measure will be implemented in Spring 2008.

Proposed analysis and feedback plan: CLA and NSSE will be professionally scored. Evaluation of student papers will be scored by a faculty committee. Findings from the CLA, elements of NSSE and the writing samples will be disseminated to the Provost's Office and to the Liberal Studies Committee and faculty teaching LBST courses in order to inform curriculum development and revisions. The Provost's Office will track CLA findings over time for monitoring. The Liberal Studies Program Review will reflect how findings have informed curriculum development.

DEPARTMENT AND COLLEGE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

In order to advance student learning outcomes assessment at the program level to meet Middle States accreditation requirements, additional training and monitoring activities have been instituted, as follows:

Training and support:

- The Provost's Office contracted with Dr. Barbara Walvoord to provide additional training and individualized consultation to the departments.
- Dr. Walvoord and the provost's associate presented a workshop on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment at the Chairs' Retreat in October 2007. Dr. Walvoord visited IUP again in February 2008 for individual follow-up consultation with department, college, regional campus, and Student Affairs assessment committees.
- The Provost's Office is encouraging development of college assessment committees to support peer review of assessment activities and facilitate integration of department assessment plans with college assessment plans.

Monitoring:

- All academic departments were required to submit a current assessment plan in August 2007. These are currently being reviewed by Dr. Walvoord, who is providing a written report on each individual plan. These are forwarded to the provost's associate, who communicates with the departments and provides support for implementing the recommended revisions.
- The Provost's Office has a plan to create a database to monitor the status of each academic department's utilization of assessment across four areas: i) the data collection measures used, ii) administered in what ways and when, iii) a brief description of findings obtained, and iv) the ways in which findings are informing curriculum development.
- As part of the university's focus on departmental program reviews, the outcomes assessment components of the program reviews received close attention. In some cases, requests for revision were issued to the departments before being approved. A workshop on preparing Program Reviews was organized through the associate provost's office in October 2007 and addressed student learning outcomes assessment. In addition, the associate provost and the provost's associate are available for consultation with academic departments to facilitate incorporating recommendations.

Report on Strategic Planning at IUP

IUP has made significant strides in its development as the largest state-owned university in Pennsylvania and as a nationally recognized public doctoral university. As the university moves forward into the new millennium, IUP continues to advance a legacy of excellence. The 2007-2012 University Strategic Plan *Advancing a Legacy of Excellence* serves as a road map in achieving this outcome and in advancing IUP to the next level of institutional excellence and academic distinction.

The strategic planning process included an assessment and revision of the vision, mission, and core values of the university, as well as the development of key goals, strategies, and actions for each of the strategic areas. Each of the goals, strategies, and actions are tied to measurable outcomes as a means to assess the effectiveness of the strategic plan. The focus on planning and assessment fosters the integration of strategic areas. Tripp Umbach, a Pittsburgh consultant specializing in strategic planning, assisted with the development of the plan. The process was led by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and University Strategic Planning Committee. These committees included a cross section of university constituents. The process included a wide variety of opportunities for university and community member participation as well as the University Planning Council. The planning process in detail can be found at www.iup.edu/strategicplan. The strategic planning effort has helped to position IUP to meet new challenges as well as to capitalize on opportunities for success.

Driven by the vision and mission of the university and critical trends in academia, enrollment, resources, student needs, diversity, global opportunities, technology, career advancement, and economic development, the overarching university strategic goals are as follows:

- Academic Excellence
- Student Development and Success
- Civic Engagement
- Marketing and Promotion
- Enrollment Management
- Continuous Improvement
- Resource Development
- University Safety and Security

The Strategic Plan was formally presented at the August 2007 President's State of the University Address. Copies of the publication have been widely shared and distributed to faculty, staff, and university constituents. The Strategic Planning Steering Committee is currently developing measurable outcomes along with an annual review process and report. The plan as well as the measurable outcomes will be accessible through the Web as an interactive reporting tool. The relational database will allow the university to report on each goal, strategy, action, time-line, etc., by college, division, time-line, etc. This template also provides information related to resources, allowing the strategic plan to be linked to the annual budgeting process. The actions and outcomes can then be linked to annual manager performance evaluations.

Indiana University of Pennsylvania is committed to "Advancing a Legacy of Excellence." The next critical steps are the full implementation, assessment, and monitoring of the plan over the next five years.