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Assessment of Student Learning Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2013

Present: Ted Pappenfus (chair), Nancy Helsper, Stacey Aronson, Barbara Burke, Stephen Burks, Wendy Emo, Jana Koehler, Brooks Jessup, Emily Sunderman, and Jim Togeas. Absent: Andrew Sletten

Approval of minutes from March 28, 2013.

Nancy suggested a correction regarding the CIRP exam. The motion to approve the minutes was moved and seconded. The motion passed, with one abstention.

Next meeting scheduled for next Thursday (April 25)

Obtaining baseline data on incoming freshmen

In order to obtain baseline data on incoming freshmen (that St. Olaf approach): Ted constructed two surveys based on our GENED survey regarding the perception of the “importance” of the GENED requirements. In 2004-05 ASLC proposed something similar. He merged content from both the 2004-05 and our GENED Senior survey.

(1) The first survey is titled the Assessment of General Education (AGE) survey. He distributed it to the committee members for their approval. It contains sixteen (16) questions. On question #2, he changed credits to courses to facilitate student understanding.

Nancy noticed that he didn't include any of the questions regarding the importance of GENED requirements. He said that the omission was intentional. Nancy suggested that certain questions be included. Ted suggested that those more general questions go at the end once students took the first part of the survey. It was suggested that questions #5 and #8 be moved to the end.

Emily asked when this survey would be conducted. He suggested that it be administered during freshman orientation. Emily reminded the members that incoming freshmen attend a seminar during orientation about general education requirements and why they are important. The committee members discussed whether this exam should be administered during orientation or in the IC courses, even though transfer students might miss taking it. Jana suggested that it might be more effective to administer it during orientation. She suggested we find out who leads that orientation session on GENEDs. Ted suggested we move forward to implement this survey during the fall of 2013. Barbara thought that this was a good tool (with the two added questions at the end).

Steve suggested that we administer the survey prior to the orientation session to provide a baseline. Wendy suggested that this might help someone make his or her lecture about GENED requirements more effective (“Here’s the survey, now we’ll tell you why the GENEDs are important. We will ask you for your opinions when you graduate.”) It was suggested that we include this language on the survey.

(2) The second survey is titled the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) survey. Ted modeled the first page after St. Olaf's survey. Ted modeled the second page of the survey based on our specific SLOs. He added a preamble for incoming students and for graduating students. There are two (2) questions.

Barbara suggested that we might want to clarify if the questions refer to the students' year of life or high school education. The original sentences reads: "Some of these may be familiar to you as a result of your high school experiences, while others may be new." Are we referring to experiences both inside and outside of the classroom? The committee members discussed modifying the opening statement to make it more clear and inclusive.

Steve suggested deleting "as a result of your high school experiences" and replacing it with such questions as "How often ... did you work on developing each of the following intellectual and practical skills?" (incoming student)"

Nancy would like to see question #4 SLOS (located on page 2 on the survey)

Wendy suggested that we might want some demographic information. Jana suggested we do this for both surveys.

Wendy wondered why we asked for the demographic information. According to Barbara and Steve, we see the results. Certain demographics might have issues with certain issues. Barbara thinks it might correlate more closely to academic major choice. We should ask for academic majors SLOA or not. It changes. We are not asking for individual identifiers in the surveys

Students of color and non-traditional students do not graduate at the same rate, according to Nancy. For that reason, it might be important to have some demographic data on these surveys.

The committee members discussed SLOs #1 and #4 and how to incorporate them into survey. Steve suggested the development of a matrix to fill in.

Jana suggested renaming the surveys to create more uniformity in titles: Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (ASLO) / Assessment of General Education (AGE). She also asked if these would be administered on paper or electronically.

The committee members discussed whether or not to include SLOs from #1 and #4. Steve suggested that we keep the surveys simple. Nancy liked SLOs #4 (bullets 2 and 3) and would like to incorporate those into senior survey. #1 is difficult to incorporate. The committee members considered rewriting these to make them more intelligible. Wendy thought that these were too difficult to assess. #1 is already covered by discipline major assessment. The idea of "big questions" also referred to as "essential questions & enduring understanding." The committee members agreed to leave out #1

For the SLO "Application of knowledge to new settings and progressively more complex problems," the committee members discussed whether to simplify the language to make it more informal or to leave it along for consistency. The committee members discussed how to render the language. Ted agreed to draft something and come back to the committee.

Our next meeting will take place on Thursday, April 25 at 3:00 p.m. We will discuss our response to the Curriculum Committee. We will also consider some statistical data prepared by Nancy.