



Academic Quality Meeting

2013-2014 Academic Year

Meeting Date: November 5, 2013
Chair: Veronica (Ronni) Tichenor

Time: 12:30pm
Secretary: Sue Kimak

Present: Ronni Tichenor, Doug Eich, Ron Sarner, Atlas Hsie, Kazuko Behrens, Narayan Sharma, Ryan Lizardi, Suzanne Sprague, Betsey Campbell

Absent: Valerie Fusco, Mary Perrone, Joanne Joseph, Donelious King, Rafael Romero

(Joanne is meeting with faculty conducting an assessment workshop.)

Ronni distributed several handouts.

Minutes from the September 3, 2013 and October 1, 2013 meetings were approved with one correction to the September minutes. The September minutes will be revised showing Betsey Campbell was present.

Learning Center Assessment Update

Doug Eich reported that the Learning Center is conducting a periodic survey of customers but has missed a few semesters. They will now be doing a three semester rotation with the assistance of some Graduate Assistants and should be able to report out at the February 2014 meeting. Denise Savoy and Joanne Joseph are working on a draft math assessment.

Early Warning System (EWS) was discussed. Are students going to the Learning Center who are supposed to be? Doug receives a list from Marybeth Lyons of students who should be using the learning center for EWS. Ronni will follow up with Marybeth to ensure that EWS is being assessed.

Engineering Assessment Plans

Andy Wolfe was unable to attend this meeting. Engineering plans were submitted mapping program goals to mission. Regarding mappings Ron suggested the MET program goals graduates should pass an exam, not just take the exam. On both Civil Engineering and Electrical & Computer Engineering, the lists of outcomes use the terminology "ability to". We want students to not only have the ability but demonstrate they can use and apply what they've learned.

Most of these outcomes come from ABET and it may be the "ability" language comes from them. Ronni will share feedback with Andy Wolfe. Ronni is also on the Chairs Council and will share with that group along with creating a mailing list with chairs/coordinators for more direct communication.

Discussion of Data Needed to Answer Self Study Questions

A discussion ensued regarding what kinds of data Academic Quality needs; what kinds of evidence or materials should this committee have to answer the self-study questions listed below.

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

1. How well articulated are the program descriptions in the college catalogs and the student learning outcomes in course syllabi?

The student learning outcomes need to be on course syllabi for each academic unit. It might mean review of syllabi to make sure that is happening now and moving forward. Does the Provost's office collect syllabi? Each working group needs to filter back answers to these questions. Ronni will find out if the Provost office collects syllabi.

2. How does SUNYIT foster periodic review of content and rigor at the Bachelor's, Master's, long distance learning and certification levels of instruction?

Point to our minutes. There are currently no programs to be reviewed. We have a schedule and adhere to the schedule. No new effort on this committee.

3. To what extent does SUNYIT provide students with experiential (service-based, practicum, internship, and project-based) learning opportunities? How do those experiential learning opportunities relate to specific student learning outcomes?

Data from programs in terms of how many classes are practicum or intern based. Sim Covington, Director of Career Services has also been trying to get information from programs.

For the second question, each program would have to answer how experiential learning is infused into programs. Point to specific program goals that relate. Ron indicated there has been no discussion. We have had internships and coops and the numbers are small with little or no discussion regarding learning outcomes. Historically departments are concerned that there is not a lot of academic content and employers are looking for cheap/free labor.

We should raise this at department levels. Atlas indicated that experiential learning opportunities are not required. The industry is shrinking for some programs and departments don't recommend students. Other colleges are required but we are not required. Also, the teaching load structure doesn't accommodate the work involved in setting these up and resources are not available in the community. Students are being referred to other related courses to boost up enrollment in classes (so classes aren't canceled). There is pressure to keep students in other courses to keep numbers up. Nursing incorporates experiential learning within the course with projects, etc. Ronni suggested that at least having a discussion about whether, or why not, experiential learning would work for a program, and documenting it in the program meeting minutes, would be a good first step.

4. Are the educational offerings at SUNYIT consistent with the goals of the programs, the institutional mission, and the needs of adult learners?

The number of sections for day and evening can answer part of the question. Courses are reviewed as part of registration process and programs are reviewed within departments and at the SUNY system and State Ed. levels. It used to be critical in some majors to have evening classes in certain programs because of trends.

The college has put up obstacles and made it difficult for non-matriculated students.

5. Are the educational outcomes provided by adjunct faculty comparable to those offered by full-time faculty?

There are a lot of systematic comparisons. Maybe adjuncts are doing things full time faculty are not. Programs could look at 100 vs. 400 level courses. Could courses have shared assignment pools and suggested syllabi items as a base level? We need to start the conversation because maybe nothing has been done systematically. This issue also came up in the Academic Affairs Committee. Adjuncts are not monitored as closely as full time faculty.

We have time to do something about the things we are not addressing. There should be more of a conversation with adjuncts about what is going on in classes and what assignments work and don't work. These conversations need to be documented in minutes. Implement necessary changes and track outcomes to close the loop.

6. To what extent do the policies and procedures regarding transfer credit reflect SUNYIT's expected learning outcomes for equivalent courses? What processes are in place to ensure that the evaluation of transfer credit is fair and consistently applied?

There is a memorandum to presidents on transferring articulation (related to seamless transfer). If we are in compliance, we are good.

7. How do processes on program oversight ensure the quality and timeliness of programs?

This question has to do with relevance and refers back to the cycle we have for reviews. For this committee the relevance is borne out by a program meeting its goals. As a group we don't have the expertise to know that and are relying on faculty. Maybe it should be a part of narrative of summary but also provide this committee with standards of disciplines. Maybe the expectation is for an outside reviewer to determine if the program is aligned with current expectations of disciplines.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

1. What processes, policies and procedures does SUNYIT employ to ensure that students registered for an online course are the same for students completing course assignments and tests?

Tech is going to take lead on distance learning and this is also a Registrar issue as well. This can be one sentence in a program narrative.

2. What evidence exists that students in an online course achieve learning outcome goals comparable to students in face-to-face courses?

Programs that have online courses need to be talking about student learning outcomes. The SED has regulations for online students and SED also requires periodic review. Online students are registered differently. If a program is only delivered online there is nothing to compare it to. If there is online and face to face we will need to split out the outcomes.

Business has masters online and face to face. IDT is totally online.

3. How effectively does SUNYIT assess credit given for experiential learning (service-based learning, practicum, internship, and project-based courses)? Do these learning experiences provide students with the opportunity to develop their skills and prepare for their careers?

This information will come from programs. How do we access? There are a certain number of hours that faculty will sign off on and write up what the student is doing how they are doing it. Department chairs or programs need to collect who has what in place and what the process is.

4. How does the institution assure that courses offered at additional locations are comparable in quality, rigor, and effectiveness to those offered on the main campus?

This goes back to the adjunct question and there is currently not a lot of quality control. In accredited programs, the accrediting team visits the off site location. What programs are we doing offsite? (Nursing?) The accreditation body validates the programs review.

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

1. What evidence exists that students and SUNYIT programs are meeting designated student-learning outcomes?

Each year programs may prioritize one goal and document in minutes the outcomes. Programs should also be doing an annual report.

2. Are the assessments of student learning of adequate quality? Do they produce results that can be used to inform teaching and planning? Are the assessments systematic and sustainable across all programs and majors?

Programs are using grade distributions in classes which is an indirect measure but we need to go beyond that. Psychology did an assessment of senior seminar that resulted in that course should

be capped at 15 to make it a good experience. Document in minutes what programs are doing sporadically or on an ongoing basis.

3. To what extent are assessment results used to make decisions about teaching, planning, and budget resource allocations?

Interface with Planning and Budgeting. The overwhelming bulk of allocations is for salaries and SUNYIT has a significant portion of tenured faculty. The only discussion now occurring is between chairs and the Provost when there is a vacancy as to where is the deepest need to fill a position. How do you plan for resources when you have no idea what the allocation is? It is difficult to link budgeting to outcomes when resources are declining.

4. How adequately does SUNYIT encourage, recognize, and value faculty efforts to assess learning and to improve teaching?

This is a hard climate when the message to faculty is that you have to publish. This points to the need for a culture shift.

The Chancellors award for excel in teaching recognizes faculty efforts with a yearly award.

5. Does SUNYIT assess student learning outcomes utilizing best practices?

Depends on the discipline. There is a lot of overlap with other questions.

Next Meeting

The Student Opinion Survey will be on the December agenda.

This committee's next goal is we need to start collecting data and have conversations in departments and programs.