University Assessment Committee - Liberal Studies Subcommittee

Summary Report of the Local Assessment of IUP's

Expected Learning Outcomes for the Academic Year 2009-2010

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<u>Introduction</u>

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) is responsible for identifying student learning outcome assessment challenges as they arise and providing input on these and other assessment-related issues to the Provost's Office. The Liberal Studies Subcommittee of the UAC is charged with designing and implementing assessment of IUP's Liberal Studies program, disseminating findings to both the Provost's Office and the Liberal Studies Committee. The focus of the Subcommittee's assessment is the degree by which the Liberal Studies program is meeting the Expected Student Learning Outcomes (Appendix A) passed by University Senate (May, 2006). Effective assessment will assist in identifying strengths and limitations of the program, allowing for future curriculum development to address acknowledged areas where improvement is needed.

While the overall assessment of the Liberal Studies program is multifaceted, this report is limited to the evaluation of written assignments produced by IUP senior-level students to determine the extent to which they reflected attainment of the Expected Student Learning Outcomes. The results of this report will be synthesized into the comprehensive Liberal Studies Assessment report that will be constructed by another party when all applicable measures have been attained.

<u>Methodology Employed</u>

Procurement of Assignments:
A Subcommittee constructed document (Appendix C) was electronically delivered to all Department Chairpersons as an initial step. This document explained the assessment strategy and the Subcommittee's goal of obtaining writing samples from senior-level students. The purposes of first contacting Chairperson's were to provide them notification this assessment was about to begin, and to also seek their cooperation in identifying appropriate courses from which assignments might be obtained. Clearly noted in th

Results

The results of the Subcommittee's assessment are reported by frequency distribution- the percentage of students who were rated as having demonstrated a particular level of skill for a particular area. This permits faculty a detailed account of exactly how those skills or capacities were defined, as it relates to our Expected Student Learning Outcomes.

Learning Outcome 1 – Natural and Social Scientific Mode (n = 535 asse

meaning in the piece. Only 3% of our students do not communicate clearly and lack fluency and clarity in their communication.   The average (n=535) for this mode was 2.7.

Learning Outcome 3 – Acknowledgement of Sources (Academic Integrity) - (n = 627 assessments)

The rubric for Acknowledgement of Sources (Academic Integrity) of Student Learning Outcome 2 included traits: 1 – The documentation and acknowledgement of sources and 2 – The differentiation of original thought and ideas of others. Based on these criteria, 32% of IUP seniors demonstrated skills at the Advanced level, 30% at the Proficient level, 27% at the Developing level and 11% at the Undeveloped level. Thus, 62% of our IUP seniors are able to provide adequate and generally accurate citations throughout their work, as well as attributing different opinions and evidence to sources. In addition, they adequately differentiate between their own ideas and those from cited material. Twenty seven percent of our seniors are able to provide some citations, but the practice is inconsistent and the format is sometimes inaccurate. They occasionally attribute different opinions and evidence to sources and occasionally differentiate between their own ideas and those from other sources. The final 11% of our seniors make limited or no use of citations and do not attribute opinions and evidence to sources. In addition, they do not differentiate between their own ideas and those from other sources. The average (n=535) for this mode was 2.8.

Learning Outcome 3 – Sense of Social Justice – (n = 269 assessments)

Undeveloped level. Thus, 60% of our IUP seniors ha

concepts from more than one discipline and seem better suited to linking theory with practice than was suggested from last year's data.

The assessment results of the second learning outcome, **Empowered Learners**, shows that IUP is providing very good training in the areas of Application and Synthesis and Critical Thinking and excellent training in the Communication area. The first area had 64%, the next area had 61% and the final area had 69% of the students performing at the Advanced and Proficient levels (table 1). Although these numbers are lower in comparison to last year's data we feel that it is a reflection of the types of papers we received where these aspects were not required at the level that last year's papers were.

The results of our assessment of the third learning outcome, **Responsible Learners**, indicate that students are working close to the levels in the other two outcome areas. IUP seniors performed at the Advanced or Proficient levels at the following percentages: Acknowledgement of Sources (Academic Integrity) category 62%; Sense of Social Justice 64%; and Respect for the Identities, Histories, and Culture of Others 60%. The last two sets of data are similar to last year; however, the Acknowledgement of Sources category was lower than last year's. We do not feel that this due to a lack of academic integrity but rather a result of what was being asked for by the professor's in the papers submitted. Again, as we noted in last year's report, this is the weakest area of the three in terms of of of 5348(k)-0.980907(e)of

APPENDIX A

Expected Student Learning Outcomes

I. <u>Informed Learners</u> 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

II. <u>Empowered Learners</u> 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

III. <u>Responsible Learners</u>

APPENDIX B

Rubrics for Expected Student Learning Outcomes

Section II: <u>Empowered Learners</u> 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.

	Critical Thinking	**Communication**
	Trait 1 – Ability to argue or explain.	
	Trait 2 – Discrimination regarding quality of sources.	

APPENDIX C: (continued)

To the faculty member providing assignments for the Liberal Studies Subcommittee (of the University Assessment Committee) in AY 2009-2010:

1) Thank you for your willingness to provide docume