# IUP
## PLAN FOR STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT
### STATUS REPORT
#### September 2008

Prepared by Dr. Susan Boser, Interim Associate Provost

This briefing document presents the plan for and status of student learning outcomes assessment at IUP in four sections: the university infrastructure for supporting assessment; Liberals Studies assessment; program level assessment; and IUP's involvement in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA).

### UNIVERSITY INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Development of the university infrastructure to support assessment encompasses four areas at the present time: incorporating assessment responsibilities into a position within the provost's office; creation of a University Assessment Committee; development of a centralized data management system; IRB policy on human subjects review of learning outcomes measures, and website development.

*Leadership for Assessment Activities in the Academic Division.* In Fall 07, the provost created a new position of "provost's associate" to support assessment development. This position is an alternate work assignment for a faculty member, and in 07-08 involved providing leadership in developing and implementing an assessment plan. This position was not filled for AY 2008-09; decision about the position is pending. However, responsibilities for all assessment activities have been incorporated into the current job description for Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Planning.

*University Assessment Committee.* In February 2008, Boser put forth a proposal to create a University Assessment Committee charged with identifying student learning outcome assessment challenges as they arise and providing input on these and other assessment-related issues to the Provost's Office. Specific responsibilities were to include:

- 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 sub-committee, provide active support to the Liberal Studies Committee in designing and implementing Liberal Studies assessment.

By April 08, the structure and charge of this committee was discussed with and approved by: the Provost, the Council of Deans, the President's Cabinet, the Vice-President for Student Affairs, and the Academic Committee for the Senate; documents were forwarded

to APSCUF leadership with a request for a meeting (no response.) The Academic Committee presented this proposal in Senate for information with opportunity for questions and discussion. Appointments have been made by all deans; APSCUF appointments are on hold pending resolution of concerns over the meeting time. The Committee will be convened for the first time in Fall 08, and can anticipate meeting 3-4 times per semester.

*Data Management System for Student Learning Outcome* A centralized data management system is necessary for storing student learning outcomes data and generating reports. IUP currently utilizes a technology architecture called Key Assessment Ratings System (KARS.) The university invested in this product a few years ago, and IT Services developed one application within it to manage NCATE data. Initial meetings between the IT Services and the provost's associate took place to review the existing application (which must be maintained as is within the system), and determine what new application within KARS might meet the data management needs for other program level assessment. A very broad concept for the system has been outlined. Given that this will need to be flexible enough to meet needs in all colleges, yet still be structurally defined around some common elements, faculty input into the design needs is important. The University Assessment Committee will thus be asked to provide input, with some consensus around common design elements obtained by the November 2008.

*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 from IRB review all data collection for internal student learning outcomes assessment for program evaluation. The provost's associate and the IRB chair drafted a written policy in October 2007. This policy has tentative agreement among all parties, though needs to be finalized and communicated.

*Website for Student Learning Outcomes Assessment*. In Fall 08, content for a website for the university community will be developed. Initially, the content may include: a statement about university assessment policy; the university's assessment plan and timeline of activities; information about data collection activities; access to resources for faculty (i.e., methods, tools, exemplars, references, etc.); and Liberal Studies assessment findings. As assessment practice and the assessment technology continue to develop here at IUP, this website may also provide links to assessment findings at the program level. The University Assessment Committee will have significant input into determining content for this website.

#### 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:* The Expected Student Learning Outcomes were developed through the leadership of the Liberal Studies Revision Committee, and passed by Senate on May 2, 2006.

*Proposed data collection plan:* A preliminary proposal for data collection suggests using four 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. 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.

- E-Portfolios. Students will select particular assignments from their LBST courses and upload into a central repository. Guidelines for assignment selection will be determined by faculty committee. A sample of portfolios will be evaluated against a common rubric to be developed by faculty committee.

- Project from the senior capstone or synthesis course. The project will be evaluated against a common rubric to be developed by faculty committee.

Administration of the first two measures is already taking place. The latter two measures (E-Portfolios and assessing senior capstone projects) are suggested, pending review by the University Assessment Committee and approval by the LBST Committee. As a temporary measure, in Spring '08 over 370 documents were collected from the Liberal Studies Synthesis classes. A team of 4 faculty and the provost's associate developed a rubric based on the Student Learning Outcomes, and evaluated a sample of over 170 student documents collected from Liberal Studies synthesis classes. This assessment provides findings related to all three Expected Student Learning Outcomes, and the final report was completed in summer 2008.

*Proposed analysis and feedback plan*: CLA and NSSE are professionally scored. Local measures will be administered and analyzed by a faculty sub-committee of the University Assessment Committee. These findings will be disseminated to the Provost's Office, the Liberal Studies Committee and the 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, training activities were conducted, as follows:

Training and support:

- In AY 07-08, 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 half-day workshop on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment at the Chairs' Retreat in October 2007. In November and December of 2007, Dr. Walvoord reviewed the assessment plans for all programs that do not have specialized accreditation, and provided written feedback to each program. She followed this up with a visit in February 2008 during which she provided individual follow-up consultation with departments on an as-needed basis.

- Effective Fall '07, new faculty at IUP are provided with a copy of Driscoll and Wood (2007) *Developing Outcomes-based Assessment for Learner-Centered Education.* Members of the newly formed University Assessment Committee will receive copies as well. The proposed website for assessment will also provide additional resources and exemplars to support faculty efforts.

Additional training and support, as well as the nature and degree of on-going monitoring of program assessment activities is to be determined. Input into this will be sought from the University Assessment Committee.

### VOLUNTARY SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The PASSHE has elected to participate in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) developed by NASULGC and AASCU. Barbe Moore, Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment, is providing the leadership for this endeavor at IUP.

Participation in the VSA entails completing a three part template on the VSA website that will be accessible to the general public:

- Part I is university demographic data and general statistics.

- Part II consists of findings of a student survey regarding campus climate and experience; IUP measures this through administration of the NSSE.

- Part III presents student learning outcomes data, and includes: 1) a brief description of assessment at IUP, 2) findings of one of three standardized assessments, and 3) a link to a local website that presents the institution's findings from local assessment activities.

Barbe Moore is completing Parts I and II of the three part template. The Provost's Office is responsible for compiling information for Part III and developing content for the website. This was completed in August 2005.