

Annual Update: 2009-09-10

A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

Our progress in developing a campus wide culture of assessment is moving ahead, but there is still much to accomplish. Due to continued budget constraints the position of Assessment Coordinator was again not funded. However, the faculty member working as Assessment Coordinator in the Fall of 2008 has become Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and remains the campus Assessment Coordinator. To aid these efforts, IU Northwest's Research Compliance Officer is assisting in centralized assessment efforts as well. 2008 -2009 is the first year in which the schools and colleges have reported their assessment results centrally using the template developed last year. Each set of results is posted on the campus assessment website (<http://www.iun.edu/~caslo/results/>). After this first reporting of results, the Assessment Coordinator and Assistant met with each Dean to discuss their results and offer assistance as needed. One common point of discussion involved our course evaluation system which differs from unit to unit. Preliminary interest in a more uniform system of course evaluation, that retains the possibility of tailoring some questions to particular units, was explored. The General Education/Assessment Committee is also interested in the possibility of using some aspect of course evaluations as part of the assessment system for General Education principles. The General Education/Assessment Committee (a Faculty Organization Committee with representatives from each academic unit on campus and the Assessment Coordinator serving in an ex officio capacity) accomplished several important goals this year as well. They developed a timeline for assessment (<http://www.iun.edu/~genednw/timeline.shtml>) of the new General Education Principles that will be in place for our 2010-2012 Bulletin. They designed and administered a pilot General Education Principle 1 writing assessment. Members met and evaluated multiple freshman and senior level writing samples and rated them using a Likert scale (http://www.iun.edu/~caslo/results/writing_assessment_2009.shtml). The first fall meeting of the committee will be devoted to evaluating the process used in the pilot and designing a more comprehensive writing assessment process. They also co-sponsored (with CETL and the Office of Academic Affairs) a series of workshops focused on assessing writing developed and coordinated by the English faculty at IU Northwest. The General Education/Assessment Committee, in conjunction with the Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, provided funding to each unit to design assessment plans for the new general education principles adopted by the campus in 2008-09. The units were asked to share what they have learned/implemented in a brown bag lunch series during the 2010-11 school year as part of receiving specific monies for assessment purposes. The 2009 NSSE was administered in the Spring of 2009 and results have just been received. Our results will be analyzed and compared to the already existing data we have from 2004-2006 and used to set targets for improvement for the future. The participation rate increased by over 20% this year and so we feel will even better represent the student experience at IU Northwest.

Review (09-20-09):

Indiana University Northwest (IUN) is to be commended for undertaking a multi-year project of this scope and magnitude, and one that is so integrally related to the core of higher education: student learning. Although it acknowledges that "there is still much to accomplish" on this project, IUN is making admirable progress toward the final two goals of this three-year project: "*Develop and implement direct and indirect measures of student learning outcomes, collecting

and analyzing the data for these outcomes (ongoing: 2008-01-01 to 2009-12-31 and beyond), and *Develop processes that utilize the data for continuous improvement related to student learning outcomes (2009-12-31).” As part of its centralization of assessment efforts, IUN focuses on three levels of student learning: general education, discipline-specific, and co-curricular. IUN has completed specific actions over the past year to further efforts on all three levels (Categories 1, Helping Students Learn, and 8, Planning Continuous Improvement). First of all, IUN gives an excellent picture of the progress of general education assessment, highlighting the creation of an assessment timeline and the design and administration of a pilot writing assessment. Second, IUN notes that the past year was the first in which the schools and colleges reported their assessment results using the template developed previously, and that these results were posted on the campus assessment website, as well as reviewed by the Assessment Coordinator and Assistant with each appropriate Dean. In future years, IUN might consider developing measures and goals for departments’ compliance with assessment reporting, as well as measures and goals for the quality of their assessments. (In fact, IUN alludes to this potential opportunity in section C. of this update.) Third, IUN notes that NSSE results have recently been received and that they will be used as a measure of co-curricular student learning. IUN notes that both the General Education Assessment Committee and departments have expressed interest in having course evaluations include specific questions tailored toward student learning at these two levels. Although this strategy can be effective, it will be important for administrators and faculty assessment leaders to understand, communicate, and respect the different purposes which course/instructor evaluation and student learning assessment have (Category 5: Leading and Communicating). Results of course evaluation and student learning assessment should be shared and used differently.

B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

The Office of Academic Affairs continued to provide funding for faculty development activities (attendance of 2 faculty at the Assessment Institute at IUPUI each year, sponsoring a national speaker on assessment of writing on campus), invested in a part time Assessment Assistant (to aid the Assessment Coordinator who is also serving as Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs), provided funds to each academic unit to jumpstart assessment of the new General Education principles, and has played an advisor role in the development of the Campus Plan for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes. The General Education/Assessment Committee of the Faculty Organization has played a major role this year in assessment as they transition from primarily focusing on the development of General Education principles to assessment and is described in detail above. The committee has also presents their ongoing work at the Faculty Organization meetings on a regular basis throughout the year, thereby providing a forum for all faculty to learn about ongoing assessment activities. The campus assessment website (<http://www.iun.edu/~caslo/>) is updated regularly with both results and resources and so is another way for faculty to learn about and participate in campus assessment activities.

Review (09-20-09):

The fact that a broad range of faculty are involved in student learning assessment efforts at IUN is very positive (Category 4, Valuing People), as is the fact that the academic administration provides resources in terms of funding and guidance to the faculty in their assessment efforts (Category 5, Leading and Communicating). All faculty have the opportunity to be apprised of assessment initiatives through the regular reporting of the General Education Assessment Committee at Faculty Organization meetings and through the regularly updated assessment

website.

C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

This year offers us our first opportunity to compare results and improvement plans reported in 2008 with those reported for 2009. A next major step will be to analyze these results and work to improve the process. The campus will pilot assessment of oral communication, mathematical and scientific reasoning learning outcomes, in anticipation of the 2010-11 timeline date for these assessments. The Office of Academic Affairs, the General Education/Assessment Committee and the Communication, Mathematics and Biology, Geosciences, and Chemistry faculty among others, will be involved in this process. An analysis of our 2009 NSSE data will take place in the fall, shared with the campus community and used to generate targets for improvement. Specifically, our previous NSSE results (2004-2006) and the anticipation of our new 2009 findings has resulted in the Fall Convocation (October 23, 2009) focus on student success this year. A national speaker on student success will kick off a year centered on various models used across the country, an analysis of our current student success programs and plans for the future. We anticipate wide input from the campus by holding sessions for faculty and staff to participate in throughout the 2009-10 school year and some funding should be available for faculty to pilot new student success practices in their courses.

Review (09-20-09):

This year presents IUN with its first opportunity to compare assessment results and improvement plans from 2008 to 2009, thus helping to move the institutional assessment focus from collection of data to analysis and use of data for improvement, the final goal of this entire action project (Categories 7, Measuring Effectiveness, and 8, Planning Continuous Improvement). Continued education efforts are also planned for the Fall Convocation, at which a national expert on student success will speak. In the area of General Education, IUN plans to assess oral communication, as well as mathematical and scientific reasoning next year, and it will develop specific goals related to the recently received NSSE results. These are also natural next steps toward "closing the loop" on efforts to centralize assessment efforts.

D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

As more faculty have become involved in designing assessment plans and beginning to provide data to both the General Education/Assessment Committee and the Assessment Coordinator and more information has been shared with the faculty through Faculty Organization and the CASLO website, we have seen increasing acceptance and support for the importance of a centralized approach to student learning outcome assessment. There is also a growing appreciation of both the amount of work involved in doing assessment as well as the benefits.

Review (09-20-09):

IUN is to be commended for involving faculty in designing assessment plans and for making a concerted effort to communicate assessment initiatives to the University as a whole through its website and its Faculty Organization (Category 5, Leading and Communicating). IUN appears to have found a sound balance between employing outside assessment authorities (through faculty attendance at conferences and bringing national speakers to campus) and using the expertise of its own faculty.

E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

Although the culture of assessment is still evolving at IU Northwest, we have made significant

progress. We will be continuing to refining our centralized approach to the collection, analysis, and reporting of campus-wide assessment data, and our approach to using the data for improvement.

Review (09-20-09):

The faculty and academic administration at IUN have exhibited hard work, perseverance, and courage in forwarding an initiative that is not always popular! They have sustained their efforts over several years, despite not receiving funding for a dedicated Assessment Coordinator. Their challenges will be to maintain momentum and to use data for improvement. IUN also will need to decide whether it wants to retire this action project in December of 2009, as was originally planned, or if it feels there is sufficient momentum to continue its efforts to centralize assessment without the added impetus of an action project.

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

Review (09-20-09):

No request for assistance at this time. 35608