Department Chair Meeting
December 16, 2013
NS Lounge

Minutes

In attendance: Ellen Venable, Fran Lozano, Nicole Cisneros, Kaye Bedell, Randy Brown, Nikki Dequin, Fran Lopez, Jane Maringer, Carlton Oler, Doug Achterman, Ken Wagman, Kathleen Rose, Gilbert Ramirez.

Kathleen Rose called the meeting to order at 3:39pm.

Kathleen asked Randy Brown to facilitate the meeting in order to discuss the survey instrument that was sent out as part of accreditation. The purpose of the survey was to get instructor feedback on where our students are with their GE student outcomes and prepare the infrastructure for an interactive, exploratory, and revealing, department chair meeting.

Randy stated a good response (85%) was received from the email (survey) that was sent out regarding courses that were in alignment with GE outcomes. He asked the meeting attendees to split up into groups, examine the results, compare these against other areas, discuss and record some suggestions for improvement. The suggestions will help determine how to do the next survey.

Groups were identified into areas A-F:
Area A (Communications in the English Language) – D. Achterman, N. Cisneros
Area B (Physical Universe and its Life Forms) – K. Wagman, F. Lozano, K. Rose
Area C (Arts, Foreign Language, Literature and Philosophy) – K. Wagman, F. Lozano, K. Rose
Area D Social, Political, and Economic Institutions – C. Oler
Area E (Lifelong Understanding and Self-Development – F. Lopez, J. Maringer, K. Bedell, N. Dequin
Area F (Cultural Diversity) – G. Ramirez, E. Venable

Area A comments:
- Most students rated as “excel or are proficient” in all areas of A.
- Success rates and transfer rates inconsistencies. How does the assessment compare with success rates, transfer rates and graduation rates?
- Question process that instructors used to answer survey. Were they reliant on data? Most of the feedback is about trying to explain how the results were achieved. What specific assessments were used to measure?
- Rubric is needed for standards with specific assessments. What is the standard for “excel”, “proficient”, “needs improvement”.
- Need to know how conclusions were reached (final exam? other?).
• There were three course sections; two strong and one not so strong. How do you answer the question? It was hard to see specific questions. Which courses address each outcome?
• Fix measurement.
• Rewrite learning outcomes.
• Was the cohort of students from registration or end of semester?

Area A suggestions for improvement:
• Identify measures.
• Put class in middle – ask what percentage of your students rate “excel/proficient level”. Need more than one answer.
• Review other factors: Do numbers correlate with enrollment? Are these classes higher level coursework?
• Want to know in some way what they used to establish numbers...exam?
• Break it out by class.
• Rubric – examples of what to use for measurement.
• List each course or program that is related to each area.

Area B comments:
• Split down the middle re proficiency; similar to A; same concern.
• Correct assessment would indicate students are where they need to be for current college work. Overall, reflects strong tendency to “not need improvement”.
• Question #3 – mathematical question - numbers low?

Area B suggestions for improvement:
• Same as area A.
• Complete cohort; data from students who enrolled from the beginning vs. only the ones that completed the course.
• Expand on the answers to allow for instructors to give the % of students in each column instead of giving one vote for a 50-student class.

Area C comments:
• Focused discussion on four areas – spent time on how those four questions/statements really fit Arts, Foreign Language Literature and Philosophy. Committee created outcome questions - perhaps revisit.
• Looked at area that needed highest level of improvement...questions #2.
• Students’ maturity level impacts ability to analyze for intellectual and emotional.
• Communications/science skill set may take more time.

Area C suggestions for improvement:
• Some questions may need to go under cultural diversity (#3); others should be revisited for clarity of content; add one question on self expression.
• Identify GE courses each semester and identify the factors to review programmatically per semester.

Area D comments:
• Use of research in scientific methodology – weak. Difference between opinion vs. fact was high. Students seem to struggle with analytical intensive material (intellectual challenge).
• See inter-relatedness between culture/class/gender/emotional intelligence.

Area D suggestions for improvement:
• Research and scientific methodology needs work.
• Need greater emphasis across the board on writing, critical thinking/analyzing assignments with both peer-to-peer and instructor analyses.
• Collective instructor push to de-emphasize distractions (in class) in order to focus on intellectually challenging material.

Area E comments:
• Recognize the importance of self development.
• Research – improvement of methodologies. Doug is developing course. Tie it in overall.
• Subjective vs. objective data? What measurement utilized?
• Retention vs. completion/success rates.
• Identify common standard to measure.
• Ratings of questions...36 answers; 68 skips.

Area E suggestions for improvement:
• Standardize method of assessment
• Connection to say whichever outcome aligns with GE outcomes provides data.
• Send forth data that the instructor pulled (pre-post test? quiz?) to back up “subjective” observation.
• Ensure alignments are properly paired up.

Area F comments:
• Rated student progress relatively high.
• How were numbers established?
• Points of measure?
• Number of responses?
• Instructor is meeting SLO of cultural awareness within context. Cultural diversity – different points?

Area F suggestions for improvement:
• Need to show improvement.
• Phrase things in qualitative way.
- Accreditation is looking for a way to close the loop to make these assessments work. Improving student learning and doing what we can to help them learn - numbers will fluctuate.
- Feeding information back may not lead to improvement.

Closing Comments: Randy asked the group what would be a good way to seek/provide feedback. Responses:
- Something not too cumbersome/overwhelming.
- Go through the list of faculty and ask them to address a specific area (i.e., take area #3), pay attention and collect data. Put people in groups across the curriculum, across the institution. Put those people together to show data that was gathered; looking at self with own course that will help cross the threshold institutionally.
- Provide this data to people so we can start to look at it.
- Review one item over semester. See what themes bubble up from there.
- Pick areas that need improvement first for those courses that have GE alignments.
- There is a reluctance to have conversations about GE; need to isolate some factors; do some testing.
- Teach towards outcomes.
- Outcomes were created by committee more than ten years ago. Revisit.