



Cal Poly WASC Steering Committee

May 20, 2009
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
01-409

In Attendance:

Peggy Browneller Paradis, Denise Campbell, Cassie Carter, David Conn, Bruno Giberti, Anna Gold, Brent Goodman, Linda Halisky, Rachel Henry, Leah Kolt, Angela Kramer, Tom Mackin, Cheryl Ney, Mohammad Noori, Skip Parks, Craig Schultz, Erling Smith, Susan Sparling, Scott Steinmaus, Tom Trice

Absent:

Susan Elrod, Rick Ramirez, Dan Villegas, Kelley Wigton, Doug Keeseey, Mary Whiteford

Minutes

There were no objections to the minutes.

Dashboards

- The dashboard would help us prepare for the CPR site visit.
- The dashboard would be web-based and would display current assessment data in an engaging graphical form.
- People who have been working on assessment could work together with members of the Strategic Planning metrics team to use WASC rubrics to figure out what data to display.
- Programs and colleges would do self-assessments of where they are and where they want to be in areas covered by the WASC rubrics, such as program assessment.
- Much of this data is already being reported to Academic Programs but is not then made available to the campus at large. This graphical representation would make the data more accessible.
- This effort would help align WASC with Strategic Plan concerns, which WASC would appreciate.
- The library is developing a dashboard. They have found that it is possible to report interesting numbers even if all data is not received on the same timeline.

Communication Plan

- The communication plan addresses how to market the self-study.
- The plan has two objectives: 1) to inform and engage internal stakeholders and 2) to inform and engage external stakeholders. More specifically, the goals are to build awareness of the self-study, get feedback on the draft, and create a sense of ownership of the process among a larger campus constituency.
- This draft of the plan will be helpful in guiding people's thinking.
- A mock visit is one possibility for preparation. Some members think this is critical. Everyone down to the level of department heads needs to be included in the mock visit process. Department heads can bring the message to their faculty.

- Part of the message to internal stakeholders is that assessment is a process of continuous improvement and yields results. Another part is that the self-study benefits Cal Poly; it is not merely a bureaucratic exercise but an intellectual activity.
- How do we know we've achieved the goal of awareness? The communication plan includes a pre- and post-test.
- The visiting team will definitely interact with all WASC committees. They will likely interact with organized groups such as Deans' Council and Academic Senate Executive Committee. They will select departments to meet with. They can change their minds when they arrive.
- To reach students, we could pick a day and time and give a hand out to all students in class at that time. It could be supported by an article in the *Mustang Daily*.
- Faculty struggle to connect to their program and the institution at large, and so another goal is to create a greater sense of connectedness and institutional identity.
- One option is a teach-in, perhaps taking a few minutes in class to ask what students think about Cal Poly.
- Posters could be hung in the bathroom stalls in the dorms.

Possible Conclusions of CPR Essays

- Something like this might be a good way of summarizing the self-study and may be helpful if it's presented first.

TSM

- TSM's essay will focus on three areas: Defining the TSM, TSM Implementation, and Diversity and the TSM.
- The working group will attempt to define the TSM for Cal Poly.
- The CSUs are a good peer group for TSM because from a scholarship perspective, Cal Poly is at the bottom of the top third in terms of grant dollars. CP's rate of increase is the highest in the CSU, and CP is number one in the number of grant dollars that go toward student workers, which demonstrates that the money is going toward student learning.
- Faculty members feel that library resources are limited but have improved over the last ten years.
- Faculty claim that they integrate their scholarly activities into the classroom, and students concur.
- Lack of time is the most often noted impediment to implementing the TSM, especially among junior faculty. Some of the comments also site lack of infrastructure.
- Cal Poly should not fall into the trap other comprehensive universities have fallen: Hire as if it is a research institution yet support faculty in terms of teaching assignments and infrastructure as if it is a teaching-only institution.
- Diversity-related evidence will come from the department chair survey regarding hiring practices. Denise and Jennifer are working on a section regarding how diversity and TSM go hand in hand.
- Diversity in the curriculum needs to include making sure diverse contributions in a field are included in the curriculum.
- The Boyer definition will be CP's definition of scholarship, and the working group will call for giving equal credit for all four types of scholarship.

- The working group may recommend top-level RPT expectations from the Provost or a university-level committee. There is support from the Steering Committee to take that direction if there is evidence that suggests it is a good idea. Most evidence the working group is aware of is anecdotal, but that need not prevent them from presenting it. They may also want to investigate why most available evidence is anecdotal. The RPT focus group recommended a university-level document about process. Without a university-wide document, the Provost makes a decision based on non-public criteria, which may be a problem.
- The faculty/staff survey data is qualitative but not anecdotal. A follow-up survey could provide more quantitative data on opinions on a university-wide RPT document.
- College-level expectations are clear.
- There's obviously a problem with RPT expectation because we can't give a clear definition of what TSM is. If we could be clear about why we don't have a definition, that would also be a clear statement about TSM.
- The definition needs to define the relationship between scholarship and learning.

LBD

- The 1983 definition does not match what people think of as LBD today.
- The definition needs to be expansive and still meaningful in order to contain what students, faculty, and staff perceive as LBD. The definition needs to view LBD as a continuum.
- People in all colleges see themselves as contributing to LBD pedagogy.
- According to NSSE data, CP seniors score above their peers in having confidence and expertise in their field. They also have a higher satisfaction with their overall education and with senior project.
- Survey data suggests that many people think GE is the only one responsible for covering the DLOs. Half the faculty don't know what the DLOs are. Diversity has been dealt with in study abroad, GE, or supplemental workshops, not in the major curriculum. Housing is high in student responses of where diversity learning takes place. Housing intentionally focuses on diversity.
- Cal Poly's emphasis on LBD is important to the recruitment of students but not to most faculty and staff recruitment, yet it may be useful for retaining faculty and staff.
- Most Cal Poly students and faculty think that the major curriculum, followed by the GE curriculum, provides them with the most opportunities for experiencing LBD activities and achieving university learning objectives (ULOs). If you look only at the "strongly agree" responses, co-curricular activities and off-campus employment both score higher than GE.
- Polyreps plant the seed of getting future students to think about LBD. It might be useful to get them together and have them write a definition.
- A business class is surveying students regarding LBD this quarter.
- Students' definitions of LBD are very individual.
- The department heads did not all see senior project as necessarily being an LBD exercise. Senior project could be a culminating LBD experience but should not be substituted for LBD throughout the student experience.

- What percentage of senior projects done in conjunction with faculty scholarship? Percentages are not known, but students tend to pick senior project advisors with some expertise in the area they will be studying.
- The highest disagreement on the faculty/staff survey with any aspirational comment was that in 10 years the senior project should be a culminating capstone experience that engages all the ULOs.

ISL

- The students' experience of learning is integrated because it's all part of their life. The challenge for CP is to make the connections between the curriculum and co-curriculum more intentional.
- Staff, faculty, and students all said the co-curriculum was an important part of students' preparation for their future personal and professional lives.
- Faculty and staff felt the curriculum was more important for students' preparation for their future personal and professional lives than students did, though the disparity was not great.
- Students rate off-campus employment highly in terms of preparation for their future personal and professional lives. CP is not intentionally linking curriculum with employment and needs to look at how to do that.
- The curriculum and co-curriculum need to be aligned with the ULOs and DLOs. One step UC Merced took to help with alignment was to add the relevant ULOs to all syllabi. Assessment with rubrics is also needed.
- According to NSSE/FSSE students felt intimidated to talk w/ faculty out of class, but faculty didn't see it that way. Advising rated low on NSSE and YFCY. CP need to look at how to change that?
- Students' experiences regarding diversity and global awareness also need to be more intentionally shaped and connected using areas such as internships, service learning, and study abroad. Some students expect to address diversity in their club activities, but it's not necessarily linked to the curriculum. Two-thirds of the respondents to the faculty/staff were involved in clubs, and it would be possible to disaggregate the data to see the differences in opinion between those involved and those not involved.
- Interdisciplinary programs are not well-represented in the working group report because there is not much faculty participation currently.

OPI

- The working group created a definition of an excellent polytechnic university, which has also been give to Erling for the Strategic Plan.
- The recommendations for making CP an excellent polytechnic university are: change the world; we are comprehensive, get over it; embrace our history but change our culture; intentionally produce leaders; train students to be self-learners; increase diversity education; integrate GE into the curriculum.
- CP needs to follow a cohort of graduates long-term after graduation to find out whether we are actually producing leaders.
- Recommendations regarding faculty: reward interdisciplinary collaboration, remove barriers to collaboration; change student-faculty ratio in order to improve scholarship, perhaps by funding endowed chairs; drop the idea of a two-tiered faculty in which one does research and

another teaches—instead, each individual has a part to play toward whatever the learning goal is.

- Centers and institutes are one existing method of breaking barriers, but they require extraordinary individual effort. The current systems don't make collaboration easy.
- Staff also need to be included with faculty in the recommendations.
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Budget

- How does the current budget situation affect the recommendations in these reports? While the recommendations are good ones, decreasing the student/faculty ratio, for example, takes money.
- Are the WASC reports the correct vehicle for faculty to resist an increasing workload?
- Do we go forward with the strategic plan at a time when decisions have to be made in crisis mode?
- The WASC report and strategic plan become more rather than less important because you have to know what you value and what's most important and make decisions on that basis. They help set priorities.
- The budget crisis just changes when the recommendations can be enacted and moves them out a few years.
- Regardless of the state of the budget, enacting some of the recommendations requires increased external fundraising.
- Some recommendations require a change in thinking rather than money.
- Other states have already had massive cuts to higher education; they just happened over a longer period of time. Some of the peer institutions the OPI group looked at went through similar difficulties, and their new models are a result of rethinking the institution.
- Faculty members don't want those type of changes, but faculty never do. That doesn't mean it won't work.