Learning Outcomes Committee Minutes

4/9/13

Attending: Julie Moore, Mike Kenyon, Janet Ash, Lisa Finnsson, Avis Adams, Kelly Eisenhour, Ken Marr

CCSSE Discussion

Negatives/Concerns (Cons):

- The purpose of and use for data is not clear.

- Who has access to this data? There is worry that the data will be initially available to just administration (per the CCSSE Frequently Asked Questions page). If the data was available more widely or to key faculty leaders (IC Chair, LOC Chair, GDEC Chair, student leaders, etc. this could be alleviated.

- How were the questions arrived at? Was there research that informed them? Why ask these questions? Questions in faculty survey seemed to be stacked in a direction that is fishing for certain information – too slanted.

- How will the students learn of the results and be able to be part of the decision making process in regard to responding to the data?

- Loss of teaching time due to time needed to take the exam during instructional class time. Some programs would be especially impacted by this as they are especially tight on time due to curriculum requirements. Could this be administered outside of class time to address this concern? Perhaps through the Testing Center?

- If the survey is going to take this much time from instructional time, the questions should focus on instruction and the data should come back to instruction.

- The survey questions regarding instruction are quite problematic, as they will inevitably reflect more directly on the instructor in whose class the survey is administered. In my opinion, the kinds of instruction-related questions violate the terms of our union contract in regard to course evaluations. If there is a desire to revise current course evaluations, that is a separate process. Note: Technically the survey results will not be able to be traced back to individual classes or students. There is some fear about whether this will be true in practice, but this is technically what is promised in theory.

- I have serious concerns about the validity of what information this instrument will provide, what specific information is IE hoping to gather, and what will be done with the information from this particular instrument. If this instrument was to be administered and used by Instruction, I would be marginally more comfortable with the process.
I don't trust motive or competence in regard to what will be done with results of this survey at this point in time. Given the fear of firing on campus, will the survey results be used for such purposes down the road?

Fear that the survey results will not be used or reported back in a way that is directly visible to faculty and staff. As one LOC member noted, “I took several of these faculty surveys as an adjunct at Tacoma Comm College. At first, I thought it was kind of cool—but I dutifully answered and then never heard anything again – maybe because I was part time.”

We live in an overly surveyed world in which folks are tuning out. Will this just be another example of this? As one LOC member says, “If we call a bank, get the car fixed, go to the dentist—everyone wants a survey completed so they ‘can serve me better.’” I wonder about this—If it happens very often, I feel like another little cog adding to the great database in the sky. The surveys in this ccssee.org center and not short. If I was a student, I might think, ‘This is a lot of time to devote to helping the campus serve me better.’

As we move into working on the Achieving the Dream grant, will this “over surveying” only further increase?

Will the data gathered match the data we are looking for? Can we tailor the language of the survey questions to match our terms? For example, when it asks in #15, “My placement scores indicated that I needed to take a Developmental course,” students may not recognize this language as we often refer to these classes pre-college and college prep instead. Also, how will be define “developmental”? English 100 and Reading 104 are technically in this category, but they are not below the 100 level.

Could IE write a tailored survey for our campus that would fit our language, needs, etc.?

Will the data be meaningful to faculty? It seems more institutional.

It’s too long. In addition, many of the questions ask for redundant information that the college already has. How can we shorten this survey?

Cost

Positives (Pros)

We will have data collected over time that we can use to do the following: study trends over time on our campus, apply for grants, use for studies on campus (PA&I? Campus-wide Assessment of outcomes? Other?). Given the FAQ sheet for CCSSE, will we be able
to look at trends over time? This doesn’t seem to be currently available.

- We have data to compare across other institutions who have administered this survey. This could help us in doing peer comparisons.

- Students will be given a voice to contribute to feedback about their experience at GRCC. (Is this currently happening? I don’t think so.)

- Findings could help us make improvements to campus that are needed but that we don’t yet realize.

- This would provide concrete, quantitative, and more comprehensive data to back up our decisions/changes on campus rather than looking at general trends, small sample groups, etc. as has been past practice in many situations.

- I particularly was struck by and liked the following question:

  How often have you done the following:
  
  - Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor’s standards of expectations.
  - Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class.
  - Had serious conversations with students of a different race/ethnicity.

  Student effort section
  Question #4: Classroom participation

  Ideas for the Questions We Get to Design

  - The question about having a serious conversation with students from a different race/ethnicity prompted me to wish for a question something like: How often have you had a serious conversation about race and ethnicity?
  - Something on plagiarism: How often have you done this, seen this, etc.? What do you think constitutes plagiarism?

  Next Steps:

  - Julie will send the LOC’s feedback that was gathered at the 4/9/13 meeting back out to the LOC, so members can share this with their divisions, gather further feedback, and discuss the pros/cons of the survey.
• The LOC will then reconvene in a month to discuss the feedback and make a final recommendation to the IC as to whether or not to recommend the survey.
• Julie will schedule with the IC to share the recommendation at an IC meeting – hopefully near the end of spring quarter.