

Academic Affairs Council Minutes
Monday, November 26, 2007
107 LOM

Present: Suzanne Hendrich, Chair, Geoff Abelson, Michael Clough, Ed Braun, John Wong, Marwan Ghandour, Jim Thompson, David Holger.

Guests: Corly Brooke (CELT), Kevin Saunders (Provost's Office)

The meeting began shortly after 8:00 AM.

Corly Brook and Kevin Saunders were invited to the meeting to talk to the AAC about the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). ISU began participating in this survey several years ago. Handouts given to the council provided background on NSSE benchmarks, the type of data collected, and how ISU compares with other research-intensive universities with respect the NSSE benchmarks. They wanted to share with AAC how the NSSE information is communicated across the ISU campus.

Data from both the NSSE and the Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman Survey (CIRP) are summarized on the ISU Office of Institutional Research website. The Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) is trying to share the NSSE information with several different groups of ISU faculty and administrators.

Brook and Saunders answered many questions that AAC members had about the NSSE. What other institutions participate? How variable are the NSSE data? How is it analyzed? What are the different ways the data can be "broken out" in order to be more useful? What does ISU do with this data? Etc.

Saunders pointed out that the data can be broken out by colleges and that some colleges are currently considering how they might use this data in improving their programs. Brooke indicated that for the first time we have data we can use campus-wide to discuss some of these issues. NSSE data has been helpful in discussing the benefits of Learning Communities and the challenges surrounding the teaching of large classes. In both of these areas, NSSE data has helped garner support for funding programs on our campus. Brooke also provided AAC with some background information about Learning Communities at ISU.

Suzanne Hendrich asked the guests and AAC members what implications the NSSE data might have for policy issues that could be considered by the AAC. Some potential issues included: learning communities, senior capstone courses/experiences, study abroad programs, ISU Comm (particularly upper level communication-intensive experiences). Saunders said he would send us the latest interpretation of the NSSE data and a list of the other institutions that participate in NSSE.

David Holger gave the AAC a “heads up” about a voluntary system of accountability that may be adopted by the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASALGC) and the Association of American Universities (AAU). The voluntary system was suggested by these organizations in response to a much more proscriptive proposal being made by the U.S. Dept. of Education. Much of the data needed is already being collected by ISU. In addition, ISU must decide on which of three instruments we might use to evaluate our effectiveness in achieving certain learning outcomes related to critical thinking and written communication. Dr. Holger indicated that there would be significant faculty input in this process.

Suzanne Hendrich mentioned two items that will be coming up for AAC consideration, an occupational safety certificate (Ag & Biosystems Engineering) and a reorganization of the undergraduate programs in the Dept. of World Languages and Cultures.

The AAC discussed the international perspectives waiver for veterans that have served in another country. We should be getting some written information from ROTC or National Guard personnel in the near future.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 AM.

Minutes prepared by Ed Braun.