

Indiana University - Purdue University Fort Wayne Opus: Research & Creativity at IPFW

ADVANCEMENT SECTION REPORT OF A
COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT TO
INDIANA UNIVERSITY-PURDUE
UNIVERSITY FORT WAYNE Fort Wayne,
Indiana November 15-17, 2010 FOR The Higher
Learning Commission A Commission of the North
Central Association of Colleges and Schools

North Central Accreditation Self-Study 2010

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Advancement Section: Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit to Indiana University - Purdue University Fort Wayne

The Higher Learning Commission, A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and
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ADVANCEMENT SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

INDIANA UNIVERSITY-PURDUE UNIVERSITY FORT WAYNE
Fort Wayne, Indiana

November 15-17, 2010

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

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I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne is a public, comprehensive university offering associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees. It serves approximately 13,000 undergraduates and 800 graduate students. It is considered a regional institution by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education with a service region of 11 counties in northeast Indiana.

The University began as separate extension centers of Indiana University and Purdue University. In 1958, the Indiana Purdue Foundation at Fort Wayne purchased land for the merger of locations into one. The campus opened in 1964 at the current location. In 1974, Indiana University and Purdue University in Fort Wayne merged to a single administration of the institution, and Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW) came into being. Each institution chose mission areas for academic programs, and Purdue University was designated as the managing partner of IPFW. During the 1980's an academic structure was created in the interests of emphasizing relationships among departments at IPFW rather than with departments at either Indiana University or Purdue University.

IPFW continues to operate under an agreement with Purdue University as the managing partner. While some program missions continue to align with Indiana University, all non-faculty contracts are made with Purdue University. An increasing number of faculty contacts are under Purdue, because new faculty are hired now under Purdue contracts regardless of program mission. However, IU mission faculty are appointed, promoted, and tenured through IU processes and policies. Still, IPFW has a great deal of autonomy and has established its own identity. Many students now see themselves as IPFW students rather than IU or Purdue students.

II. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

A. Assessment

The assessment of student learning at IPFW has improved since the last comprehensive evaluation visit in 2000 and the submission of a progress report in 2004. The six foundations of the *Baccalaureate Framework* provide a mechanism to link all aspects of the undergraduate student experience at IPFW. The alignment of student learning outcomes for discipline-specific and general education programs to the *Baccalaureate Framework* provides a unique opportunity to map the curriculum and identify gaps that need to be addressed. Professional development in the area of assessment has been provided by the Office of Assessment and the Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching by sponsoring local workshops and financial support for travel to

assessment conferences. Finally, the staffing of a Director of Assessment (2003) and Director of General Education (2010) will provide the leadership and continuity to develop the culture of assessment at IPFW.

While IPFW has made substantial progress in assessment since the last visit, the team heard many comments about the spatially fragmented and episodic nature of assessment. Considerable institutional attention needs to be paid to assessment. Certain units, especially some with specialized accreditations (e.g., NCATE, AACSB, ABET), with a well developed assessment plans, are collecting data, and have used data to modify their programs. The self-study reported that 81.5% of degree-granting and certificate programs have assessment plans and 75.9% have submitted an assessment report. Comments of faculty, department chairs, members of the Assessment Council and General Education Council, and program directors, also clearly indicate that other areas (even some with specialized accreditation that have expectations of the assessment of student learning) are very immature in their development of a culture of assessment and understanding of what constitutes assessment from a University perspective. For example, team members heard the following statements:

- Why do we have to do assessment?
- I am doing assessment, I turn in my grades.
- I did not realize that this activity would count as assessment.
- We have to be careful and not use the "a" word around some/certain faculty.

The team also found evidence for the apparent episodic nature of assessment that includes the following:

- No evidence that the Assessment Council had met this year.
- No consensus on how many times the Assessment Council met during the previous year.
- Lag-time in the development of rubrics to assess student achievement of the goals of the Baccalaureate Framework (rubric development for two goals initiated in 2010).
- Lag-time and limited progress in development of assessment protocols for the six areas of general education.
- Assessment plans for some academic units have not been updated/reviewed for a significant time period.

Therefore, to move beyond the fragmented and episodic nature of assessment at IPFW and into a true culture of assessment, the team offers IPFW the following for consideration:

- IPFW would benefit from the development of a university wide assessment plan that outlines the basic framework for assessment activities but also provides the flexibility to be adapted to the needs of individualized units. This plan should clearly define roles, responsibilities, and a timeline for activities.

- The relationship between the Director of Assessment and the Assessment Subcommittee needs to be better defined so that the Director can provide greater continuity of activity as members move on and off the Subcommittee.
- Although newly created, the relationship between the Director of General Education and the General Education Subcommittee could also be defined so that the Director can provide greater continuity of activity as members move on and off the Subcommittee.
- The relationship between the Director of Assessment and Director of General Education should be clearly defined or understood to reduce potential conflicts. Prior to the appoint of the Director of General Education, the Assessment Director was working with the General Education Subcommittee to address the issues raised by the Subcommittee in 2008-2009. Who is ultimately responsible for leadership in the assessment of general education?
- The Director of Assessment and Director of General Education meet with individual units to clearly articulate what constitutes assessment and the expectations for assessment.
- IPFW might/should consider sending a group of key individuals to participate in the HLC Assessment Academy.

By considering and implementing these suggestions, the team firmly believes that marked progress will be achieved in the development of a culture of assessment to improve student learning at IPFW.

B. Distance Education

The 2007, the vice chancellor for academic affairs created a task force to develop guidelines for the administration of distance education with specific emphasis on the role of online courses in the university's future. One recommendation of that task force was that "Department chairs develop a system for evaluating their online courses comparable to the one they use for evaluating face to face classes, including some items that are particularly relevant to online courses." This does not seem to have been done consistently. Faculty members report that the same evaluation is used in both face-to-face and online classes. A low percentage of online evaluations are returned. Faculty also note that chairs do not visit their online classes or vet the online classes for quality. The Center for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT) has a thorough process to ensure quality in new courses, but that does not apply to all online classes. The chairs might benefit from professional development in the area of evaluating online classes offered by CELT.

C. Graduate Education

Based on the documentation provided and reviewed as well as individuals interviewed, graduate programs are consistent, essential and complementary to the mission and core

values of IPFW. Since the last comprehensive evaluation visit in 2000, an Office of Graduate Studies was created and a Director of Graduate Studies was appointed. The responsibilities and functions of this office and position were added to the duties/titles of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Given the growth in enrollment and development of new programs (six new master's programs) since the last visit, coupled with the potential for growth in the future and the ongoing complexity of the relationship between IPFW and both Indiana University and Purdue University, the team recommends that IPFW evaluate its infrastructure support for graduate education and consider adding a stand-alone administrative position (e.g., Dean, School of Graduate Studies) responsible for the oversight and leadership of the all aspects of graduate education at IPFW. This recommendation is in no way intended to imply anything about the present performance or leadership of the program director but reflects only the recognition of the growth in graduate education both in enrollments and expansion of offerings.

As IPFW further expands graduate education and looks particularly to doctoral programs, consideration should also be given to differentiating the faculty load requirements between graduate and undergraduate programs and/or course instruction. From interviews with program directors, department chairs, faculty, and the Director of Graduate Studies, it appears that faculty load varies among departments. The team recommends that a University-wide policy be explored regarding faculty load that considers instruction of graduate-level courses, advisement of graduate students, and supervision of graduate student research. The policy would allow for flexibility at the program level but provide a framework to further develop a graduate culture within the institution by providing a clearer distinction between undergraduate and graduate programs by rewarding teaching, research and scholarship of faculty and graduate students.

D. Records

In a review of records, the team noted that in some cases information that should be available in a file was not conveniently located. The institution is encouraged to review files for convenient location and completeness of records.

III. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND/OR PRACTICES

The team was particularly impressed with the success of IPFW's engagement with its constituencies. It was clear to the team that IPFW views its role as a region-serving institution as central to its mission. The university has created an infrastructure that supports community and professional engagement in ways that are very important to the region and to Indiana.