Annual Update: 2009-09-10

A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

The Faculty Organization's General Education/Assessment Committee (comprised of representatives from units across the campus) has completed the task of developing the principles, requirements, and learning outcomes for General Education at Indiana University Northwest. The Faculty Organization adopted the student learning outcomes for principles 4 and 5 at the October 17, 2008 meeting and adopted the learning outcomes for Principle 1 at the January 16, 2009 meeting. These outcomes are posted at our web site at http://www.iun.edu/~genednw/principles/principle_4.shtml, http://www.iun.edu/~genednw/principles/principle_5.shtml, and http://www.iun.edu/~genednw/principles/principle_1.shtml. The principles and learning outcomes are to appear in the 2010 IU Northwest Bulletin whereupon they take effect in terms of student requirements. We revised the timeline for tasks related to Assessment of General Education and designated responsibilities for the tasks among the General Education/Assessment Committee, The Faculty Organization, and all schools and colleges. The timeline is available at http://www.iun.edu/~genednw/timeline.shtml. The committee also conducted an initial assessment of writing skills, described at http://www.iun.edu/~caslo/results/writing_assessment_2009.shtml and the committee recommended funding for Intensive Writing workshops, the first 3 of which were sponsored by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), and were presented during the spring 2009 semester.

Review (09-11-09):
Completion of all the Principles and aligned outcomes meets your timeline and provides a basis for the General Education/Assessment Committee, the Faculty Organization, and all schools and colleges to begin their work developing assessments following a functional timeline. The Principle 5 web page states "Some of the Principle 2 courses and advanced/writing intensive courses from Principle 1 should be designated as ethics or citizenship courses." Yet there is no mention of ethics or citizenship in Principle 2. This may be confusing for those designing courses and assessments. Additionally, this designation may be overlooked if not specifically noted in Principle 2.The initial assessment of writing skills can serve as a model for the design, development, and field-testing of subsequent assessments. It is helpful to have information about the assessment status stated or linked to each of the five principles web pages to better communicate expectations of student learning and the processes that will be implemented to measure achievement.

B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

The General Education/Assessment Committee includes members from academic units across campus, helping to ensure necessary communication between the committee and the faculty in the units. Additionally, at each step of the process the necessary feedback and approvals were obtained from the Faculty Organization; information and/or approval items for some piece of the new general education program appeared on several Faculty Organization meeting agendas this past year. The College of Arts and Sciences Dean and Chairs have designated courses that satisfy requirements for each of the principles. The Office of Academic Affairs has played an advisory role in the process, has made sure that the Deans and Directors are kept informed and have had a chance to have input and provide feedback, and has funded faculty development opportunities.

This office designated $5000 for stipends and materials needed for a year of Intensive Writing workshops. CETL organized and advertised the workshops and faculty writing specialists from the department of English led the workshops, entitled Designing Writing Assignments (Feb. 24, 25); Responding to Student Writing (Mar. 24, 25); and Assessing Student Writing (April 14, 15). Attendance at these workshops was approximately 12 per topic.

Review (09-11-09):
Involvement of members of academic units has supported a design process that comes from investment of the faculty and academic administrators and your commitment to valuing people. In the 2008 review it was recommended that admission staff might be involved so that they could be informed and prepared when advising students, although it appears that you did not find this necessary. As you begin implementation you may want to reconsider this suggestion so that expectations are most clearly communicated. Additionally, there is no mention of student review of the five principles. It may be useful to solicit student input for readability and comprehension.

C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

The timeline calls for schools and divisions to submit their plans for the integration of the new requirements into their degree programs to the Survey and Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Organization by November 1, 2009. A General Education Curriculum Integration form http://www.iun.edu/~genednw/ for documenting the planned changes for each degree program was designed by the committee chairs and successfully pilot-tested by the School of Business. In the area of writing, additional writing workshops are planned for fall 2009 and may include an outside speaker on the subject. Reviewers suggested that we might consider a new or follow on project to review the assessment data and fine tune our learning experiences. We believe that this is addressed by the AQIP action project Campus Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes available at http://www.iun.edu/~caslo/. Consistency of the assessment process will also be assured by the adoption of the General Education Curriculum Integration form for documenting the planned changes for each degree program. Our Committee will work this year on involving students and admissions staff into changes in General Education process, prior to its publishing in the 2010 IU Northwest Bulletin .

Review (09-11-09):
Progress towards curriculum alignment is greatly supported by the leadership of the School of Business pilot project that has served as a model for integration of the principles into the curriculum. Developing assessment measures appears to be a well-organized effort - facilitated by the General Education Curriculum Integration form – and will assist in identifying courses that support the principles. However, the form does not reference assessment measures. Although the assessment measures are under development, including a column on the form for assessment measures would proclaim and promote the importance of attention to and development of such measures.

D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

We anticipate that our initial assessment of writing skills, described at http://www.iun.edu/~caslo/results/writing_assessment_2009.shtml along with Intensive Writing workshops directed by our own faculty will become one of our "effective practices." We hope that all units will showcase their best practices in assessing student learning outcomes at an appropriate CETL workshop and that this will become another one of our "effective practices." Our major strength lies in the broad participation of faculty from all academic units, the

incremental approval of pieces of the new program, and the strong commitment and support from the Office of Academic Affairs for this process.

Review (09-11-09):
Involvement of the academic community reflects your commitment to AQIP principles of involvement and leadership. As curriculum integration and assessment measures are designed and developed, involvement of both admissions staff and students may provide valuable contributions that can improve communication once the curriculum is implemented and will also involve these two key stakeholders in the change process.

E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

The next major challenges will be: a) general education curriculum integration, b) continuous assessment of student learning outcomes, c) faculty resource issues related to implementation of required general education courses, and d) enculturation of continuous quality improvement of the new program once fully implemented.

Review (09-11-09):
The university team is to be commended on keeping to and even exceeding the projected timeline. As the design process continues with assessment measures, it may be helpful to consider how the writing assessment project and the School of Business pilot can serve as models for other academic units. Promotion of these efforts as recognition of efforts to date as well as exemplars can provide foresight and concrete illustrations for possible applications elsewhere.

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

Review (09-11-09):
9904 - This institution is making reasonable progress towards achieving its goals. Ahead of its timeline, there is still much to be done while celebrating accomplishments to date.