

Date: 11 February 2014 (1-2 p.m.)  
Location: Cowles Library, Room 201

Members Present: Gilbert (Chair), Majeran, Dunham-LaGree, Phillips, Manley, Saunders, Richardson, Keyser, Hodgkinson, Vaughan

### **1) Review of summary NSSE data and Wabash memo, plus update on student feedback to date (Kevin Saunders /Stephanie Majeran)**

- Wabash/Teagle memo

- History: Kevin attended the Teagle Assessment Scholars work on Engaged Citizen (3 yrs. ago)
- Teagle visited Drake in Fall 2013: Their focus was on assessing the Drake gen ed curriculum, and working with groups across campus (they met with DCAC as a group)
- The Teagle group looked at NSSE data, as well (this year's data was not available to them at the time.)
- Many of the Teagle comments revolve around the structure of assessing Drake curriculum: With the large number of outcomes, systematic assessment is very difficult.
- Primary near-term recommendation: Kevin, Stephanie and students should have grounded conversations via focus groups (this is ongoing; see below).

- NSSE data

- Roughly 35% response rate (higher than many institutions)
- Drake is below the mean on 8 of 20 total indicators (10 from first-year students and ten from seniors); the weakest areas (scored below the mean for both FY and seniors) are in: Reflective and Integrative Learning, and Supportive Environment.
- Broad discussion of areas of concern/shortcoming relative to peers (7 schools participated--different group than we've compared ourselves to in the past)
  - Schools: Butler, Elon, Mercer, St. Mary's (CA), Valpo, Seattle, Loyola New Orleans
- Similar findings from critical thinking and information literacy AOI reviews (Example: "Examined the strengths/weaknesses of your own views" was down year-over-year and significantly below the "peer group." This is consistent with CT and IL assessment that shows significant challenges for Drake students in the higher-order skill areas of analyzing and synthesizing information.)

- Student focus groups:

- Only two+ sessions to date (more scheduled for Spring)
- Many students like AOI structure because they can dig into majors early (since most aren't sequenced)
- Students aren't always clear about the purpose of some AOIs.
- However, students all identified one AOI course that they enjoyed and that

they felt expanded their horizons.

## **2) Initial reaction / feedback from Committee members**

- Question: Would students who took NSSE have had the opportunity to experience J-term? Response: Some of the seniors did (although impossible to say how many; more juniors and sophomores participated (proportionally) in the first J-term than seniors.)
- Question: What did we excel at? Response: High percentage of first-year students engaging in high-impact practices.
- At least one committee member expressed surprise at the perceived low rate of engagement in student-faculty interaction.
- Question: What constitutes supportive environment? Response: "Academic success" areas such as: Writing workshop, tutoring, advising, etc.
- Several committee members said they would expect to see significant differences across schools/majors. Data is available school-by-school, and Kevin and Stephanie are "making the rounds."
- Several members would like to drill down into more detail on reflective & integrative learning data (see "next steps," below)
- A committee member said that while there were some disappointing findings, there was nothing very surprising (in either the Teagle report or the NSSE data)
- A broader discussion ensued: Questions included, "What is the intentionality of our curriculum?" and "What possibility is there that changes to Drake curriculum may have an impact on NSSE data?" Although no answers were given, Kevin pointed out that, "Our end goal is not to move NSSE scores." (Remembering that NSSE is perception-based, and not performance-based)

## **3) Brief update on UCC deliberations: (Todd Hodgkinson (UCC Chair) and Marcia Keyser (Vice-Chair))**

Todd and Marcia reviewed progress to date by the University Curriculum Committee. Readers are referred to the UCC Minutes or their UCC representative for details. The main points that were stressed: This is a multi-year process, and the UCC is currently looking at several options (ranging from "no change" to "widespread change").

The possibility of joint meeting for UCC & DCAC later in this process (when UCC is closer to having a "final" recommendation) was discussed and endorsed.

## **4) Discussion of next steps**

There was widespread agreement that a future meeting of DCAC should be devoted to looking at NSSE data in more detail (sometime in March).

Subsequent discussion identified a few areas to focus on/prioritize (since these are both areas of concern in NSSE and were identified last year as assessment priority areas): 1) critical thinking 2) information literacy 3) multicultural/global 4) engaged citizen and 5) writing. Kevin said

filtering out the questions and results in that area was do-able, especially since there is considerable overlap.