

2012 Committee Meeting Minutes  
December 12, 2008

Our primary goal is to ensure that every student in every undergraduate major has an opportunity to learn each of the six Principles of Undergraduate Learning during their experience at IUPUI. Ultimately, student learning of the PULs must be assessed, but we agreed that we should begin by identifying where the Principles are taught in the curriculum of each major.

One way to begin this process is to ensure that each freshman seminar contains emphasis on a few of the PULs. Then we could ask that each of the RISE experiences focuses on a few of the PULs. And finally, we could ask that Capstone courses assure student learning of all the PULs in a particular discipline.

Another, very recent, opportunity to insert the PULs into the thinking of deans and chairs is the announcement by the ICHE that henceforth there will be less emphasis on simply enrolling students and more incentive funding for increasing the number of degrees we grant and increasing the percentage of our first-time, full-time students who graduate in four years. Uday has already sent a message to the deans asking that they undertake planning to increase the number of degrees they grant and at the same time decrease time to degree. Both of these strategies would benefit by streamlining curricula. A very good way to streamline would be to focus on essential learning outcomes. That is, what is essential for a student to know and be able to do by the time they finish a degree program, and, by the way, how does each of the PULs figure in that set of outcomes? We might distribute an example of a curriculum map showing the PULs listed in the first column and the required courses in the discipline as column headings, resulting in a matrix. Then faculty in a discipline could indicate which PULs are emphasized in which courses, then look at the row totals to see which PULs are receiving an adequate amount of emphasis, and which are not. This kind of study might suggest a re-thinking of the importance of certain courses.

If faculty in a discipline are looking at courses in other disciplines that have heretofore provided experience in developing generic skills such as writing and critical thinking, it will be helpful to know what PULs those courses actually emphasize. Answering this question was behind a recent pilot survey administered to instructors of Gateway courses. Gateway instructors were asked how much emphasis they placed on each of 24 concepts that were related to the PULs and their sub-components. Unfortunately, lack of follow-up with potential respondents limited the number of participants in the survey, and a number of other problems were detected. Michele Hansen will work with Kate Thedwall and Sarah Baker and others to define more clearly the response alternatives and to increase the response rate in another pilot test.

Becky Porter emphasized the importance of our getting to a point where we can include in the catalog of courses some information about the PULs emphasized in each course.

Susan Kahn has looked at a variety of rubrics that we might employ in assessing student achievement of the PULs at a point in the future when we can insert assessment in this process. Mary Fisher will convene Susan, Trudy, and Mary Price to see if we can come to agreement on a recommendation about using a 3- or 4-point scale for a campus-level rubric. We would ask Mary Price to be involved since the Communities of Practice should be engaged first in this discussion. In addition, we might ask the principal investigators on the ePort Integrative Department Grants to contribute their ideas.

Karen Black pointed out that a preliminary indication of the PULs associated with courses in the state-wide transfer articulation listing already exists in the matrix we developed a couple of years ago. Before asking deans and chairs to do new work, we should distribute the STAC matrix again and ask if the information there is still relevant.

Ultimately, we should send the STAC matrix, results of the Gateway survey, and an example of a curriculum map to the deans as we ask for their help in achieving the goals of the 2012 Committee.

A suggestion was made that we develop a countdown clock from 2009 to 2012. Mary Fisher and Trudy Banta will work on this.