Memorandum

To: Sara Cordell  
Chair, Committee on Assessment of Student Learning

From: Sharron LaFollette  
Chair, Graduate Council

Date: April 26, 2009

Re: Graduate Council Support of CASL Resolution

On April 20, 2009 Graduate Council (GC) reviewed the draft resolution and accompanying documents on integrating assessment into the program review process. The Committee on Assessment of Student Learning (CASL) has proposed aligning the review of the assessment process by campus academic and administrative departments to the regular eight-year program review. The movement to implement assessment procedures within academic and administrative programs throughout campuses is being driven by both internal and external forces. At the national level, the Spellings Report criticized higher education for not conducting regular and comprehensive evaluations of the quality of academic and administrative programs and not responding to the identified needs for improvement. The North Central Higher Learning Commission and the Illinois Board of Higher Education have supported infusing assessment procedures throughout campus. In academic year 2008, UIS Campus Senate confirmed the importance of assessment across campus by creating CASL.

GC unanimously supports this proposal because:

- UIS has identified assessment as being a critical tool for ensuring academic and administrative accountability in providing quality programs on campus,
- Assessment should be an integral component of program activities; therefore, policies which imbed assessment into formal program review are critical to long-term success,
- Assessment centered within the departments can be optimized to specific needs of the departments and allow for faster adjustments to be made in operations and curriculum,
- A systematic process for the discussion of assessment at mid-term (at 3 years) in the program review process allows CASL to customize assistance to improve progress toward effective assessment at the department level, and
- Mid-term reports reduce assessment reporting intervals from yearly surveys to a more thorough and responsive evaluation of departmental operations and curricula.
- This process will help departments prepare their assessment reviews well in advance of the crush of the program review process.

GC believes CASL is providing a much needed resource for campus-wide monitoring and improving assessment. We support this resolution and the work CASL proposed for continued growth in this area.

UIS

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