To: Joanne Creighton, Interim President

From: Wendy Sternberg, Associate Provost and Professor of Psychology; Chair of Institutional Effectiveness Committee

Re: Year End Report of Institutional Effectiveness Committee, June 2012

1. Summary of Activities in 2011-2012

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee met approximately biweekly beginning in October 2011. The group consisted of the following membership:

Wendy Sternberg, Associate Provost and Professor of Psychology (Chair)

Catherine Fennell, Director of Institutional Research/Assistant to President for Special Projects

Christopher Chandler, Director of Human Resources

Steve Watter, Dean of Student Life

Diane Wilder, Assistant Vice President, Institutional Advancement

Mike Keaton, Senior Associate Director of Admission

Spencer Golden, Director of Enterprise Systems, Instructional and Information Technology

Jennifer O’Donnell, Web Communications Manager

The committee discussed (and took action on) several different topics during 11-12, as outlined below. Meeting minutes (and other supporting documents) are attached to this report.

* Student Learning Assessment

One function of the IE Committee is to provide leadership around issues of student learning assessment. Our focus for 2011-2012 was on departmental statements of student learning goals. In response to a joint solicitation from EPC and IECacademic departments submitted statements of student learning goals suitable for posting to the web in February 2012 (the posting/updating of departmental webpages will be accomplished in Summer 2012). In order to assist academic departments with this exercise, the IE Committee Chair (the point person on the committee for issues related to Student Learning Assessment) prepared and circulated an “Assessment Resources” document, and led a faculty Brown Bag lunch in late January to discuss this initiative (supported by other participants in the Teagle Student Learning Assessment project). At present, all Academic Departments—except Sociology, Linguistics and Political Science—have submitted learning goal statements.

Looking ahead to 2012-2013: As part of the EPC/IEC assessment solicitation, a second set of questions was included, related to the use of the senior thesis as a summative learning assessment. In our 2010 Middle States Self-Study, we made the argument that despite not having formal departmental “student learning assessment plans”, our students’ accomplishments in the required senior capstone experience demonstrated learning assessment and achievement of departmental learning goals, and verified the success of departmental curricula in preparing students for the capstone project. Middle States found our approach compelling, but requested that by the time of the Periodic Review Report (in 2015) that we establish consistent standards for the core components of the senior thesis experience (met in discipline-specific ways) and that we develop a rubric on which the standards would be evaluated. Given the nature of this project, we believe that EPC is best suited to take on this task. We have asked Departments to contribute descriptions of the thesis experience in each department to assist EPC in this project, and these were submitted along with the learning goal expectations in February (with the exception of the three departments noted above). The IEC chair should consult with the EPC chair during the academic year to monitor progress on the “thesis as a learning assessment” initiative, as well as the current-year focus on assessment of General Education requirements (which Middle States also asked us to address). Finally, there should be additional follow-up with academic departments that did not respond to the solicitation. In a subsequent year, after Departmental use of the senior thesis rubric, the IEC and EPC should request feedback from Department Chairs about their experience in applying and reflecting upon the rubric results within the department.

* Middle States Status Report (attached)

In anticipation of the appointment of a new President and the upcoming Periodic Review Report (due in June 2015), the IEC created a progress report focused on the 21 recommendations arising from the 2010 self-study. This progress report was shared with Senior Staff in April 2012, and pending minor refinements, will be posted to the College website in Summer 2012.

* 2011 Senior Exit Interview and Enrolled Student Survey

The IEC reviewed the Deans Office summary from the 2011 Senior Exit Interview, and the 2011 COFHE Enrolled Student Survey. Following our own recommendation to improve institutional effectiveness by returning survey data to stakeholders and decision-makers, the Office of Institutional Research prepared a summary of student responses on the ESS for the Provost and for Academic Departments. The report provided to the Provost included a summary of all quantitative data about students’ academic experiences, broken down by respondent’s major, and included divisional summaries and national benchmarking data. Reports prepared for academic departments included quantitative data from respondents majoring in that particular department. Of interest were the Haverford-specific questions that focused on our institutional learning goals (our “Educational Goals and Aspirations), some of which were specifically addressed to seniors filling out the survey. We were pleased to note that our students’ self-report of skills acquired in preparation for and during the senior thesis project demonstrate achievement of our articulated goals.

In addition, the committee distilled the outcomes of the Exit Interview and ESS, and in particular, looked for synergies among the responses received in the more quantitative (ESS) and qualitative (Exit Interview) responses. From these responses, the committee discussed a set of “Areas of Concern” to be shared with Senior Staff, and in some cases recommendations for follow-up. The committee also discussed the perennial issues about which students complain in both the Exit Interview and the ESS—dissatisfaction with food at the dining center (in terms of quality, choice, and healthfulness), inadequacy of campus spaces, and the shoddy condition of some of the dorm spaces. As these are areas about which considerable institutional attention is already focused, we did not discuss them or recommend them for follow-up (although the Committee will continue to look for changes in student sentiment on these matters in the future, in response to ongoing efforts at improvement).

Looking ahead to 2012-2013: The Areas of Concern that were distilled from the feedback we received/analyzed and that should be taken up by the IE Committee for possible follow-up are: student dissatisfaction with the Social Honor Code, concerns about the academic rigor of Study Abroad programs, and concerns about the relationship among athletes and non-athletes and the role of athletics at Haverford. Regarding the Social Honor Code, it is suggested that the IE Committee, with the Dean’s representative as lead, consider ways of better understanding student sentiment about the Social aspects of the Honor Code, and addressing those concerns if they are indeed widespread. It is also recommended that Donna Mancini be invited to attend a meeting of the IE Committee to share information about current practices of assessment associated with international study abroad programs—both those administered by Haverford and those administered by other institutions. Regarding the relationship between athletics/academics and athletes/non-athletes, it would be interesting to look for positive trends on these issues once the new community guidelines surrounding athletics and academics developed by FAPC are adopted. Finally, the analysis of the ESS suggests that students would welcome a wider diversity of ideas as part of their Haverford education, criticizing their Haverford experience in terms of having a narrow worldview. Although the committee understands and appreciates this sentiment, we did not feel that there was any follow-up that could even attempt to address this concern at the present time.

* Policies and Procedures

A major effort this year concerned the documentation of College policies, and establishing procedures for ensuring that policies are accurate and up-to-date. In November 2011, the IE Committee chair met with Senior Staff to alert them to the effort to document all policies in existence at the College. Senior Staff members sent a solicitation drafted by the IE Committee to all department heads/direct reports. Responses were provided to the IE Committee, and complied into a spreadsheet documenting the existence of College/Departmental policies. To date, responses were received from most areas, however, there were no reports filed from the Dean of the College (the Dean’s office requested to submit their responses during the summer) or the Dean of Admission/Financial Aid reporting lines. High-level policies that cut across reporting line are highlighted through links from the Institutional Assessment Plan webpage (see below). It is recommended that office procedures be documented through network storage to facilitate continuity and reduce lost productivity due to employee turnover.

Looking ahead to 2012-2013: Future IE Committee agenda items related to this effort should include: a) refinement of the policy inventory—provide descriptions of each listed policy, which may require consultation with administrative unit heads; b) annual “check-in” with administrative units regarding changes to policies/procedures that should be reflected in the policy inventory; c) follow-up with administrative unit head regarding transparency of policies for the purposes of continuity during transitions; d) documentation of College Operating Procedures (follow-up with President’s Office regarding Board Operating Procedures, an effort currently underway with Violet Brown as on-campus contact); e) establish procedures for review of and revision to Administrative/Professional Handbook, and Staff Handbook, similar to what has been done recently with the Faculty Handbook—these are the primary repositories for College policies that affect employees, and should be reviewed for accuracy and to ensure that practice aligns with policy.

* Institutional Assessment Plan Website

Several meetings were devoted to establishing a web presence for the work of the committee, that we are referring to as our “Institutional Assessment Plan” website. After preliminary committee review of website structure, organization, and desired content, the Committee chair and Director of IR developed all of the content for the website. Communications is working on the website, and it should be “live” during the summer of 2012. Key areas of the website include: general information about the College’s approach to assessment and planning; student learning assessment; institutional effectiveness; comprehensive planning; program assessment; employee performance evaluation. Before officially going live, the website will be reviewed by the IE Committee and Senior Staff.

Looking ahead to 2012-2013: Although the website is fairly well developed, it is expected that there will be refinements that can be incorporated. Once EPC develops senior capstone expectations and core components, these should be incorporated into the student learning assessment section, along with a summary of assessment initiatives with respect to General Education requirements. The committee should discuss inclusion of other items that are not currently included: departmental mission statements, employee performance evaluation completion rates, information about the Kuali and SEADS initiatives, etc.

* Salary Bands

The committee discussed the establishment and transparency of salary bands for exempt employees. Currently these exist for non-exempt employees and faculty, and are published on the College website.

Looking ahead to 2012-2013: HR is currently working to compile this information for more widespread dissemination.

* Document organization

The committee discussed the haphazard mechanism for storing unneeded documents (currently in the attic storage rooms in Roberts—aka The Morgue). A group of committee members, President’s Office, and Library staff visited the storage area to gauge the importance of items that are stored here. Certain items were tagged as having institutional value and were slated for transfer to the College archives. Other items were flagged for removal and disposal.

Looking ahead to 2012-2013: A more comprehensive system of cataloging old documents is needed, and could be related to an Institutional Data Management plan (see below).

1. Agenda Items for 2012-2013

As noted above in sections entitled, “Looking ahead to 2012-2013”, there are points of follow-up from 11-12 agenda items that should be carried forward into the next academic year. In addition, included below is a list of “scheduled items” that the IE Committee will want to pay attention to on an annual, ongoing basis. Finally, there are several items that represent new initiatives for the IE Committee in 12-13.

* Annual Scheduled items:
  + - administrative units annual revision of policies and procedures (update to policy inventory)
    - senior thesis title and abstract collection (titles to Raiser’s Edge, abstracts to admissions)
    - update link to admissions summary of senior thesis projects
    - discussion of senior exit interview and other student/alumni surveys (HEDS alumni survey in 12-13)
    - review/refinement of senior exit interview questions
    - reports on employee evaluation completion rates (HR)
    - administrative units annual review of job descriptions for HR

In addition to these items that should be on the IEC agenda in each academic year, several items can be included on the IEC agenda in 12-13.

* Career Development Office

In 10-11, the IEC discussed CDO functions and made some recommendations (e.g., coordination between CDO and academic departments, and between CDO and campus employers) that were put on hold in light of a comprehensive CDO review in 11-12. The IE Committee should reconsider those recommendations, informed by the outcome of the CDO review.

* Co-Curricular Student Learning Assessment

In 11-12, the focus was on student learning assessment in academic departments. However, the College mission includes development of the “whole student” and there is considerable rhetoric surrounding the learning that is achieved through co-curricular activities, particularly those that inform students’ classroom experiences (i.e., Center-sponsored activities). The committee should work with co-curricular programs to develop learning goal statements and ensure that student learning relative to these goals is assessed on an ongoing basis.

* Civic engagement

Related to the above item on co-curricular learning assessment is the issue of Civic Engagement and an increasing call for external reporting about such activities. Clearly a central part of our mission, responses on the ESS suggest that students are not as engaged as centrally in these activities as they would like to be. A more thorough assessment of this issue and how we capture data and report on it is warranted.

* Institutional Data Management Plan

At present, information is gathered, stored, and used by many different units on campus. A more thorough data management plan is needed. Also of interest is the impact of the SEADS project and the adoption of a more thorough information management system in the coming years. It is expected that the IITS and IA representatives on the Committee will play crucial roles in helping the committee think through issues related to data management, data retention, and data organization.

* Course evaluations

The Committee attempted to solicit faculty-wide input on the matter of course evaluations, but the Committee Chair was bumped from the agenda of 3 faculty meetings (and a Department Chair meeting). Input from the faculty via email was received at the end of the academic year and will be shared with the incoming Associate Provost responsible for matters of Institutional Effectiveness (most likely by serving as IE committee chair) in 12-13. It is recommended that the Associate Provost develop a proposal based on the input received from faculty and a benchmarking analysis of peer institution practices that can be brought to the faculty for fuller discussion in 12-13.

III. Reflections

I conclude this report with some final reflections for the President’s consideration regarding the structure and organization of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. At present, the committee consists of eight members, a representative from each of the six Senior Staff reporting lines (Provost, VPFA, VPIA, Dean of Admissions, Dean of the College, Chief Information Officer); a representative of the Communications Director (the Director attends meetings, but is not a member, of Senior Staff); and a representative of the President. This committee structure works well, and each committee member has contributed valuable insight into committee discussion/deliberation, informed by their expertise, experience, and perspective. It might be useful to consider potential additions to the committee structure. For example, the Budget Director currently attends Senior Staff meetings and plays a crucial role at the College in ways that are relevant to Institutional Effectiveness but is not currently represented on the Committee. In addition, the Research Analyst in the Provost’s Office can (and does) play an important role in data gathering in support of assessment activities, but can also play a more prominent support role for the committee by attending, taking minutes, and ensuring follow-up and coordination with other key committees.

Another issue to consider is the designated chair of the committee. Currently, the Associate Provost is the chair, but the Director of Institutional Research/Assistant to the President for Special Projects also takes a leadership role on the committee. There is no *a priori* reason for the Associate Provost to be committee chair by default, although s/he is in a good position to serve in this role, given the evolving nature of the position with respect to student learning assessment initiatives. A co-chair model, with the Director of IR co-chairing along with the AP (or another representative) might be a useful system to consider. Finally, the continuity of membership is important for the success of the committee, and I would urge the President to recommend to Senior Staff that their representative to the committee serve multi-year terms (already standard practice in most areas).