Minutes of the Academic Standards Committee Meeting
General Education/International Education Faculty
December 13, 2006

Attendees:
Kevin Haertzen, Patrick Hagen, David Kraemer, Jennifer Mandel, Paula Nelson, David Rowley, Adam Stanley, Frank Steck, Susan Tonner, Irfan Ulhaq, David Zierath, and Shane Drefcinski

The meeting began at 4:02 p.m.

Since there were a large number of guests who teach courses that count for International Education credit, Steck began with item #5 on the ASC agenda: the assessment of International Education.

Hagen distributed a handout that listed the general education requirement for International Education, the student learning outcomes of International Education along with the two assessment tools in place (the senior exit survey and the formal meeting of the faculty), and the scores for International Education from the previous senior exit surveys. Hagen added a suggestion for a third assessment tool: an annual survey of selected International Education courses. He also questioned whether the university should change its policy that “Short-term visits of less than six weeks duration and/or trips undertaken primarily for tourism or recreational purposes may not be used to fulfill this requirement.” UWP offers a number of brief courses (e.g., during Winterim) that involve international travel, and these courses seem to satisfy the spirit of the International Education requirement. No action was taken on either of Hagen’s suggestions.

The next part of the meeting was spent clarifying how to assess international education (IE). Some people were under the impression that the faculty already assessed the IE component of general education; they had not. (This ASC meeting was the formal meeting of the IE faculty specified in the general education assessment plan.) Others were under the impression that assessment of general education required some type of standardized test or other, highly objective measuring tool. Of course, this would be very difficult given UWP’s “cafeteria” approach to general education and the interdisciplinary nature of IE. Mandel noted that assignments that already are embedded in the IE courses suffice. She mentioned success she had with an assignment that requires students to comment on an article about the Middle East. Students wrote a short paper that attempted to summarize the article at the beginning of the semester. Most students did poorly. Then, at the end of the semester, they did the same assignment all over, and performed much better. It was agreed by the faculty and ASC that these sorts of assignments are adequate examples of evidence that indicate student achievement.

Ulhaq raised the possibility of a single IE course that would be required of all UWP students. Most faculty members were not receptive to that idea, although Tonner noted that her previous institution had an interdisciplinary, international relations course that was required of all students.
Turner, Rowley, and Hagen raised questions about the existing IE student learning outcomes. They were concerned that the outcomes were too vague. It was agreed by the faculty members who teach IE courses that they will re-write the student learning outcomes during the spring 2007 semester.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.