Program Review Committee

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 9, 2013
To: Tim Wilson, Interim Vice President of Student Life and Dean of Students
Re: Response to 2013 Student Life Annual Assessment Report
Prepared by: PRC / Savannah Kelly

Thank you for submitting your 2012-2013 Annual Assessment Report to the Program Review Committee in a timely manner. The PRC appreciates your dedication in assessing multiple departmental programs through the administration of surveys and is encouraged by your closing the loop activities. Before specifically addressing this year’s report, it is important to provide a few remarks and questions regarding Student Life and assessment in general.

According to the “Educational Plan and Assessment” web page, Student Life creates “educational programs targeted toward four of Westmont’s institutional learning outcomes. While Student Life will execute departmental, inter-departmental, and educational goals yearly, it also employs a 4-year cycle wherein each of the four institutional learning outcomes receives particular emphasis.” According to the web page, members of Student Life created white papers in January 2012 outlining the division’s participation with and support of the following outcomes: CUPA, Diversity and Global Awareness, Physical and Emotional Health, and Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement.

During the 2012-2013 academic year, the campus-wide focus was to assess the Christian Understanding, Practices and Affections (CUPA) institutional learning outcome. And yet, in the 2012-2013 Student Life Annual Report, there is no mention of the activities supporting CUPA during the last assessment cycle, nor is this mentioned in the 2012-2013 General Education Annual Report, which specifically addressed the CUPA initiatives. The PRC strongly encourages you to provide information on any activities supporting the current institutional learning outcome in your annual assessment reports. It is important that you disseminate this information beyond the white papers and the annual report would be an ideal place to communicate such activities.

As a co-curricular division, we applaud Student Life for providing information on five different departments in their annual assessment report. However, the report is in need of a cohesive assessment strategy for the entire division which would be addressed through each individual department. The data presented in the annual report is quite important for in-house divisional and departmental uses; however, the PRC is most interested in Student Life establishing an overarching strategy for assessment that would be repeated every four to six years rather than the evaluation of individual stand-alone programs as noted in your current report. We encourage you to annually include data on the “4-year cycle” mentioned in the above paragraph, or to identify broader program learning outcomes specifically for Student Life that can be addressed through departmental assessment efforts.

The current report is divided by department and that seems to work well, however the PRC encourages you to consider writing an introduction to the entire report explaining the overarching goals for Student
Life during the academic year. We would like to see the departmental reports supporting those broader goals in addition to assessing their own departmental programs. The introductory comments should be concise (no more than 1 pg.) while also serving to synthesize the entire report.

We would like to recommend a few formatting suggestions that will assist your readers in interpreting the report. We do appreciate your use of the established report template which promotes consistency across all departments, but we ask that you include all “survey results” (sections B) as appendices. Please strive for consistent formatting across departments when providing survey results; in this year’s report, each department presented survey data in various formats, fonts, and sizes. The “template summary” (sections A) along with the “director’s comments” (sections C) should suffice as the text of the report.

We commend each department for identifying learning outcomes for their activities and for their closing the loop analyses. An additional strength of the report are the departmental “Directors’ Comments,” which strive to interpret the data and respond with appropriate follow-up measures. We certainly feel that the spirit of assessment has been implemented in individual Student Life departments. Now we encourage you to identify your assessment priorities on a broader scale. If this is difficult at a divisional level, then determine 1-2 program learning outcomes for each department that will be addressed consistently. Or, as suggested previously, consider using the four institutional learning outcomes you support (as mentioned on your website) as guiding priorities and then encourage the departments to create their own outcomes which will annually align with the broader Student Life / IL outcomes.

Thank you again for your submission. We look forward to reviewing your report next year.