The meeting of the Campus Assessment Network (CAN) was held Wednesday, October 2, 2013 at 3:00 p.m. in Adams Hall B13.

Welcome and Introductions

Members were introduced and thanked for their attendance.

Members present:
Chris Parker, Evelyn Comber, Carrie Zack, Crystal Doyle, Lara Lyles, Beth Towell, Bri Lauka and Michaela Holtz

Future Agenda Items

Beth Towell wondered if it would be beneficial to have Jeff Reynolds and Ritu Subramony talk to the group about how to use CAD data. Beth said that the College of Business is interested in CAD data but are curious about what the data can be used for. Chris Parker agreed that it would be a good idea to have Jeff and Ritu come in and talk to the group about CAD data.

Evelyn Comber said she would like to see the group do another book discussion this year. Beth Towell mentioned that a good book topic this year might be how we can assess things outside of the classroom. Bri Lauka thought a good book discussion topic would be a book on co-curricular assessment. The university has student learning outcomes and they can be very broad. Departments also have student learning outcomes and she would like to learn how we can bridge the gap. How can we identify the specific learning outcomes for this group of students. As an advisor it would be nice to see how it can all fit together to help students understand it more and to guide them better. Beth Towell agreed that this would be a great book topic and co-curricular and extra-curricular type of topics.

Chris Parker asked what the group thought about ePortfolios. Beth Towell thought it would be great to talk to a department that uses ePortfolios and find out what they like about them and what they find useful. What are the pros and cons of using them. Michaela Holtz said that the Department of English has been using them for a while now and that Michael Day does a lot with them. Chris agreed that having Michael Day come and attend a meeting and talk about ePortfolios is a good idea. It would also be great to get the students perspective on using them. Would it be beneficial to start a UNIV 101 through 401 class that is only one credit for students to take to inform them about ePortfolios and how to use them in the classroom.

Bri Lauka attended the First-Year Experience conference and one of the things they talked about is having a three credit class that is an introduction into a field but also combine it with a UNIV 101 class. It can help them with identity formation. Beth Towell said the College of Business has similar type of classes and Bri said she would refer a lot of students to that type of class. Beth Towell said that it would be great to see what other departments are doing on campus when it comes to career preparation.
Alumni Survey

Carrie Zack said that the alumni survey doesn’t provide her office with a lot of information. They use a teacher preparation survey but it is going away and at the same time requirements are being increased by accreditors to obtain more survey data. Her office is trying to figure out what type of survey they are going to use to now gather the data that they need. They are always battling a low response rate for the teacher preparation survey and the alumni survey. Carrie is wondering if they should put a supplemental into the alumni survey or find a new state test to use.

Chris Parker gave an update on the alumni survey redesign and said that tomorrow will be the first meeting. The team will be going over the questions, how it can be shorter and more useful to people. A lot of the questions now we don’t need to ask, don’t use the answers from the questions or already know the answers to. We want to condense that down and still make it very useful. The IBHE has dropped the requirement of universities having to ask specific questions on their alumni survey. Now that the requirement has been lifted we are taking the opportunity to redesign the survey. If there is anything you would like to see different on the survey please let me know.

Campus Query

Bri Lauke said the university has been promoting the campus query training and use of MYNIU a lot more. Some of it seems to be very helpful and wondered if it could be beneficial to the CAN group and if there was a way to tie assessment into it. Beth Towell said that the student success collaborative hasn’t been well received but the software could be very useful. Bri Lauke would love a tool that could help track who comes in for advising and who doesn’t. Beth Towell wondered if there was a difference between students who use academic advising and ones who don’t. It would be great to be able to know that and try and figure out what we could do to help the ones that don’t use it.

Presentation of a Linkage Model as a Framework for Assessment Research

Chris Parker passed out a handout and talked to the group about it. The handout shows how there is so much data out there and how it can all play together. Chris has tried to put a linkage model together to show what we do as a university and how that impacts the students. It would be great to see what kind of reactions students have to those different practices and learning outcomes as a result of those and what sort of life results would they have. Bri Lauke thinks that these are measurable things but wants to know who is impacting this? Bri Lauke would like to know what office or groups could be engaging in this. Chris said an article that the AAC&U did was very interesting and it was done on student performance and retention and how a number of practices can affect that. Evelyn Comber said that she has noticed that the students who don’t want to quit or transfer are ones who are involved in NIU and have friendships and places they go to. Evelyn said that students do come here for an education but they also come here for socializing and that is very important. It would be great to also know how the community views NIU with all of these factors. Beth Towell said it would be nice to know what the “communiversity” is going to do for us. How will it impact us. It is a really big plan and initiative that President Baker is putting together. Beth Towell also wants to know what else impacts enrollment. Of course having a great educational reputation is important but is an ethical reputation also one of them. This would be great information to have for marketing purposes.
Baccalaureate Student Learning Outcomes

Chris Parker addressed the group about baccalaureate student learning outcomes and how we can assess them. Seems like there are many good ways to go about it and would love to talk about it more at a future meeting. It would be great information for the Office of Assessment to have when working with other departments.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.