**Comments from the Assessment Committee (August, 2009): CIE**

**Assessment Committee Contact Person: Dean McCurdy**

**Plan also reviewed by: Drew Dunham and Cheryl Blackwell**

General Suggestions (sent to all Departments/Programs)

In general, there were a few themes that the Assessment Committee noticed. First, it is most helpful when the progression from Step 2 to Step 3 and Step 3 to Step 4 are clear. That is, after you have articulated your learning goals, the clearest proposals are explicit in how the courses/experiences in Step 3 directly support the learning goals. And Step 4 should take full advantage of all of the places in Step 3 where data might be collected. Second, make strategic use of both direct and indirect measures, and think about whether data can be collected at the beginning, during the program of study, and at the end. This gives a richer sense of where and when your work contributes strongly to learning goals and where improvements might be made. Third, make your plan manageable! All data need not be collected annually; some can be done every other year. And you may choose not to measure for all of your learning goals right now. Make claims that you can (a) intellectually, ethically stand behind and (b) find resources to measure.

Specific comments on your plan

Step 1 (Program Mission): Your mission statement defines the audience as “the people of Albion College and the global community.” It might be helpful to clarify the terms “people” and “global community” in this statement. From reading the following steps, it seems that “people” refers mostly to Albion students studying off campus and international students and native speakers studying on our campus.

Step 2 (List goals/outcomes): The goals listed in this section certainly appear to be logical for the mission of your program, but assessment is ultimately much easier if the outcomes/goals are listed from the perspective of what skills/knowledge students should gain from your program. Parts 1 (A) and (B) and 2 of your original plan do contain several learning outcomes that are student-centered and would seem to lend themselves readily to assessment. We suggest that the outcomes listed in parts 3-5 of this step be described similarly - from the perspective of the intended audience (learning outcomes for students) rather than as overall goals of the CIE. For example, Objective 5 states that the CIE will “encourage an appreciation of cultural diversity, on and off campus”. It might be helpful to describe what attributes a student (on or off campus) will attain if this goal is successful. That way, it should be easier to develop a plan to assess this outcome (in Step 4).

Step 3 (Identify program components): In this section, you describe examples of actions that you believe would strengthen various elements of your programs. While this information is important, it is the type of thing that would normally appear in Step 6 (i.e., information that comes from interpretation of actual assessment data). In revising Step 3, it would be helpful to simply list the types of activities the CIE uses to educate students and others (you have done much of this under your response to Step 2, so it could be moved and elaborated-on here). After listing activities, you would then list the specific learning outcome(s) from Step 2 that connect to each activity in your program.

Step 4: This section needs to be developed before proceeding to Steps 5 and 6. In choosing a method(s) or a source(s) of data for assessment/interpretation, it will be important to select learning outcomes that can be readily assessed (through one or more of the activities listed in a revised version of Step 3). Also, you do not need to assess every portion of your program (choosing one learning outcome to start with is likely a good idea). Depending on the outcome(s) you wish to assess, approaches might include surveys, focus groups or other means as indirect efforts, and evaluations done by you or others as direct measures of assessment.

Thank you for your efforts!

**Next Steps:**

In coordination with your Assessment Committee reviewers and their feedback, please observe the following deadlines for your assessment cycle:

September 15: Revisions to Steps 1-4 due (if necessary)

October 1: Completion of Steps 5 & 6 using preliminary data

November 2: Final Fall 2009 plans due