September 27, 2013
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Inquiry ARC Board of Trustees Report

Summary Program Overview:
Participation in Inquiry ARC continues to be robust, with 38 faculty and staff having participated to date. Our program goal for 2013-14 is 20, and we currently have 14 fall 2013 participants and 5 new applicants for our spring 2014 cycle, which is currently underway. The current cycle for spring will end Sept. 27, so I anticipate that we will meet or exceed our goal for participation for 2013-14.

For details on our programmatic and professional development achievements and goals, see http://inquiryarc.unca.edu Reports: Inquiry ARC Report, 2012-13. I have detailed our assessment concerns and goals below.

Summary Assessments Results from AY 2012-13 (Pilot)
1. Evaluation of faculty materials – Our assessment identified several issues in faculty materials used to communicate with students about critical thinking and the Inquiry ARC pedagogy. Faculty were inconsistent in the detail provided on their course materials, sometimes failing to provide program SLO’s on their syllabi or clearly aligning course activities with critical thinking skills. Few provided feedback through open ended questions.
2. Evaluation of student work – Our assessment indicated that providing a variety of rubrics for evaluating student work did not improve the quality of information about students’ development of critical thinking skills. In fact, many Inquiry ARC instructors were unable to apply either of the rubrics because their courses do not require a final project or culminating piece of student work.
3. Student ratings of instruction – The following patterns were observed on the key Student Rating of Instruction items associated with Inquiry ARC pedagogy and critical thinking among students. (see appendix 1, Table 4)
   a. Gaining knowledge – Relatively similar mean ratings for Inquiry ARC courses and other courses during both fall 2012 and spring 2013.
   b. Understanding ideas - Relatively similar mean ratings for Inquiry ARC courses and other courses during both fall 2012 and spring 2013.
   c. Developing creative capacities – Somewhat higher mean ratings for Inquiry ARC courses than for other courses during both fall 2012 and spring 2013.
   d. Developing writing skills – Based on a very small sample of ratings from Inquiry ARC courses, somewhat lower mean ratings for Inquiry ARC courses than for other courses during both Fall 2012 and Spring 2013. This suggests a need to encourage Inquiry ARC educators to incorporate more writing in their courses.
   e. Developing speaking/discussion skills - Relatively similar mean ratings for Inquiry ARC courses and other courses during Fall 2012 with an increase in positive ratings by students during Spring 2013.
   f. Developing quantitative skills – Somewhat higher mean ratings for Inquiry ARC courses than for other courses during both fall 2012 and spring 2013.
Learning to analyze and evaluate ideas, texts and arguments – Somewhat higher mean ratings for Inquiry ARC courses than for other courses during both fall 2012 and spring 2013.

Summary of changes as a result of our assessments
1. Faculty materials – We have rewritten the Faculty Materials Checklist to provide more specific guidance regarding the information we need about faculty pedagogy and student learning outcomes. We also are using a new approach to soliciting information about how faculty enact the Inquiry ARC pedagogy in their classes, requesting a brief paragraph in which faculty to reflect on their work as an Inquiry ARC instructor at the end of the semester including what appeared to work well and what changes they are considering based on their experiences with the course.
2. Evaluation of student work – We are returning to a single Inquiry ARC-based rubric for evaluating student work and asking faculty to use the rubric to evaluate a final project or culminating piece of work. As an alternative, particularly important in classes without a final project or culminating work, faculty may use a pre-/post-assignment, written or performance-based, focused on critical thinking skills cultivated by the Inquiry ARC pedagogy.
3. Faculty development – We have added a second, in-depth workshop on assessing Inquiry ARC courses held at the start of each academic semester to ensure that faculty understand the information we are seeking and how to provide it.