

PRESIDENT'S COLLEGE-WIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PLANNING
Minutes of the March 7, 2011 meeting

Present: William Cornwell (Recorder), James Cullen, William Cunningham, Neal DeChillo, Edward Desmarais, Mark Fregeau (Chair), Arlene Greenstein, Kristen Kuehnle, Raminda Luther, Krishna Mallick, Nancy Schultz, Jeramie Silveira, Michele Sweeney

Location: CC-131

Mark convened the meeting at 11:00.

Mark welcomed the newest addition to the committee, Jeramie Silveira, and reported that the committee is now fully staffed.

Mark made a motion for everyone to e-mail the recorder their votes on whether to approve the minutes for the 2/28/11 meeting by Wednesday, March 9th. William Cornwell seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

One committee member expressed his outrage at the committee being asked to recommend reductions in academic programs when the departmental reports show that departments already are drastically underfunded and are doing amazing things with minimal resources. He believed that the committee was “barking up the wrong tree” and that we should follow the example of other universities, where there was a comprehensive review of all parts of the university instead of a review that only targeted academic programs for cuts—for instance, a review process at Salem State should look at administrative expenses. Another committee member responded that the university’s financial predicament was partly the result of a lack of comprehensive academic planning, which is what this committee is being asked to rectify. A third member said that if the committee’s report demonstrates how badly underfunded university programs are, then that information could be presented to the trustees or the governor.

One committee member asked the recorder whether the minutes for the February 28th meeting had been posted online so that community members would know which departments were going to be discussed today. She stressed the importance of the community knowing what the committee will be doing at each meeting. The recorder replied that because the minutes were not approved, they were not posted, and that what should be distributed before a meeting was an agenda. A third committee member noted that these are open meetings, that the committee will not be talking about departmental information that is not already in the departmental reports, and that departments will have the opportunity to respond to the committee’s draft report. A fourth committee member thought that, given the tight deadlines that the committee must meet, the committee will not be able to function if it has guests coming from every department to participate in discussions about their departments—the departments already have composed their reports, and every community member will be able to comment on the draft report.

A committee member responded that she has questions that are not answered in the reports and that she would like departmental representatives to answer at the meetings. She seconded another committee member’s comment that some reports were missing important data and that the committee might lack information needed to make recommendations about some programs. The first member emphasized that given the importance of the committee’s work, the quality of the report should not be sacrificed to meet deadlines. Some committee members countered that the reports were generally complete and were sufficient for the committee to write its report. One member of the committee added that if the committee got bogged down in trying to get departments to send representatives to participate in committee meetings, the committee would not complete its work this semester and all of the substantial efforts of departments and of

the committee would be wasted, which would lead to widespread anger from department chairs, among others.

A member of the committee argued that in the interest of fairness, when a department is under discussion, committee members from that department should be removed from the discussion: To do otherwise is to disadvantage departments that do not have committee representation. Another committee member objected by saying that although every faculty member had the opportunity to volunteer for the committee, he did not see people “bursting down the doors” to do so. A third committee member also disagreed with the first one and said that a member’s objective was not to advocate for a particular program but was to cull information, preferably in a spreadsheet, so that the information easily could be distributed to the community and to look for interdisciplinary collaborations, duplications of effort, and so forth.

Michele stated for the record that she is concerned about the fairness of the committee and objects to how its procedures do not call for inviting a representative of a department to be present when the department is under discussion and do not call for committee members to recuse themselves from decisions about their departments.

A committee member said that he thought that extending the Monday meetings past 12:30 would be problem because many people would have to leave then but everyone should be present to discuss recommendations about departments. Another replied that it would be helpful to agree on a spreadsheet to use and then the members who could stay past 12:30 could fill information in the spreadsheet so that the full committee would be better prepared to deliberate later about the department.

At the last meeting the committee had talked about the pros and cons of using a spreadsheet and about what format a spreadsheet should have if adopted. Since that meeting, two committee members, Neal and Nancy, separately had worked on two sample spreadsheets for the committee’s consideration. In discussing the spreadsheets, committee members said that the spreadsheet should be data-driven and not evaluative. Committee members also noted that a spreadsheet’s purpose should be to provide a fast, uniform way to access information about each department and not to compare numbers from different departments. One member thought that the spreadsheet should note not only which programs are accredited but which ones have to be accredited, because although accreditation is a good indicator of quality, meeting the standards of accreditation costs money, and the university cannot afford to seek accreditation for all eligible programs. This member observed that, for instance, Nursing and Occupational Therapy have to be accredited, but Education does not have to be accredited by NCATE.

After extensive deliberation about the benefits and drawbacks of using a spreadsheet and about the sample spreadsheets that Nancy and Neal helpfully developed, **Kristen made a motion for the committee to use the template that Neal provided but with the addition of (a) two columns, one for the number of full-time faculty members and one for the number of declared majors or minors and (b) information showing to which approved program-review criterion each column relates. The columns on Neal’s spreadsheet template were labeled “Programs,” “Support SSU Mission,” “Internal Demand,” “External Demand,” “Enrollment (mean 5 yrs),” “Graduation (mean 5 yrs),” “15% Rule,” “Recent Efficiencies,” “Proposed Efficiencies,” “New Initiatives,” “Faculty Needs,” “Other Needs,” and “Other Relevant Information.” Mark seconded the motion, which was approved by a vote of twelve in favor and one abstaining.** The spreadsheet was tweaked further later in the meeting (see below).

The committee discussed the qualitative information that the spreadsheet would omit. **William Cornwell made a motion that there be a qualitative analysis of each department that would substantiate or supplement the spreadsheet’s data and that, with the spreadsheet, would provide a basis for the committee’s final report. Raminda seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.**

At various times during the meeting, the committee's purpose was questioned: Is the point of the committee to be an "über collator" of departmental recommendations, and if so, should those recommendations be prioritized? Although these questions were not fully answered, there was a consensus that one important committee function would be to suggest departmental collaborations that departments might not have realized are possible and desirable. For instance, three departmental reports talk about green curricular initiatives in development: The committee might want to recommend that these departments explore working in tandem, even though they did not initiate that suggestion.

At or about 12:30, several committee members, including the recorder, had to leave.

Discussion

The committee continued to discuss process. One committee member suggested that departments should be notified when their reports will be discussed and invited to observe or answer questions.

The chair noted that departments will have access to the committee's final report and all have the opportunity to respond.

There will be two parts to the final report, a quantitative part and a qualitative part.

The committee worked on refining the spreadsheet that had been approved for the committee's use and adding a few additional categories so that all seven criteria were represented. Changes included replacing "recent efficiencies" with "Recent Changes" and adding a column labeled "Future Plans." It was noted that the final report should note both increase of percentage and increase absolute numbers—these should be noted as a category. Increasing, decreasing, stable number of majors (09) and percentage change should also be noted.

Accreditation is only one factor among many to be considered.

Our job is to recognize the good work of the departments.

We need to discuss the graduate school involvement along with the undergraduate programs in both how it relates to each department, and how it is related to external demand.

We will look to see if the reports demonstrate C (Community Outreach) and W (Workforce) and M (State and Accreditation Mandates).

Minors can be addressed in the qualitative portion—if enrollments are not increasing because of space constraints etc, what efforts should be made to increase enrollments? Would we want to recommend enhancement of resources?

The question was raised about whether or not there should be a column for APRs. For each department, it needs to be clear: Is the APR for research, assessment, teaching or other?

The question was also raised about whether assessment should be a category. Should a general statement be included that all departments need to be supported to undertake assessment? NEASC in part addresses this. In addition to student satisfaction surveys, program objective outcomes—employer surveys, student exit surveys should also be encouraged and supported. A recommendation should be made that all departments move in the direction of assessing program outcomes. The university needs to provide support for this. We do well with assessing student outcomes, but not so well with program outcomes

Faculty needs should be considered for supporting current programs and for new initiatives

It was noted that the committee should choose a realistic number of reports to address each session.

Discussion of the reports

The first report discussed was **Adolescent Education and Leadership (AEL)**, which has 6 full time and 6 part-time faculty members. The spreadsheet was filled in with the following values:

1. Criterion 1: Support for SSU Mission--positive
2. Criterion 2: Internal Demand --positive
3. Criterion 3: External Demand—positive
 - a. High demand for math and sciences, and less for humanities
 - b. There are state, federal and accreditation mandates to fulfill
4. Criterion 4—positive
 - a. Recent changes—include curriculum changes
 - b. 15% rule—it should be clearly noted in the reports
5. Criterion 5—positive
6. Criterion 6—positive
7. Criterion 7—positive
8. Recommendations—eliminate business education and humanities, add Middle School English.
9. Possible streamlining—look into a five year master’s program and possible doctoral program.

Qualitative comments on AEL:

Outreach in the department –a plus—it is really doing a lot of outreach

Enrollments seem high in some programs—but there are lower enrollments in the math and science programs and theater.

CE undergraduate programs are low—but Graduate programs have strong enrollment.

Middle School concentration being recommended for elimination.

There may be an error or overstatement of workload on p. 7 of the report, on the chart that includes several departments not technically in the department such as PhysEd, Art Ed, and Spanish. For information about these departments, see Art, Phys Ed, and Spanish reports. A clarification may be necessary.

High external demand in some areas, but not in others. Reasons for lower enrollments in math, science and theater should be examined.

Criminal Justice (CRJ):

1. Criterion 1—positive
2. Criterion 2—internal demand—positive
 - a. Core courses, classes on flow sheets in other departments
 - b. Courses in the diversity requirement—fulfill distribution requirements
 - c. Q, V, and W courses
3. Criterion 3—external demand—positive
 - a. Community involvement, partnerships
 - b. Quinn Bill creates external demand—and the pool of applicants is drawn from a pool beyond criminal justice –somewhat like an accreditation—involves a site visit
4. Criterion 4—positive
 - a. Internal demand—strong on retention, enrollment, and graduation rates. More recruitment needed at the master’s level. Noted under future plans. Enrollments have been increasing.
5. Criterion 5—positive

- a. NEASC information included
- 6. Criterion 6—positive
 - a. New concentrations need time to grow—perhaps recruitment and retention could be highlighted here.
- 7. Criterion 7
 - a. Possible Ph.D. in CJ—revised the forensics concentration—investigating a 3 year bachelor’s program
 - b. CJ requesting 3 new faculty.

Two (2) reports were discussed, twenty-eight (28) more to complete.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30.

Respectfully submitted by William Cornwell (Recorder) and Nancy Schultz