

President's College-Wide Advisory Committee on Academic Planning
Meeting Minutes - Revised
2.22.10

Present: J. Cullen, W. Cunningham, N. DeChillo, N. Dennis, B. Doran, M. Fregeau,
A. Greenstein, E. Haran, K. Kuehnle, L. Little, K. Mallick, K. Ratner, P. Sablock,
M. Sweeney, L. Swiniarski.

Chair Mark Fregeau called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. in CC 131.

Chair's report

Fregeau reported on Provost/Academic Vice President Esterberg's presentation on academic planning to department chairs on February 11, 2010. Some chairs voiced concerns over deadlines imposed in the 11.06.09 document "Academic Planning Process 2009-2011." Other chairs expressed questions about criteria they would be addressing. The Provost is revising the format and guidelines for reports in response to concerns of chairs at the February 11 meeting. The next chairs' meeting is Wednesday, March 3 at 3:00 p.m..

Discussion questions

Fregeau posed the following questions to the Advisory Committee at various points during the meeting:

- Given the fact that the committee was convened at the end of the first semester in the planning process, should we consider proposing a revision in the timetable? If we want to revise the timeline, we will have to explain why to the Provost.
- How do we fashion a workable charge from the outcomes listed in Part III on page two of the document "Format and Guidelines for Departmental Reports" (12.17.09)? How do we fine tune desired items?
- How do we want to frame this? For example, should we say: Show us your mission statement? Give us your current program description? Name of program? When it was last reviewed? How many graduated? What is enrollment? How many credit hours are taught? How many full time/part-time faculty? In short, should we start with the first set of indicators in Part IV of the "Format and Guidelines for Departmental Reports" (12.17.09)?
- What can we package to send back to departments? Should we provide a template for chairs to assist in their information gathering and submission?

- Where will the Chairs and the Advisory Committee find data for the indicators listed on page three of the document “Format and Guidelines for Departmental Reports” (12.17.09)?

Discussion

The following points were made by members at various points in the discussion. For efficiency, points are presented by topic, not in the order they were made. Comments have been combined to reduce redundancy.

Clarity

The Advisory Committee must be as direct as possible in its requests for information and make clear the timetable for the submission of information.

Goals

It is important to clarify the desired goal of the Academic Planning Process. Are we aiming to reduce expenditures, or to make the curriculum more efficient? How do we address the Provost’s concern desire to identify areas for future academic growth and interdisciplinary cooperation?

The academic planning process could provide the school with the opportunity to see academic areas in a whole new light, as the Provost suggested at our initial meeting.

The college mission statement has changed in the past few years. We need to see how all departments fit together; how they all relate; and how they might interrelate.

Developing evaluation criteria

It is important to identify which criteria will be used to judge merits of programs. Will the criteria focus on the number of majors? Program costs? Benefits of a program? How do we define “benefits”? Further, what constitutes a “program”?

What is the best way to develop criteria: building piece-by-piece, or proceeding from the mission statement?

We need not only to develop criteria, but also, weights for various criteria.

What rubrics and definitions should we use for academic program reviews?

Criteria for evaluating majors will be different from those for evaluating minors, certificates, and concentrations.

If the entire evaluation criteria are made available from the beginning, chairs will be less threatened by initial requests for numbers. If people see the whole picture, they will be less threatened.

The philosophical approach of evaluation criteria seems pretty standard across schools represented in our packets. (Morehead, Humboldt, Southern Maine, Indiana State, and Fitchburg State).

Requesting data

Could we present some of the criteria to chairs, and ask them to provide a response related to one criterion?

By providing chairs with the evaluation criteria at the same time we ask for numbers, we can enable them to put what we're asking for in context.

Departments that seek accreditation may have accumulated data and evaluated programs in ways that departments that do not apply for accreditation have not. Many departments that do not apply for accreditation have assembled internal department evaluation reports.

By requesting data for the indicators on page three of the "Format and Guidelines for Departmental Reports" (12.17.09), we will establish a consistent foundation for all departments.

If the committee only asks for numbers, people may interpret this the wrong way. We should couch our requests for information very carefully. We will want to make sure that we make clear that requests for numbers are not the whole package. We will be seeking additional information.

Quality is not always reflected by numerical data.

The Advisory Committee could ask departments to provide a narrative that provides the context for data requested. For instance, a department might explain that enrollments were low since a program was just instituted two years ago.

Why do chairs have to supply numerical data? Answer: Only chairs can put the numbers in context. Must we ask chairs to provide data this semester? Answer: Asking for data now provides us with progress this semester. Where will chairs find data? Answer: On the Z drive.

Timetable issues

Members of the committee do not want to rush the development of criteria or to overburden chairs with requests for information.

Members also recognized the fact that the original timetable involved four semesters, not the three that remained after the committee was convened in late December, 2009.

Members also acknowledged that the President needs input from the committee to aid her decision making for the 2012 budget year.

Given the late start, the committee hopes to get criteria to chairs for their input and feedback by May 31.

Subcommittee appointed

Peter Sablock, Neil DeChillo, Louise Swiniarski, and Keith Ratner volunteered to serve on the Subcommittee to Write a Draft of the Evaluation Criteria for the March 1, 2010 meeting. For guidance, they will refer to documents from Humboldt State, Indiana State, Morehead State, the University of Southern Maine, and Fitchburg State. Information from the Universities of Michigan and Iowa may also be consulted.

The subcommittee is charged with drafting the overarching criteria for evaluation that can be applied to all academic departments and program. The draft will not weight criteria.

Chair's meeting with Provost

At his next meeting with the Provost, Chair Mark Fregeau will report that the committee is making progress. He will not ask for an extension of the timeline at this time. He will inquire about the availability of the Provost's revised format and guidelines for departmental reports.

Next meeting

The next meeting is Monday, March 1, at 11:00 – 1:00 in CC 131.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned, by consensus, at 12:20 p.m..

Respectfully,

**Nancy Dennis
Recorder**