

**President's College-Wide Advisory Committee on Academic Planning
Meeting Minutes
4.26.10**

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 11:05 a.m. in the MH 237.

Chair's Report

Chair Mark Fregeau reported that the Provost provided a brief update on the work of the Advisory Committee on Academic Planning at a recent extended chairs' meeting.

Fregeau noted that the criteria are now proceeding through governance.

Fregeau distributed the "SOAS Departmental Annual Report Outline" for 2009-2010. [It was noted that the School of Human Services and Bertolon School of Business were following similar guidelines this year].

Subcommittee on Rubrics Report

The following replicates the subcommittee report sent to Chair Fregeau in an e-mail on 9 April, 2010 from Rubrics Subcommittee members Neal DeChillo, Bill Cunningham, Peter Sablock, Lillian Little, and Shelley Sweeney. (The original e-mail memorandum is attached to these minutes).

"On Friday, April 9th we met to develop a rubric for the Program Review Criteria. In discussing rubric construction, it became very clear to us that this was not the direction we wanted to go when reviewing department program reports. Our concern was that a rubric would quantify (4, 3, 2, 1) the success or progress of a program where there might be a possibility that programs would receive an unfair low score. Instead, we were more comfortable with making qualitative judgments based on the information that we received. As a result, we developed the following statement. We would like the larger committee to review, and provide feedback and support at our next meeting.

In reviewing department program reports, the President's Advisory on Academic Planning will make recommendations for efficiencies (e.g., reduction of flow sheets) where appropriate, within and across academic departments and we will not be rank ordering programs or categorizing programs for elimination."

Motion to Receive Report of the Subcommittee

It was moved and seconded to receive the report of the subcommittee. The motion carried.

Discussion on the Motion

Points are arranged in categories to further readability.

Subcommittee's comments

The subcommittee does not want to include a rubric in the departmental review process.

Quantifying elements of departmental reports might engender rancor among faculty.

Given that chairs will strive to present the best case for their departments, it is very likely that the Advisory Committee will end up assigning all 3's and 4's [on a rubric of 1-4]. This means that assigned grades will essentially be meaningless.

After much anguish over the use of rankings, the subcommittee settled on flow sheet reductions as the optimal way for faculty to participate in the departmental review process.

Discussion

Committee member: Without a set of rubrics, chairs might have difficulty writing departmental reports.

Committee member: Without rubrics, the work of the Advisory Committee will be more difficult. Response: By looking at enrollments for each flow sheet, chairs could make cuts easily. If there is a small demand for a flow sheet, the chair will make a decision on its future.

Committee member: To clarify: are we having criteria, but not rubrics to evaluate the criteria? What is the basis for the evaluation? Answer: We're trying not to quantify.

Committee member: How else do we evaluate without numbers?

Committee member: Not having rubrics sounds subjective. How will we evaluate the criteria? Answer: Numbers for majors and enrollments are objective data. Still, much relevant information will be of a subjective nature.

Committee member: We need to rank order criteria in order of importance if we are not giving a number [in a rubrics]. We need to tell people what to look for. We need consistency in evaluating departmental reports.

Chair's comment

Chair Mark Fregeau made the following point to guide the discussion:

We need consistency. Chairs have spoken to me about rubrics, guidelines, whatever you may call them.

Rubrics discussion resumes

Committee member: This is our opportunity to have input into future directions of programs. If we [the Advisory Committee] don't provide inputs, the administration will make the decisions.

Committee member: Why can't we look at departmental reports in light of the criteria and say: do they or do they not meet the criteria? This approach does not depend on a lot of data, but still provides an evaluation.

Committee member: In any evaluation, we should describe what departments are doing to make things better.

Committee member: We should help departments write the best reports they can.

Committee member: I understand the frustration with numbers, but we need guidelines for chairs. Rubrics can be very simple or more involved. What are we going to do for our guidelines?

Committee member: What are postings going to look like? What are you going to use to see that goals are actualized? We do similar things [when grading] student papers.

Committee member: If we decide not to have rubrics, are we going to set up another committee to draw up guidelines?

Committee member: Our charge is to divide flow sheets into thirds: the bottom 30% to eliminate; the middle 30% to retain, and the top 30% to expand. This is the Dickerson model.

In response: We disagree. While the Provost asked us to look at programs to eliminate, retain, and expand, there was no indication that this meant an equal weighting among all three. In her deliberations, the Provost will use criteria and any weights developed by this committee. It is true that most schools rely on the Dickerson model. However,

Salem State is developing its own criteria, through the work of this committee. As for cutting percentages, this will be influenced most by the budget in '011. It is not realistic to think we would cut 30% of our academic programs. This scenario would occur if Salem State received no state appropriations. This is highly unlikely. The Provost's decision will be based on not only numbers, but also, on consideration of all criteria.

Committee member: Could we develop a qualitative, Likert scale for evaluations?

Committee member: We can't avoid ranking. What are we going to do/not do?

Committee member: If the Advisory Committee assigns all 3's and 4's [in a rubrics], the administration will make its own decision. Response: But, not having a rubrics also hands the decision over to the administration.

Committee member: Can't we suggest how flow sheets could be made more efficient? Perhaps we could develop a profile? Response: We need guidelines to do this.

Committee member: This committee chose not to weight criteria. Should we revisit this?

Committee member: I don't think you need numbers to evaluate what departments are doing. I feel that the criteria are guidelines that can show how well we do things. Why don't we trust chairs to do their jobs, to answer the criteria in ways that are best for their departments?

Committee member: No one on campus knows what we're [the Advisory Committee] is doing. Subcommittees in departments will end up applying the criteria. The reports will be a mess.

Break in discussion of rubrics

Governance progress on the criteria

Chair Mark Fregeau asked All College Chair Jim Cullen and Curriculum Chair Michelle Sweeney to comment on their committees' deliberations on the criteria.

Cullen noted that May 12 is the deadline for Academic Policies, Curriculum, and Student Life to complete deliberations. Their responses will go to the All College Committee. Thus far, there are concerns over determining "external demand." Also, there is nothing in the criteria that asks how to better a program. In some departments, there is a communication gap between chairs and faculty about the departmental review process.

Sweeney observed that curriculum committee members are seeing things they would like included in the criteria.

There was no information from the Student Life Committee.

Brewer Doran reported that Academic Policies was working on the criteria.

The criteria were being sent to the Graduate Education Council for review. However, Chair Keith Ratner had not received them, and they were not on the agenda for this week's meeting.

Rubrics discussion resumes

Chair summation of discussion up to this point

Chair Fregeau summed up: Regarding rubrics, we have two options: a) rubrics with numbers; or b) rubrics with qualitative headings. Alternately, we could leave the criteria as they are. Departments could report back with assessments of how they are dealing with the criteria.

Rubrics discussion resumes

Committee member: I am concerned about questions raised by review teams. We need to provide training.

Committee member: I was under the impression that departmental reviews would be reviewed by two teams to ensure inter-reliability.

Committee member: We have to provide chairs with something beyond the criteria. We might make the guidelines very explicit by including qualifiers like "meets very strongly," etc..

Committee member: the more we pigeon hole, the less flexibility chairs will have.

Committee member: If program reviews were classroom assignments, how would you assign grades?

Committee member: Couldn't we just ask: Yes or No – do the departments meet the criteria?

Committee member: In my area, a profile developed from the criteria would show differences among departments. Applying guidelines to these criteria would enable the committee to decide what is a "wow" job - and what is not.

Committee member: What is the difference between criteria and guidelines?

Committee member: We might think of guidelines as assigning grades.

Response: if you look at the criteria, how would you develop a guideline that defines “consistency with the mission of the Commonwealth”? We need to develop guidelines to show how things are done.

Committee member: Isn't this process similar to evaluations we do for promotions and tenure? The promotions and tenure committees look at portfolios submitted by individuals in very different departments, with different responsibilities. The criteria unit members follow are broad enough to accommodate these differences. The promotions and tenure committees evaluate the portfolios. We don't compare across departments and members within departments. Why can't the Advisory Committee evaluate faculty portfolios in a similar fashion?

Committee member: I evaluate faculty in my departments using guidelines in conjunction with the criteria in the contract.

Committee member: Are you saying that with the criteria, you are making interpretations? Why can't you use the same approach in evaluating programs?

Committee member: We need to establish our objectives. Cost savings. I'm not comfortable with assessing that. Efficiencies? This is different.

Committee member: The President is looking to our work to identify programs to streamline or expand. Above the President's level, she's looking to identify programs to prepare students for new fields in the twenty-first century. The process will have up sides and down sides.

Committee member: But, is the re-allocation of funds our job?

Response: No. But, this committee will provide the data to the administration to use to make the decisions.

Committee member: As a first step, we can cut down the number of flow sheets and make remaining ones more efficient. But, if funds from the state continue to decline, we will have to go further.

Committee member: How can we talk about resource allocation without knowing how resources are allocated now? In order to reallocate, we need to know the current use of resources.

Committee member: We could ask for this data.

Committee member: How do we find out the allocation of classroom square footage?

Response: Even with such data, we have to deal with this report. We have the opportunity to help Andy Soll and the Provost do their jobs. We may start with qualitative data, but it will become quantitative next spring.

Committee member: Even without the inclusion of numbers, I think we can tell the administration what's going on and what's not going on.

Committee member: If data is not available, we will have a level playing field. Even without additional figures, I can talk about the financial underpinnings of my department.

Chair summation of discussion up to this point

Chair Mark Fregeau: We have done a great job of developing the criteria and moving them forward. Our timetable is in place for governance. We need to deal with rubrics. Making a decision on rubrics will help us move forward. We need to settle this.

Rubrics discussion resumes

Committee member: It might be more constructive to take a different approach. What if the criteria become the guidelines for the departments? We can assess and make recommendations.

Committee member: That approach may have the most utility. We could offer nice suggestions, instead of telling a department they were a "2."

Committee member: This is what we were asked to do – provide recommendations.

Committee member: The academic program review documents from Morehead State provide details to help departments flesh out answers. The hints are half-way between a long laundry list and general suggestions. Might we add such details to our criteria?

Committee member: We could assemble a list and provide links to them.

Committee member: Can't faculty do this on their own?

Committee member: We still have a problem with the evaluating process – what to go by.

Committee member: How will we evaluate diverse departments?

Committee member: Why don't we go back and ask questions of departments if we are unsure of how they are responding to the criteria?

Committee member: The Board of Higher Education has a rule that every program is supposed to graduate five students a year. We must make this rule clear to chairs. The graduation rule in itself provides a baseline for evaluation.

Committee member: Most chairs are unaware of this.

Motion to amend the statement of the Subcommittee on Rubrics

Original Statement

In reviewing department program reports, the President's College-Wide Advisory Committee on Academic Planning will make recommendations for efficiencies (e.g. reduction of flow sheets) where appropriate, within and across academic departments and we will not be rank ordering programs or categorizing programs for elimination."

Proposed amendment

In reviewing department program reports, the President's College-Wide Advisory Committee on Academic Planning will make qualitative recommendations based on equal consideration of all previously approved criteria.

Discussion on the amended motion

Committee member: The vagueness of this statement is disturbing, given the anticipated state budget. Our task is to make this work as well as possible.

Committee member: People can be comforted by the idea that we are sunseting programs but not departments.

Committee member: No department will be sunsetted as a result of this committee.

Committee member: The cutting will be someone else's decision anyway. The work of this committee and any committee are only recommendations.

Committee member: We have accomplished a lot this semester. The criteria have been developed. We have a statement on how to proceed. We can't go any further at this point. The departmental reviews will begin in the fall semester.

Committee member: Does the amended statement provide enough information to chairs? What do the four department chairs here today think?

Committee member: I applaud the intention to include benefits of programs in the motion. I will make recommendations on costs savings and efficiencies in my departmental review.

Committee member: Shouldn't cost cutting be part of the Committee's response? Should it be included in the motion?

Committee member: In looking at flow sheets, I don't see how to determine costs - both direct and indirect.

Committee member: Let's look at the motion from a program view.

Committee member: We're not going to do rubrics, but we have created guidelines. This fulfills the Provost's "Charge to the Committee" dated 12.17.09.

Vote on the Motion

In reviewing department program reports, the President's College-Wide Advisory Committee on Academic Planning will make qualitative recommendations based on equal consideration of all previously approved criteria.

The motion carried, 13 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention.

Next meeting

The next meeting will take place after the All College Committee's May 12, 2010 deadline for the return of comments on the guidelines.

The next meeting will take place on Monday, May 17 at 11:00. The place is to be announced.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:41 p.m..

Respectfully submitted,

**Nancy Dennis
Recorder**

