

**President's College-Wide Advisory Committee on Academic Planning  
Meeting Minutes  
3.08.10**

Present: J. Cullen, N. DeChillo, N. Dennis, M. Fregeau, E. Haran, K. Kuehnle, L. Little, K. Mallick, K. Ratner, M. Sweeney.

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Chair Mark Fregeau called the meeting to order at 11:08 a.m. in HB 104.

**Chair's Report**

**Distribution of evaluation criteria**

Chair Mark Fregeau reported that he had consulted with MSCA/Salem Chapter President Amy Everitt regarding the distribution channels for the evaluation criteria the committee produces. Everitt confirmed that the criteria will go through governance, as discussed at the March 1, 2010 meeting.

It was asked: Isn't material developed by the Advisory committee being distributed to governance committees for informational purposes only?

Fregeau replied that it was his understanding that the criteria will be submitted to All College as part of its regular business, not just for informational purposes.

**Posting of minutes**

Fregeau urged the committee to make the minutes accessible to the entire Salem State College community. He directed recorder Nancy Dennis to speak with Amie Goodwin of Academic Affairs about posting the minutes on suitable places on the college web site.

Nancy Dennis was also asked to investigate the posting of minutes on the governance web site.

Discussion followed regarding whether or not to post drafts of criteria.

It was agreed that decisions about posting drafts would be made on a meeting by meeting basis.

**What is a "program?"**

Chair Mark Fregeau noted that the Advisory Committee must clarify what it will be asking of chairs.

Fregeau organized the discussion around these questions:

- What is a program, for purposes of the program reviews?
- In “Format and Guidelines for Departmental Reports” (12.17.09), the Provost lists six possible definitions of a program: a major, an option within a major, a minor, a track within a minor, a concentration, and interdisciplinary courses leading to a minor, track, or concentration.
- Should the committee settle on one choice? If so, which?
- Should the committee provide a cover letter to chairs clarifying what we are looking at? This might include suggestions for organizing departmental reports.
- Should we make up a list of programs for which reports will be requested?

### **Discussion of the definition of a “program”**

The following questions and observations were made. Some points have been consolidated to reduce redundancy.

- Will our report be written for departmental majors, or majors and all sub-tracks?
- We are not looking at departments, but at what departments do.
- Are we assessing departments or majors? In the business school, the two are not the same.
- For business, will we look at one major, or the different departments under business?
- The School of Education follows one mission statement. Internal demand is department based.
- Why cannot departments interpret what a “program” means to them, as it applies to their discipline?
- Faculty should come up with a list of all programs that warrant a review. For instance, Criminal Justice would prepare five reports.
- Should the Advisory Committee ask departments to compile a list of programs they would like evaluated?
- What will be included in the matrix of evaluation of programs?

- The criteria for evaluating a major is different from those used to evaluate a certificate. We should have different forms for evaluating each type of program: major, minor, track, concentration, and certificate.

### **Subcommittee to identify programs to be reviewed**

Michelle Sweeney, Krishna Mallick, and Lillian Little volunteered to serve on a subcommittee to identify programs to be evaluated. Chair Mark Fregeau asked the minutes to note that members not present are welcome to join this subcommittee.

### **Criteria subcommittee report**

Neal DeChillo and Keith Ratner presented the criteria developed by the subcommittee charged with drafting evaluation criteria. (Other members of the subcommittee included Peter Sablock and Louise Swiniarski).

DeChillo explained that the group consolidated criteria from the two previous drafts, while reconciling both with the Provost's criteria.

### **Discussion**

The following points were made before and during discussion of "Chair's Concerns." For clarity, they have been organized here. Comments have been consolidated to reduce redundancy.

- Regarding criterion three, how would departments determine the "external demand for graduates"? Where would they get criteria for this? How do we quantify external demand?
- Two additional web sites might make determining demand easier:  
Mass.gov's Massachusetts Employment Projections  
<http://lmi2.detma.org/Lmi/EmploymentProjections.asp>  
US Occupational Outlook Handbook  
<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>
- Language changes were suggested for Criteria Five and Six, "Outcomes," and "Program Statistics."
- When will 2009 data be made available on the "Z" drive? Answer: this summer.
- We began with eight criteria on the first two drafts. Now we have six. Question: What have we lost? Answer: Cost and program data elements were integrated into two areas.

- What will we do with the data? Will we rate data provided for each bulleted item?
- We should not penalize departments for items that do not pertain to them, such as accreditation.
- Why are we placing so much emphasis on marketability? Why not emphasize the development of critical thinking and other learning objectives?
- We should look beyond immediate market needs to preparing students for the future.
- We should not worry about departments meeting all of the criteria. For example, while there may not be an expressed demand for philosophy graduates, there are demands for professions that depend on skills developed in philosophy: law, education, and other analytical fields.
- Regarding Criterion Three, “External Demand,” might departments define careers that use skills of particular majors?
- The Provost has been clear: We are triangulating both qualitative and quantitative data.
- Could the Advisory Committee provide a cover letter saying that we recognize that not every criterion can be met by every department or program?
- Chair Fregeau noted that such a cover letter would need to be composed with the Provost.
- How will we tabulate responses? How will we construct a rating scale? Won’t all data look the same?
- Won’t this process and the data provide a starting point for comparing disparate programs? This is the first attempt to look at all programs through the same lens.
- Regarding previous program reviews, some departments spent many hours completing them, while others spent very little. Further, many program reviews never went anywhere.
- It was observed that in fact many program reviews resulted in triple the number of curriculum revisions that went through governance. There was a lot of elimination of duplicate programs.

## **Chairs' Concerns**

Chair Mark Fregeau noted that some chairs were worried about writing the departmental reviews. Some have indicated a reluctance to participate.

He noted that it was his feeling that the Advisory Committee's charge was to help the Provost work with expected constraints of the 2012 budget due out in summer 2011. Departments could elect to be a part of the process or not. If they elected not to participate, the administration would make its own decisions on consolidations of programs.

## **Discussion about chairs' concerns**

Points have been brought together for clarity and consolidated to reduce redundancy.

- There is concern among faculty in the Arts and Sciences that professional areas were getting more attention from the administration.
- The distribution of the *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance, Revised and Updated*, by Robert C Dickeson has sparked concern among some chairs.
- Many departments have non-accredited programs. They do not have data on student outcomes to submit for departmental reviews. Could Arts and Sciences departments receive assistance in gathering data?
- Why can't arts and sciences departments submit the external reviews that were compiled over the past few years? Many of these were excellent.
- If departments were fearful, wouldn't this be the time for them to make their case?
- Concern was expressed about the equity of evaluating of smaller departments in the arts and sciences. Typically, these departments do not have data from assessments of outcomes.
- Wasn't the purpose of the program reviews to consolidate and reduce the number of flow sheets, rather than to eliminate departments?
- If this is the case, why don't we define "programs" as "flow sheets"?
- Logically, it does not make sense for the administration to be looking to eliminate departments without having first streamlined programs within departments.
- What difference do any of these fears and rumors make? We have a job to do and we have to do it.

- Could the Advisory Committee seek clarification from the President on the purpose of the departmental reviews and the work of the Advisory Committee?
- It was reiterated that the purpose of the program reviews and work of the Advisory Committee was to find ways to cut costs for the 2012 budget cycle.

### **Actions In Response to Discussions of All Items**

Chair Mark Fregeau will ask the Provost to meet with the Advisory Committee at its next meeting on March 22 to address concerns about department cuts.

Neal DeChillo will revise the criteria and circulate another draft.

Recorder Nancy Dennis will attach this draft to the meeting minutes.

Recorder Nancy Dennis will provide the urls of two additional sites to aid in determining external demand for graduates of various majors: Mass.gov's "Massachusetts' Employment Projections," (<http://lmi2.detma.org/Lmi/EmploymentProjections.asp>) and the US Occupational Outlook Handbook (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>).

The work of the Subcommittee on Programs will be postponed until after the March 22, 2010 meeting with the Provost.

Either Chair Mark Fregeau or Amie Goodwin will send a statement to the college community noting the posting of the Advisory Committee Minutes on the college web site.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m..

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Nancy Dennis**  
**Recorder**

