

NCA STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, April 28, 2005

11:15 A.M., CN301

Present: Rick Beck, Gail Bruce-Sanford, Jennifer Caine, Linda Curran, Joan L. Foster, Kathy Heyl, Frieda Holley, Jeff Johnson, Vonda Knox, Larry Langton, Stephanie Moran, Abel Moreno, Ann Murphy, Hal Tamblyn,

Absent: Ellen Boswell, Roberta Hills, Ellen Susman, Julie Strasheim/Cathy Lucas

1. The minutes of the April 21, 2005 meeting were approved as written.
2. *Collecting data on the degrees of part-time faculty:* Stephanie Moran handed out another revision of the Part-time Faculty Contract and Part-Time Faculty Contract Procedures. She reported that Lee Combs had reviewed the documents and had no concerns.
 - a. Several changes were suggested to the contract:
 - Change “per semester hour” to “per semester/load hour.”
 - Three typos: change “that” to “who” in the sentence in bold, change “Transcripts” to “Transcript” when asking about new degrees, and insert “party” in the “employment at will” sentence – “by either party.”
 - b. Committee members approved the slightly revised contract. The new contract will become effective for this summer. There will be an official communication about the change. Summer contracts that are already in the process do not need to be redone.
3. Jennifer Caine, Linda Curran, and Ann Murphy reported about the HLC-AAHE Assessment Workshop that they had attended.
 - a. They found the workshop worthwhile; they now have a good idea of where HLC of NCA is headed in terms of accreditation and assessment.
 - b. MSCD is ahead of many other institutions who attended the workshop. However, there are aspects that could be improved at MSCD, in particular, “closing the loop.” We need to tie assessment with planning. We attempt to “close the loop” with program review, but not necessarily with the annual assessment reports.
 - c. “We need to use assessment to make a difference.”
 - d. Few institutions are assessing co-curricular or student service activities, but many are struggling to do so. Workshop members were not clear on what constituted “co-curricular activities.” At some institutions, non-academic areas are being asked to describe how they contribute to student learning and the development of desired skills.
 - e. Jennifer stated that her impression was that NCA is trying to reinvent itself. They have a good handle on “compliance” with respect to academic programs - but now the focus is on “student learning.” Moreover, HLC-NCA now realizes that “student learning” is not just a function of the quality of academic programs but also the quality of the support services available to students.
 - f. Since “student learning” is paramount, some college policies, e.g., “drop/add” need to be reviewed to determine if they contribute to student learning or only to student satisfaction.
 - g. Linda reported that student learning goals are needed for more than just major programs. They are needed for all programs, that is, for minors and certificates also. Steering Committee members discussed the need to have goals for minors and certificates.

Perhaps faculty should determine why a minor is required to graduate (unless an exemption is granted.) What is the purpose of a minor? Are we achieving our goal? Committee members agreed that student learning goals should be established for all certificates.

- h. Linda noted that the following questions need to be asked: Does the listing (of learning goals and/or ways of supporting student learning) describe what we should be / could be doing? If not, how should the list be changed? What resources are needed to change it? With the resources we have, what can we begin doing?
 - i. Student learning goals need to be measurable; otherwise we cannot determine if we are accomplishing our goals and/or how to enhance student learning.
 - j. We need to move away from a “Lone Ranger” assessment operation where only one person in the college cares about assessment and knows what is happening.
 - k. Linda, Jennifer, and Ann discovered that not all HLC-NCA reviewers had been trained on the new criteria. This was causing some concern at other institutions. We should have trained evaluators in two years.
 - l. Linda noted that we need to be selective when we write our self-study report. We need to “tell a story” not list a series of facts.
4. Committee members discussed Draft Two of the “Self-Study Plan for the 2007 HLC-NCA Visit.” (The first draft was called “Tasks.”) The recommendations/ suggestions will be shown in Draft Three. Some highlights of the discussion:
- a. A standing Academic Space Planning Committee should be established.
 - b. The assessment committees should not be “task forces” but should be standing committees. Otherwise HLC-NCA will believe we are looking at assessment methods just to get accredited and will drop everything once they leave.
 - c. The current General Studies Committee may want to take on the task of reviewing the assessment of General Studies.
 - d. Some academic programs might be able to assess their seniors’ achievement of some General Studies goals, e.g., ability to write clearly, speak effectively. Consistency across disciplines might be provided by developing and using rubrics for assessment of a skill across academic programs.
 - e. The task of reviewing the credentials of part-time faculty should be given to the schools.
 - f. The concept of also having the academic schools undertake the study of “engagement and service” was discussed. However, some engagement activities are not located in schools; some activities/services are provided by other units at MSCD. Further discussion on how to handle this is needed.