

Minutes – Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Oversight
August 28, 2009
Campus Center, Room 905-09

Present – Amilcar Shabazz, Bryan Harvey, Ralph Whitehead, Ernie May, Donna Zucker, John McCarthy, Doug Anderton, Kathy Debevec, Martha Stassen, Marilyn Blaustein, John Dubach, Coleman Cornelius, John Cunningham, Joseph Berger

ACCREDITATION

Bryan Harvey led a discussion regarding the upcoming NEASC visit. Bryan reviewed the process thus far and presented an overview of next steps up through the November visit. At Bryan's request, discussion turned to feedback on the self-study documents that have been posted thus far. These documents represent two rounds of drafts that have been made available on the web for comments and suggestions.

The emphasis in the report is on the need for improved facilities – with hopes that the visiting team will recognize and support investment in campus facilities as a strategic priority. Questions were asked about how this fit with the Provost's agenda. Bryan and others emphasized that this self-study was a companion, not a replacement, for the Framework for Excellence; and that the two documents together provide the vision and assessment that can be used to position the campus for the future. It was noted that although not specifically mentioned, AAU-level aspirations seem to be an important campus-wide aspiration.

Discussion turned to concerns about the balance between description and assessment. It was noted that this imbalance is partly due to multiple authors and partly due to the nature of the various categories that NEASC requires be used to organize the report. Concerns were also raised about the lack of attention to governance issues on the campus; discussion of that topic then led to further discussion about the intended audiences (NEASC visiting team first, trustees, etc as well) and the need to make the connection to the Framework for Excellence more explicit and the need for strategic talking points. Further discussion focused on some of the temporal disjunctures (e.g., diversity) and the need to focus on trajectory – what has changed since the last visit and where are we headed? It was also suggested that more language be used from the Chancellor's Readiness Project report and that more attention be paid to how this is an opportunity to drive strategy and influence key stakeholders. In addition to facilities, it was suggested that in addition to facilities, that faculty (particularly in terms of declining numbers), financial aid, and fund-raising (the four "F" s?) and improved governance be given greater emphasis.

Bryan also described in response to a query about what materials were needed for the Accreditation visit and he, along with Martha Stassen and Marilyn Blaustein, described how a wide range of data and reports (e.g., AQAD reports, Departmental benchmarking, etc.) were all being posted on-line.

Questions were raised about how to get more faculty involved and AHCSO agreed to work on supplying some talking points representing strategic priorities that could be emphasized in accreditation and strategic planning. AHCSO will send out an on-line draft of the Framework for Excellence for audit and ask different members to provide feedback. Ralph Whitehead volunteered to examine the alignment between the Framework and the Accreditation Report.

Bryan was appreciative of the feedback and promised to incorporate it into the document. The committee thanked Bryan for his efforts and there was general agreement that the self-study does indeed "look like us".

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

There was time for a brief discussion of the impending Academic Program Review. Bryan passed out materials that had been used in the past, but indicated that they were unlikely to be particularly useful. Discussion focused on the Provost's priorities and it was agreed that Joe and Amilcar would go to the next Rules Committee meeting (September 9) to learn more; particularly about the plans to "monetize" resource allocation. Discussion focused on what this means and how to make sure that we valorize as well as monetize. Questions were also asked about how to define what constitutes a program. Joe agreed to send out some materials on Academic Program Review. In response to a question about timing, it was agreed that this would all happen quickly and needs to get started in the Fall.

FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that Fridays at 10am would be a good time for future meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph B. Berger