

8-27-2007

Academic Planning Council Minutes of August 27, 2007

Carolyn A. Craddock
Northern Illinois University

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ACADEMIC PLANNING COUNCIL
Minutes of August 27, 2007
3 p.m., Holmes Student Center – HSC 505

Present: Alden, Anderson, Bond (for Bose), Cassidy, Fox, Freedman, Gorman, Gough, House, Marcellus, Marsh, Molnar, Prawitz, Reynolds, Singh

Guests: Donna Askins, Research Associate, Office of the Provost; Carolinda Douglass, Director, Assessment Services

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m., and Alden welcomed the members for the 2007–2008 academic year. There was an introduction of each member of the council. It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of April 30, 2007, and the motion passed unanimously.

Nominations were sought for assistant chair of the APC. The assistant chair conducts the APC meetings in the absence of the provost and serves as the APC liaison to the University Council. Aimee Prawitz volunteered to serve as assistant chair. By acclamation the council agreed that Prawitz would serve as assistant chair.

This year there are three subcommittees to conduct the reviews of the academic programs and centers. The subcommittee chairs are Dan Reynolds, Laurel Jeris (who is not present today), and Aimee Prawitz. Thank you for agreeing to serve in this important role.

The constitution and bylaws specify that major committees have an agenda committee, which allows faculty to contribute to setting the agendas. The common practice in past years has been that the provost, vice provost for academic planning and development, the APC subcommittee chairs, and the APC assistant chair have served as the agenda committee. This is one option, and other suggestions would be welcomed. The major task for this committee is to create an agenda for the spring semester. All council members have the opportunity to give suggestions for items to be addressed by the council, particularly for the spring semester. The APC voted to continue its past practice for 2007-2008. The committee will meet in January to set the agenda for the spring semester. Typically, there are only two to four meetings in the spring.

New program and center requests must receive the endorsement of the APC prior to submission to the Board of Trustees, and the APC has a constitutional responsibility for periodically updating the mission statement. Also, the APC discusses program priority budget requests. The APC's major responsibility during the fall semester is the review of academic programs, public service and research centers, and interim reports. The APC will review several follow-up reports in the spring semester, probably in March.

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) is currently involved in a strategic planning process. It is possible that *The Illinois Commitment* may be replaced as a result of this process. Due to this strategic planning process, the university did not have to submit a Performance Report for 2007. The university did submit a report on the licensure examination pass rates for law and nursing, the

number of undergraduates meeting initial teacher certification requirements, and the program review findings.

The programs that will be reviewed this year are: all the programs in the College of Visual & Performing Arts, the Departments of Economics and History in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, and the Bachelor of General Studies. Also, the Art Museum, the Center for Burma Studies, the Office of Economic Education, and the Regional History Center will be reviewed this year. Times are provided during regular APC slots so the subcommittees can meet with the department and college representatives to discuss the program reviews. The members received the reviews assigned to their subcommittees, and the subcommittee chairs are setting up meetings with the college and department representatives. The program review packages contain information that will help you prepare for those meetings.

The notebook distributed to the council members was reviewed. The first section of the notebook contains information about the committee and the council's schedule. The schedule of planned meetings is listed for the fall, but council members were asked to hold all Mondays between 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. in case additional meetings need to be scheduled. Members will receive an agenda prior to each scheduled meeting. Also, the subcommittee assignments and dates that the program reviews will be discussed are in this section of the notebook.

The background information section of the notebook contains reference materials that should be particularly helpful to new subcommittee members, and this information should be reviewed prior to reading the program review documents. The IBHE focus statement was developed by the IBHE. Essentially, the *Illinois Commitment* has replaced the focus statement. This section of the notebook also contains the response to the APC members' review of council responsibilities. Last year the response rate to this survey was very low, and this may not continue to be a meaningful exercise for the council. Based on feedback received a couple of years ago, changes were made to the council's responsibilities.

The guidelines section contains the program review calendar and review formats. The format should be referred to as you read the reviews. Several years ago the program review format was revised to try and eliminate redundancy. The program review format now contains a departmental section where the departments report on resources, faculty, contributions to the university mission and the *Illinois Commitment*, and effective practices. The center review format is also in this section of the notebook. You will notice that it is an abbreviated format in comparison to the program review format.

The data section contains data from the Office of Institutional Research for all programs in the university. You also have data in your packets assigned to your subcommittee, and the subcommittee chairs have additional data that can be referenced by subcommittee members.

The council was updated on the strategic planning process. In October 2006 President Peters indicated that NIU would be undergoing a strategic planning process in his State of the University address. Constituency groups were contacted, and a process was set up to develop a task force. One month later we ended up with a 45 member task force. The task force met as a whole and also in work groups.

The Learning Alliance, which is associated with the University of Pennsylvania, provided excellent consulting that helped facilitate the strategic plan. This group has assisted over 90 universities in developing strategic plans. Members serving on the task force, the Council of Deans, and the Presidents Cabinet were all interviewed by this group.

The Learning Alliance presented eight areas that emerged from the interview process. At the end of January the task force spent one and one-half days listening to what went on in the interviews and the eight areas that emerged from this process. The eight areas identified were narrowed down to four areas. The task force was split into three groups to discuss these issues, and each group was given very specific tasks to focus on. A representative from The Learning Alliance came to NIU every two to three weeks to lead discussions and see where we were at. President Peters attended most of these meetings. Following a second round table discussion the work groups produced reports that were posted on the web.

The Learning Alliance took the reports and consensus from the round table and drafted a document that was distributed to the Council of Deans. The deans are looking at how they are going to link this to their college plans. All of this information will be posted on the web. Everyone will be able to review this big picture document and what the Council of Deans template will look like. The strategic goals at the college level will be very specific.

The hope is that there will be some significant funding for the imperatives. The imperatives are: continue to focus on undergraduate education, multidisciplinary academic research clusters, regional impact, and the campus community and climate. One point brought forward in regard to the focus on undergraduate education is to provide engaged learning for our students. One of the assets of this university is that people tend to work well across departments and colleges. The focus of the multidisciplinary academic research clusters group was to look at how these clusters can be identified and advanced. NIU is not a traditional regional university; NIU is in a global region. NIU should identify strategies that would make NIU the first choice for students, faculty, and staff.

The deans are currently working on developing a lexicon. Within a month or so people will be asked to forward ideas on how these imperatives can be advanced within and between units. A proposal for multidisciplinary research centers will be part of this process.

Should this information be put into the program review process? This coming year would be too soon to have information as part of the program review process, but this is something the APC may want to talk about. After the APC has a chance to see how these documents emerge, it may want to look at the mission and scope statement.

The discussion turned to the proposal for the Northern Illinois Center for Accelerator and Detector Development (NICADD). Dean McCord, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Dr. Mini, Chair, Department of Physics were introduced.

NICADD is a center staffed by faculty and staff in the Department of Physics that has strong ties to Fermilab and Argonne. At the present time, NICADD has temporary approval from the IBHE, which is usually for five years. Due to the transition of the dean's position in the college, the university requested a one-year extension of the temporary status for this center.

This center represents two research groups within the Department of Physics: the high energy physics group and the accelerator and detector development group. The high energy physics group studies the output of accelerator experiments, and the accelerator and detector development group studies the detectors themselves and the process of making and running the equipment necessary to perform beam physics. Both of these groups benefit from the proximity to Fermilab and Argonne. This center has received federal grants, and the two groups share some important economies of scale with equipment and particle beams. There is also on-going interest in bringing in some people from engineering. NICADD's track record has been within the Department of Physics, but sometime down the road if engagements with engineering develop, the center may revisit this formal structure. The operations are deeply intertwined. Jerry Blazey is working with the Department of Energy trying to move forward with the international collider. This could possibly be built in the U.S., and maybe even at Fermilab. The detector group has really been very competitive in the federal funding process. The relationship with Fermilab is tied to the international collider, and the relationship with Argonne is much more diverse, which will remain a source of support. The Argonne site is much more stable.

This center is very attractive to Ph.D. students; it is one of a kind or very close to one of a kind. The Ph.D. in Physics has only been in place for about seven years, and more than three-fourths of the Ph.D. students have had experiences in this center. The department has 50 graduate students, and 30 of these are probably in the Ph.D. program.

A motion was made to endorse the NICADD proposal. The motion passed unanimously.

After this meeting, the subcommittee chairs would like to meet with their subcommittees. Please stay for a few minutes after the meeting adjourns.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn A. Craddock

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