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Academic Planning Council Minutes of November 19, 2007

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ACADEMIC PLANNING COUNCIL
Minutes of November 19, 2007
3 p.m., Holmes Student Center – Room 505

Present: Alden, Anderson, Bose, Cassidy, Freedman, Gay, Gorman, Gough, House, Jeris, Marsh, Molnar, Prawitz, Seaver, Singh

Guests: Donna Askins, Research Associate, Office of the Provost; Josephine Burke, Director, Art Museum; Alexander Gelman, Director, School of Theatre and Dance; Rich Holly, Associate Dean, College of Visual & Performing Arts; Harold Kafer, Dean, College of Visual & Performing Arts

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. The agenda for the November 26, 2007, meeting was mailed out today, but one subcommittee report is missing. This report will be sent electronically when it is received.

Harold Kafer, Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts; Rich Holly, Associate Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts; Alexander Gelman, Director of the School of Theatre and Dance; and Josephine Burke, Director of the Art Museum were introduced.

Laurel Jeris thanked her subcommittee members for their participation in conducting the review. The college representatives said that the subcommittees have all been terrific. This is the first time that the director of the School of Theatre and Dance has been involved in the program review process, and the meeting with the subcommittee was extremely helpful.

The departmental strengths include the fact that the faculty is very involved in instructional and artistic endeavors. The faculty combine teaching, advising, scholarship, and service to their rigorous performance schedules. The school also provides significant outreach to the community through its productions and community-based workshops for children, adolescents, and adults. Periodically a touring company is convened and this provides students with an additional performance opportunity.

The discussion points are the facilities, the limited non-personnel budget, and faculty diversity. The facilities have been a major concern for quite some time, and the renovation of the Stevens Building is at the top of the university's capital budget priority list. The university is still waiting for legislative action to release the funds for this renovation. On January 1, 2008, the rules will change considerably for capital development budget funds allocations; the funds can be released by a simple majority vote. Does NIU have a plan B for the building renovation? No, not for \$20 million. The Division of Finance and Facilities will have to decide what to do if the state funds are not released this year. The non-personnel budget is dramatically lower than that at other institutions, and the school has more productions than comparison institutions. The non-personnel budget for the school is \$54,000 with the next lowest amount at \$120,000 at Western Michigan University. Is this general revenue money? It is a combination, but income is not included in NIU's figure, and endowments are not included in any these figures. Does this include fee money? Schools are probably not able to use course fee money for these purposes. In 2002-2003, without the general education fees we could not have had any productions. There is only so long that you can do more with less.

The school has low faculty turnover, and some new minority hires have left the university. Faculty diversity should continue to be addressed in a systematic way as opportunities for new hires arise.

The following comments apply to the departmental and all the program sections. Many sections in the report need to be strengthened and clarified. The subcommittee spent the majority of its meeting time providing feedback related to strengthening the report. Also further development is needed in the assessment of student learning outcomes. The school is working with the Office of Assessment Services on this issue. There is an active conversation going on regarding program assessment and what changes need to be made. Has the accrediting body provided any information on this issue? Carolinda Douglass has done some studying on this and found that with the information prepared for the National Association of Schools of Theater there would still be some problems. The school has an assessment committee working on this issue, and its timeline coincides with this process. Also, Judy Chitwood is representing the college at the HLC's Assessment Academy in December, and she is the chair of the assessment committee. Both the theatre and dance disciplines have been engaged in assessment for a long time. Given the nature of their jobs, our graduates find employment again and again, and this is a form of assessment. The training is set up to mirror that by having consistent auditions, portfolio review, etc. The problem is getting this to fit into the assessment parameters. There may be a way of quantifying what we are already doing, and the school has taken an active stand on this in establishing the committee and working with assessment services.

The strengths of the B.A. in Theatre Studies include the service to non-majors. This is a significant contribution to the university, and should be noted in the review. There are many new opportunities for undergraduate majors to participate; these include the international study tours, puppet productions, and a new performance series. Stage presence is important, but it is also a small part of the overall student experience.

Discussion points are the need for additional faculty and the decrease in enrollment. Faculty teach across all programs in the school, and the number of temporary faculty has increased. The enrollment is lower than the faculty expected since the program went to a limited admissions policy. The program has ended up with fewer students than it wanted, and minority enrollment has dropped. Demographics have also shifted. The faculty is not trying to make the program go away, but that is what the report seemed to imply; the revised version of the review will address this concern. The B.A. program is a radically different program than all the other programs in the school. The program focuses on the education of students in training. The recruitment procedures set up for the other programs do not transfer to the B.A. program. Also, the standards for the B.A. program have been increased. The school has set up a B.A. board that is comprised of individuals from all the technical disciplines, and the board members are looking at the nature of the offerings, the perceptions about the program, and the communication with students. Has there been any change in the applicant pool? In the past there has not been an applicant pool. Some of these students wanted to be in the selective admissions programs and were unable to be admitted. This made the B.A. program a second-class program, and graduates of this program are not as successful at getting production roles. There is now a clear group identity, and it is a strong group academically. In many ways this is a "university degree." When students decide to leave one of the school's programs, they generally leave the university. The B.A. program takes more advantage of the university as a whole in its requirements. Has anything been done to make comparisons of student profiles before and after the program went to limited admission? Not yet, but it is not off the table. It is a concern, and the school's goal is to make this program as populous as we want it to be.

The B.F.A. program strengths are the increase in enrollment, the service to non-majors, the planned changes and priorities, the favorable competition for highly talented students, and the relationship with the Moscow Art Theatre School. The budget cuts have affected the school; it has not been able to offer

some courses, and the faculty are eager to offer these courses when funding becomes available. There is only one other program at the graduate level that offers something similar to the Moscow Art Theatre School training, and at the undergraduate level no other school has a program like this. National Theater Institute (NTI) is a clearinghouse for students all over the country. This year our students are working very closely with them, and the training our students receive at NIU is significantly cheaper than what the NTI students pay. The people in Russia know our students and our program. Our students have consistent quality that is recognized.

The discussion point for the program is the enrollment. The program has good minority representation. The diversity issues have to do with faculty and we have not had much turnover in our faculty. The subcommittee would like to encourage the faculty to continue addressing this issue.

Program costs are slightly below the statewide average in the M.F.A. program, and this is a program strength. The faculty would like to see more growth in the acting specialization, and the Moscow Art Theatre School program should help bring this about.

The number of minority students has declined. It was explained that classes for the specialization in acting are admitted every three years. The class that just entered is more diverse than the last class admitted (16 graduate students, 2 of whom are African American). The specialization in design and technology is much more complicated. The facilities issue is very problematic for these students. Students in the specialization in design and technology need state-of-the-art computers and other equipment to prepare for their careers. Our efforts are to maintain a relationship with undergraduate programs that serve as feeders to the specialization, but we keep losing potential students to other places. We recently lost a lighting and design student to the University of Illinois because the stipend offered there was twice as much as NIU's stipend. NIU has better faculty and training than the University of Illinois, but this is a matter of money and facilities. Our numbers are down in this specialization because the building is looking worse. This point should be put into the review and linked to recruitment and enrollment issues that we just discussed. There is a professor in rigging who is internationally known, and this is very attractive to students and helps with recruitment.

The Art Museum is undergoing review for the first time. The mission of the museum has changed over the last five years so evaluating the museum was difficult. Some of the things going on this year were also incorporated into the review.

There are many unit strengths for the Art Museum. The return to Altgeld Hall allows the museum to more fully define and carry out its mission to be a quality fine arts resource for NIU and the region. The space in Altgeld gives the museum credibility that can assist in securing grants and increasing visibility, membership, and donations. The museum has moved from being a "gallery" to being a "museum." The museum has been called a "museum" since 1991, but the move into Altgeld Hall deals with the perception of the museum. A marketing person to help with advertising and promotion has been added to the museum staff. Actually the jobs have been reconfigured so the museum could hire a marketing person. The museum has a significant number of undergraduate students working at the museum, and museum studies graduate students are involved in the museum's activities. The museum is heavily dependent on student help. The benchmarks are clearly delineated with growth and achievement targets.

Discussion points include the need for more space and the use of existing space, more community involvement, environmental stabilization for collections, and money for the care of the collections. The issue with environmental stabilization also affects what the museum is able to take on. The budget (\$8,000) to produce 5-11 exhibitions each year is drastically lower than other institutions. The museum is now up to 11-15 shows per year. For the past two years the museum has been given a more sizeable

sum to work with due to the Chicago gallery closing. The museum now has five times the amount it had previously, and this has made a huge difference. This money is not guaranteed into the future, but the college office has given the Art Museum a promise of a portion of these funds for next year so plans can move forward. The appropriation is focused mostly on exhibitions, but some money was spent this year on small storage units to assist with care of the collection. Given the refocus of the museum it is now in a new benchmarking group, and it is at the bottom of this group. The museum now has more space and better programmatic funding. The museum has no budget for acquisitions; all of this has to come from donations. The museum has established benchmarks to move in the direction of accreditation that will require financial resources, commitments, and support from the Board of Trustees. The Art Museum is undertaking discussions with the senior administration at NIU as to the feasibility of accreditation as we discussed at the summer meeting with the provost's staff. Sometime this year the accreditation process and requirements will be discussed with the college and the provost's offices. The accreditation process looks at education, outreach, and facilities as well as governance of the museum. We are at the beginning of this process, and it is a goal for every museum to consider accreditation. Many of the museums in Illinois that fall in the same group as we do are accredited; there are approximately 1,000 museum's accredited nationwide.

The recommendations for the future include working on the goals that the museum has set. These goals are to increase membership, student involvement, campus presence, and educational offerings; and to work toward accreditation. The museum should consider partnering with other campus units to host selected alumni events that will showcase the museum to alumni. This could benefit the Art Museum in several ways.

A question was asked about the call for educational programming. Some of the educational offerings have been increased but these are mostly outreach programs in schools, senior centers, etc. There are more people coming to the Art Museum. Has there been any thinking about the museum education program? This program is on hold right now because the person who was running the program left NIU. We have been doing some things with the community school and with the museum studies program.

Helen Nagata and Helen Merritt received a Venture Grant from the NIU Foundation for an exhibit in the Art Museum in January 2008 that pulls together the Japanese culture in the 19th and 20th centuries. A number of Ukiyo-e and Sosaku Hanga prints will be utilized by juxtaposing those prints with a 21st artist who is a fourth-generation Japanese print maker. The grant will help with producing a catalog and a website. There will also be a talk given in coordination with the exhibit, and students have written the essays for the catalog. The dean of the college said that in his time here as dean this is the biggest exhibit of scholarship on the campus. Please stop by and see this exhibit.

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of November 5, 2007, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn A. Craddock

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