

## **COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT (CAA)**

**MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 17, 2008**

UNH 307 10:00 – 11:30

Members present: Heidi Andrade, Henryk Baran, Kristina Bendikas, Irina Birman, Daryl Bullis, Sue Faerman, Marjorie Pryse, Bill Roberson, Joette Stefl-Mabry, Bruce Szelest, Alex Xue

Members absent: Bill Lanford, Michael Christakis

The Chair began by welcoming all members to the Council. He asked for members to introduce themselves and then spoke about the need for the Council to fulfill its responsibilities, and in doing so to support and develop efficient and effective means of assessment that would not create additional burdens on faculty. He then turned the meeting over to the Director of Program Review and Assessment who led the members through a binder consisting of assessment related materials useful to the Council and its committees, materials pertinent to Program Review, followed by those pertaining to General Education Assessment and finally the University in the High School program.

In addition to reviewing the informational documents, the Council members reviewed the schedule for the year and raised questions and issues which were suggested as potential agenda items. The Program Review process generated most of the discussion.

- Faerman asked how the Council could do its job better.
- Pryse raised the possibility of the earlier engagement of programs preparing for review since currently they start from scratch in the review year.
- Bendikas supported anticipatory work with programs on their assessment plans to ease the burden of writing the self-study in the review year.
- Roberson suggested that in addition to the two standing committees the Council might consider a working group, consisting of a few members, which would focus on helping the program strengthen their assessment plans two years prior to their review.
- It was agreed that programs needed to be able to generate more useful data than is currently found in self-studies and put the process more in the hands of faculty.
- Bendikas suggested that the 7 year interval was a long time without formal follow up and Roberson's suggestion could become a kind of 5<sup>th</sup> year review.
- Stefl-Mabry suggested that programs should be provided with more of a template for creating their plans that simplified the process to answering questions of "knowledge, skills and attitudes."
- Faerman suggested that changing the charge of the Council in the Senate Charter might enable it to have more strength and flexibility in carrying out its responsibilities.
- Baran suggested that the assessment reports, currently requested by mid-August, be requested earlier, prior to faculty leaving for the summer.

- Szelest brought up the suggestion that departments post their assessment plans on their homepages as many programs in other universities are now doing.

It was agreed that this is a key year for the Council's work on Program Review, since the review process enters Cycle II in 2009-2010.

Discussion about General Education assessment focused more on the description of the process, although several issues were raised by members.

- It was noted that compliance was an ongoing issue
- Graduate students who teach and part-time faculty are not asked to be part of the sample which leaves out an important constituency and reduces the potential sample.
- Faerman stated that it would be important to see how faculty currently understand the General Education process compared to how it was understood several years ago after it was first implemented. She further noted that compliance would be enhanced if faculty saw assessment as part of what they do, rather than an additional burden.

The Council Chair then raised the need to nominate committee Chairs. He moved to nominate Joette Stefl-Mabry as Chair of the General Education Assessment Committee and Irina Birman as Chair of the Program Review Committee. The motion was seconded by Bendikas. There was no discussion. The nominees accepted.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kristina Bendikas