

COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT (CAA)

MINUTES, APRIL 24, 2008

UNH 200, 3:00 – 4:00

Members present: Henryk Baran, Irina Birman, Seth Chaiken, Bill Lanford, Marjorie Pryse, Bill Roberson, Bruce Szelest, Rose-Marie Weber

Members absent: Stacey Chen, Michael Christakis, Peter Duchessi, Sue Faerman, Anna Politano, Joette Stefl-Mabry, Man Kit Tse

The minutes of April 3 were approved.

The Council began to review the six reports presented by the Program Review Committee. Pryse remarked that the reports were more substantial than they have been in previous years. She stated that they will give greater credence to the Council while also being helpful to the departments. Peter Duchessi deserves credit for steering the committee in a productive direction. The committee discussed how best to review the reports. Chaiken suggested that perhaps one representative from the committee could present each report to the Council. Discussion ensued which later resulted in a consensus that any report should be very brief, and rather than repeat what the Council had already read, simply focus on issues and concerns. Roberson questioned the absence of context in the reports i.e. they do not refer back to any previous report. Lanford pointed out that since these programs were part of the first cycle of program reviews, there is no context from which departments or the committee could draw. Roberson suggested that the reports include language that looks forward to the next report. Further discussion clarified the timetable of program reviews and annual reports. Pryse noted that the issues raised in these reports are intended to be addressed in the departments' annual assessment activity reports. Baran asked for clarification about what information is given to the departments to create their assessment plans. Bendikas described the Practitioner's Guide which is provided to all Chairs at an orientation meeting prior to beginning the self-study process. In addition she stated that she has been meeting with Chairs and assessment liaisons to provide feedback and answer questions about their annual reports and assessment plans. The Council members agreed that there is a need for additional information and education about different types of assessment.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Criminal Justice report.
The motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Psychology report. Discussion ensued regarding the omission of the master's program in the self-study. The motion was tabled while further information was sought.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences report. Discussion ensued about the issues and concerns raised. Bendikas asked for Council members to review the reports to be sure that the language was positive

rather than punitive. Weber stated that while the reports did raise concerns, they did so in a constructive way. Birman clarified several points that the committee had raised regarding the presentation of assessment information in the report. Roberson asked if the Chairs and departments engaging in their program reviews were told in a simple and straightforward way that the assessment plan was to deliver a clear picture of how well their students are learning the objectives the program sets forth. Szelest described how the Chairs are guided through the process, but acknowledged that the Program Review process is in need of clarification. The motion carried.

The Council returned to the comment about the MS program in the Psychology report. Pryse clarified that the department has an MS only in Industrial Psychology and it did mention that briefly in the self-study. The Psychology report was accepted based on the deletion of two statements pertaining to the MS program. The motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Physics report. Weber reviewed the issues in the report for the Council. Pryse suggested an editorial change to one item. She then asked the Council to consider the value of rejecting a department's assessment plan. Discussion ensued. It was decided to separate the motions. The motion carried.

Pryse then made motion which was seconded, asking that the department share with the Council their assessment plan, that it take into account the recommendations made in the Program Review Committee's report, and those from the Director of Assessment, and that it be provided to the Council by the end of November, 2008. The motion carried.

A motion was made a seconded to accept the Sociology report. The motion carried.

A motion was made to accept the Communications report. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kristina Bendikas