APPROVED

ACADEMIC PLANNING COUNCIL
Minutes of March 28, 2011
3 p.m., Holmes Student Center – 505

Present: Alden, Carter, Cassidy, Falkoff, Gorman, Jung, Koren, Marcellus, Matuszewich, Novak, Otieno, Prawitz, Seaver, Simpson

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

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. If anyone has recommendations for changes in the program review guidelines, please forward them to Carolyn Cradduck by Wednesday, March 30.

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of March 7, 2011, and the motion passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda is the change in degree designation from an Ed.D. in Educational Psychology to a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology. The practice in the discipline has been to award Ph.D.s in Educational Psychology, and NIU is one of the few institutions that have an Ed.D. The faculty has been preparing for this change and has already implemented changes to the course work, admission, and program requirements. Two external evaluators evaluated the program and confirmed that the standards now in place are Ph.D. standards. The change in degree designation has been approved by the curricular committees, and the change is being brought to the APC for endorsement. The Ed.D. in Educational Psychology would be phased out; current students in the program will be given the option of graduating with an Ed.D. or a Ph.D. A motion to endorse the change in degree designation from an Ed.D. to a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology was made and seconded, and it passed unanimously.

The next agenda item is the consent agenda for the follow-up reports. The reports included on the consent agenda are the M.S. in Management Information Systems, M.S. in Electrical Engineering, M.S. in Mechanical Engineering, M.P.T. and D.P.T., Microelectronics Research and Development Laboratory, and NIU Center for Economic Education. Anyone can bring out one or more of these reports if they want to have a discussion on these reports. It was moved and seconded to approve the consent agenda, and the motion passed unanimously.

The APC turned to the remaining follow-up reports.

The B.S. and M.S. in Chemistry programs were asked to report on the assessment findings and actions taken on the findings since the last program review in 2009. There is substantial information in the baccalaureate report on Chemistry 110. Chemistry 110 is a general education course; it is not a required course for the major. There is very little information about implementing the assessment plans and findings. This is also true for the report on the master’s program; this report focuses on developing writing skills. The reports do not quite answer the questions that were asked. If another follow-up report is requested, we would ask both of these programs to report out on the methods
included in the assessment plans, what they found, and any actions they have taken on the findings. This information was not in the program review report. Our options are to ask for another report next year, we could say these reports are acceptable for the information that was reported, or some other action that might be proposed. The concern is that the IBHE can request at any time any full program review document, and the findings information would not be in this report. We could say that we asked for follow-up reports, but we still don’t have findings information. There is a big push for pay for productivity, and the IBHE could very well be empowered to ask for things that they have not asked for before. In communicating with the department we could say that some evidence was provided and in preparation for the next program review the programs will be expected to provide assessment findings. A motion was made and seconded that the programs provide the information that was requested in a follow-up report that will be due next year. The motion passed unanimously.

For all three programs in the Department of Physics we asked for the same information that chemistry was asked to provide. There was a discussion with the chair of the department regarding this request, and the annual assessment updates were discussed as a source of information for the follow-up report. For some reason the chair went back to the program review summaries and based his report on the summaries. The programs were asked to report on assessment findings and actions for all three of the degree programs. It was suggested that the follow-up report from mechanical engineering be sent as an example to the department chair, and we should ask the department to work with Carolinda Douglass. A motion was made and seconded that the programs provide the information that was requested in a follow-up report that will be due next year. The motion passed unanimously. In the correspondence it should be made clear that if the department chair has any questions regarding what the APC is asking for, he should contact Carolinda Douglass in the Office of Assessment Services.

The B.A. in Theatre Studies and the B.F.A. and M.F.A. in Theatre Arts programs were asked to report on the same items as chemistry and physics were asked to report on. We also asked the programs to report on program level learning outcomes, internal benchmark indicators (including targets), and external benchmark indicators. On the last page of the report the programs do talk about comparable programs and there is a set of indicators. The programs identified degree level learning outcomes and benchmarks, but there are no data and no targets. There is a little bit of assessment data, but little of it has been reviewed or acted on. It doesn’t appear that the feedback loop has been closed. For the internal benchmarks information it seems like the programs didn’t quite get what internal benchmarks are. We should offer them an opportunity to see what good benchmarks are and suggest that they generate some in the next report. This process does show that NIU has a rigorous program review process. A motion was made and seconded that the programs provide another follow-up report that focuses on these items that are still lacking. The motion was amended to include that the follow-up report be submitted next year. The motion as amended passed unanimously.

The follow-up report on the B.G.S. will be considered at the April APC meeting.

Earl Seaver provided a presentation on retention initiatives. The Office of Student Academic Success was created in July 2009, and the goal of the office is to support students through to graduation. There are many new retention initiatives that have been started. Some of these are Map-Works, Degree Maps, Tracking Student Success, Stop-Out Re-Enrollment, Advising Summit, addressing challenging courses, Themed Learning Communities, and others. The highest retention
is in the Themed Learning Communities, which is 6 percent higher than other initiatives. Our goal is to have every student here have someone who is looking out for them.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Cradduck