ACADEMIC PLANNING COUNCIL
Minutes of November 19, 2012
3 p.m., Holmes Student Center – 505

Present: Abdel-Motaleb, Alden, Baumgartner, Damodaran, Douglass, Falkoff, Gordon, Gorman, Hertz, Matuszewich, Prawitz

Guests: Joseph Flynn, Assistant Professor, Department of Leadership, Educational Psychology, and Foundations; Connie Fox, Associate Dean, College of Education; Sherrill Morris, Acting Associate Vice Provost for Academic Outcomes Assessment, Office of Assessment Services; La Vonne Neal, Dean, College of Education; Marc VanOverbeke, Acting Chair, Department of Leadership, Educational Psychology, and Foundations; Elizabeth Wilkins, Professor, Department of Leadership, Educational Psychology, and Foundations

Prawitz called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. Provost Alden will join the meeting a little later.

Marc VanOverbeke, acting chair of the Department of Leadership, Educational Psychology, and Foundations; Joseph Flynn, assistant professor in the Department of Leadership, Educational Psychology, and Foundations; Elizabeth Wilkins, professor in the Department of Leadership, Educational Psychology, and Foundations; La Vonne Neal, dean of the College of Education; and Connie Fox, associate dean of the College of Education were introduced.

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of October 22, 2012, and the motion passed unanimously.

Neal commended the extraordinary work of the curriculum and instruction faculty in preparing the report. The college is looking forward to receiving the feedback on the report.

The meeting was turned over to Geoff Gordon to present the subcommittee report. He thanked his subcommittee members for their hard work in reviewing the programs.

There are several strengths noted for the Departmental Context section. The report was well written and well presented. Thank you. The department does extremely well in utilizing technology resources, and the department has been productive in developing engagement activities. The faculty are active and productive in their scholarship efforts and value connections with students.

There are several discussion points. Can you talk a little bit about the structural changes that have occurred in the department? There have been two major structural changes. The curriculum and instruction programs were moved to the Department of Leadership, Educational Psychology, and Foundations last year. This allows us to have nice synergies with the leadership area. The faculty in curriculum and instruction have done well with this change. The other change is there is a new acting chair that has been in the position for the last five months. Faculty lines for clinical assistant professors are mentioned a couple of times in the report. Right now, the educational administration programs are the only programs that have clinical faculty. This is useful in the educational administration programs because we bring in retired superintendents and principals to teach. It is hard to find faculty that have both research and administration experience, and this is required. The clinical faculty don’t have the
There are several discussion points. Why did enrollment drop in 2011? Two cohorts completed the program in 2011. Please discuss the degree completion rates. During the review period, our program decision makers are seeking more cohorts. There is a combined cohort at Joliet and Harper, and one cohort is finishing up in District 155 in Crystal Lake. There have also been conversations with McHenry to develop a cohort. There will always be an on-campus program. Describe the activities undertaken to remain engaged with alumni, school administrators, and other constituents. Alumni who are in positions of authority contact us and want to meet with us to talk about developing cohorts. We try to engage them in the programs by inviting them to be guest lectures, mentors, instructors, etc. The alumni are also involved at the undergraduate level. A good example of this is the students completing the Joliet cohort who are school administrators. After finishing the program, they talk about their wonderful experience in our program. These graduates become our best mode of advertisement, which also helps us recruit students, and it keeps us connected with the students.

There are a couple of recommendations for the future. There seems to be a common trend for space needs across the university. Perhaps we should look at ground zero for reallocating space. We are seeing more and more contracts and cohort programs. Maybe faculty should sit down with other departments that also offer their programs using the cohort model and see what they are doing. Continue to seek approval for hiring additional faculty, especially for the doctoral program. Keep pursuing increasing the delivery of graduate-level courses in cohort and contract models utilizing hybrid and online instruction.

The M.S.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction program has many strengths. Faculty members and staff provide strong support for students. The report is well written. The program remains strong, graduating highly qualified candidates who exhibit high pass and certification rates. Given a very tight job market, graduates appear to be making the best of a bad situation. Faculty are active in scholarship and professional activities. The program is cost effective (near or below the statewide average).
accounted for 15-44 percent of the degrees awarded at public institutions statewide. You should talk about the completion rates compared to other schools. Also discuss how an advanced degree in education can be detrimental to the graduates. This depends on what state graduates seek employment in. For graduates who are place bound in Illinois, it can be detrimental to have an advanced degree in education. Graduates of this program have done well in corporations. Once the state figures out how they are separating teacher leadership programs from principal programs, it will be helpful. The new teacher leadership program should line up with the master's in curriculum and instruction.

There are a couple of recommendations for the future. Continue efforts to recruit and develop cohort programs. Develop a means for alumni to become more involved in the program financially, through formalized mentoring programs, placement support, marketing efforts, etc. More information from employers is needed. Find and fund tenure-track faculty positions.

The Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction has many strengths. There is a nice listing of student achievements in the review, and the review is well written. The program is very flexible. Faculty are able to meet the needs of a variety of students from a number of different settings. The program has high employment rates. The degree completion rate is 6.3 years, with most students employed full time while completing the degree. There is a high level of diversity in the program. The completion rates for women and minorities are up since the last review. Students are actively engaged in publishing research, and program costs are below the statewide average. Pass rates on the licensure/certification examination are consistently above the state average.

There are several discussion points in the report. Some of them are editorial. Some of the other discussion points will be mentioned. Does the 6.3 year average completion rate just refer to the students who completed the program? Add more about employer expectations and satisfaction to the report. Is the shortage of faculty leading to longer completion time? One benefit of the cohort model is that it creates a relationship with the students in the program, and then the students begin to support each other. Typically, the more students and fewer faculty in a cohort, the longer it will take the students to complete the program. Having students helping each other helps them get through the program faster.

What are the program’s two biggest challenges and opportunities? The challenges and opportunities are the same thing. School administrators have a real interest in the Ed.D. program. Can we keep building more cohorts? The opportunity is there, but increasing the number of cohorts will create challenges. Working with the new teacher leadership program at the master’s level will be a good opportunity. New opportunities come with new hires. This goes back to the department, but how many other departments have lost nine faculty members? The financial times are difficult. It is nice that curriculum and instruction is in this department. There have been discussions in the Council of Deans about shifting to a 21st century model for funding. NIU still has a 1995 funding model. The new model will require a redistribution of resources based on a performance funding matrix, and students’ credit hour generation will be part of this matrix. The deans have been told that they will not receive any new money until they go through this process.

The recommendations for the future are to conduct your own alumni survey, develop and implement a plan for increasing graduation rates, and expand the use of technology. Keep getting alumni involved in your program. Continue to develop and implement a plan for increasing graduation rates for students in the program, and keep expanding the use of technology to offer hybrid models.

The 2012 University Writing Project and Spanish Pilot Report was distributed with the agenda for today. This project assesses course-embedded writing samples from juniors and seniors, and this is the fifth year that we have used the same rubric. The intent of this process is to improve student outcomes.
Last year was the first time that Spanish was evaluated. This year the outcomes are similar to previous outcomes, with some slight differences. The University Writing Project (UWP) guidelines were distributed. These are discipline specific writing samples. English 104 is evaluated by Michael Day in the Department of English. What is the comparison to the evaluation between these two initiatives? The comparison was discontinued this past year. The individuals who did the composition evaluation did not find the comparison information useful, but they are doing different assessments. The prompts for the two projects are different. For the UWP, students complete the paper out of class; for the English 104 project, students complete the paper in class. There is a report on the Office of Assessment Services website explaining why the comparison is not done any more. Is the writing level good, moderate, average? Are there any benchmarks? Over time, we are continually weak in presentation. Presentation is more than grammar, spelling, punctuation; it includes being concise and word usage. We are trying to find out why this might be the case. Is this a communication issue or an English issue? Communication in terms of what? Our students are not great writers because they don’t write as much. A number of suggestions to address this issue have been made to the General Education Committee. We have also talked to Brad Peters who oversees the Writing Across the Curriculum initiative. The professors who participate in the project provide feedback to us. The question is what can be done? What needs to be done is that in all classes writing needs to be taken very seriously. The university needs to study this problem and then provide resources to address this problem. That is a recommendation this council could make. We talk about this every year. Is this a valuable study to do year after year? Sending students to the University Writing Center for assistance didn’t increase their success. Look at the rubric; are we looking at the right things? The rubric is fine, but perhaps it is not addressing what we need it to address. There is no mandate to do this specific project, but we are required to do general education assessment. There has not been much general education assessment done, but this is one outcome. We should not give this up until we have something else in place to assess students’ writing. Having this will help us when the Higher Learning Commission comes for the reaccreditation visit. We could move the assessment of writing to the college level. The College of Business has done this already. We want this to be useful. Maybe a writing task force should look into this issue. Can presentation be broken down more? Even in math students have to write and explain the information. The English courses should highlight this more. If something is taught in English 103 and 104 and then students do not continue to practice what they were taught, they may forget what they were taught. Writing needs to be stressed in every course that a student takes. If there are any recommendations, concerns, or suggestions, please contact Sherrill Morris. Is it social media that causes students not to write well? We will continue to work on this.

Literacy and math will be assessed in the K-12 schools in 2014. There is a push from the IBHE, and it wants to know how we are reaching down to the school systems so students develop the core competencies. Another big push is that the IBHE wants very few remedial classes taught. The only way to do this other than lowering standards is to work more closely with the K-12 schools. When students take remedial classes, it takes them longer to get a degree, and sometimes they don’t finish a degree.

There are three interim reports on the agenda: the B.S. in Applied Management, the D.P.T., and the Ph.D. in Geography. The IBHE requires that institutions submit an interim report three years after a new program is approved. A summary of these three reports will be submitted to the IBHE. All of the reports have responded to the questions they were asked to respond to.
A motion was made and seconded to endorse the B.S. in Applied Management interim report. The motion passed unanimously. The actual enrollments in this program are well below the estimated enrollments. We can seek clarification on the enrollment numbers prior to submitting the report to the IBHE. If this were an online program, the enrollments would be better. This is a degree completion program for firefighters, EMTs, and computer scientists who would prefer to complete this program online. Harper and other community colleges wanted to have these types of programs as their own degrees so they could offer four-year degrees. When we requested approval for this degree, Harper said they had 200 students interested in the program.

A motion was made and seconded to endorse the D.P.T. interim report, and the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made and seconded to endorse the Ph.D. in Geography interim report, and the motion passed unanimously.

A presentation on the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) reaccreditation process was made. The HLC site team visit will occur on March 3-5, 2014. We are looking at our points of pride and where we have challenges. During the last review in 2004, there were a couple of areas of concern that were addressed in 2007. We also had an off-campus locations visit in 2010. In 2012, the Steering Committee and the subcommittees began gathering data for the reaccreditation self-study. We would like the entire campus engaged in this process. The five criteria are:

- Mission
- Integrity: Responsible and Ethical Conduct
- Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support
- Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement
- Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

All of the criteria speak back to the mission. The self-study report will be posted in August 2013 for public comment. We would like everyone to commit to the process, respond to information requests, encourage others to participate, get to know the new statement of the vision and mission, and spread the word about the reaccreditation visit. This is an institutional review. It will be really important for us to encourage our colleagues to read the self-study once it is posted. We are doing this holistically; right now there are well over 100 people involved in this process, and students are involved in this process too. It is important that we see this as everyone’s responsibility. This really is a self-reflection; the more people involved, the more reflected we are. In May, please check online for the self-study report and provide feedback.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Cradduck

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