ACADEMIC PLANNING COUNCIL
Minutes of December 1, 2014
3 p.m., Holmes Student Center- 505

Present: Boutin, Coller, Douglass, Falkoff, Freeman, Gordon, Goldberg, House, Li, Mogren, Molnar, Olson (for Dawson) and Shortridge

Guests: Chris Parker, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Outcomes Assessment; Jeff Reynolds, Director of Academic Analysis and Reporting; Ritu Subramony, Director of Academic Accreditation;

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 p.m.

Discussion of Program Prioritization:
The following points were made:
* Program prioritization and program review are processes that are complimentary and synergistic, but they are not the same process.
  - Program review compares like programs across institutions.
  - Program prioritization compares different programs within the same institution to more effectively:
    - Align with Mission
    - Allocate resources

* Program Prioritization and Program Review cycles differ in that Program Review is an annual process that looks at a subset of programs on an 8 year cycle and Program Prioritization is a process that occurs for all programs every 3-5 years.

* Reasons for employing Program Prioritization:
  - Support from the BOT and President Baker
  - Alignment of resources and mission, in particular to address concerns from our 2014 Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation report indicating a need for greater alignment between strategic resource planning and institutional effectiveness. In part, this is due to a lack of alignment between past budgeting and planning processes. This will put NIU in a good position for the report due to HLC in 2018.
  - The Dickeson model has been employed successfully on many campuses giving NIU a wealth of resources and information to employ.
    - The model provides a standardized list of criteria both for academic and administrative programs.

* Program Prioritization nationally
  - 49% have undertaken prioritization
  - 26% are planning to undertake prioritization in the future
  - 25% have not undertaken prioritization

* Backgrounds on Robert Dickeson and Larry Goldstein

* Members of the Coordinating Team include:
  - Ibrahim Abdel-Montaleb
  - Brett Coryell
Two Task Forces will be created with individuals being nominated based on their knowledge, experience and “trustee mentality.”

- **Academic Program Task Force**
  - Comprised of faculty representing all colleges across the university.
  - Evaluate programs based on criteria selected and weighted by an inclusive and iterative process.
  - Provide prioritization for academic programs by quintiles for senior leadership to use for resource allocation.

- **Administrative Program Task Force**
  - Comprised of faculty and staff.
  - Representatives from all divisions across the university.
  - Evaluate administrative programs based on criteria selected and weighted by an inclusive and iterative process.
  - Provide prioritization of administrative programs by quintiles for senior leadership to use for resource allocation.

**Timeline**

- Fall 2014- Initial exploration, development of Coordinating Team and preliminary communications with campus.
- Spring and Summer 2015- Development of criteria with campus input, nomination and selection of membership of task forces, initial gathering of data and continued communication with campus (including a web site).
- Fall 2015- Program faculty and staff will be putting the information together for support of individual program and task forces will go through training for analysis of programs and begin initial analysis.
- Spring 2016- Review and analysis of programs and quintile prioritization.
- Fiscal year 2017- anticipated resource allocation.
- Review of process is expected to take place at end of initial process.

The following questions were asked:

**What criteria will be used to decide if the prioritization process has been successful?**
Benchmarks will be set up and evaluated at the end of this process. We’re also aware of what factors will tend to lead to failure of the program and are planning our program accordingly.

**How do you plan on addressing the issue of evaluating short term success or lack of success in a program that may not represent the true health of the program long-term?**
There are many criteria involved in this process and the amount of weight given to each criteria can vary so the task forces will not solely look at enrollment. Supporting information and arguments from the programs will also be given careful consideration in this process.

**Do we have a recommendation for the size of the task forces?**
The recommendation is between 10 and 20.

**Would it make sense to give programs guidelines or give training on how best to represent their programs?**
I agree completely. The first time out for this method will be a learning process which will include tapping into the experience from other universities who have already been through this process.

**What are some of the possible outcomes from the process?**
There are many possible outcomes. One expectation is for more strategic allocation of resources and better alignment of resources with mission. A program could have increased or decreased investment. A program might receive recommendations on how to make their program better or a program might be eliminated. All of these factors will be considered in conjunction with the current budget that the university has available to spend on programs.

The council discussed the importance of communication throughout the university to help faculty and staff to see the positive aspects and outcomes that are possible with this process.

The council discussed the importance of innovative ways of approaching the health of a program and bringing about positive changes.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Essex