ACADEMIC PLANNING COUNCIL
Minutes of March 7, 2016
3 p.m., Altgeld 315

Present: Abdel-Motaleb, Coller, Douglass, Falkoff, Freeman, Gordon, Hathaway (for Goldenberg), Howell, Hunt, Molnar, Olson, Parker, Reynolds, Shortridge, and Winkler

Guests: Al Phillips-VP Administration & Finance, Sarah Leis- Academic Analysis and Reporting

The meeting was called to order at 3:00p.m

There were no announcements.

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of February 8, 2016 and the motion passed unanimously.

Reading these minutes over, I just want to say what a rich discussion we had that day and I'm glad that we were able to record and remember them.

Next, we are going to move on to key performance issues. Executive Vice President and Provost, Lisa Freeman is here as well as Vice President, Al Phillips. I am going to give a brief introduction, and Jeff Reynolds will talk about the metrics that you all received in the documents that were distributed in preparation for the meeting today. And we would like Lisa Freeman and Al Phillips to join in at any time.

As you all know, we have been working on trying to streamline the process of program review for almost three years. We had a task force in 2013 and we came up with some recommendations and some of you were on that task force. I know Geoff Gordon and Marc Falkoff were on that task force. We had good people from all of your colleges, and were able to get some really strong recommendations that were basically intended to do two things. First, was to make program review more efficient and, second, to make it more meaningful. Some of the things to make it more efficient, we were able to do pretty quickly. We were able to streamline the process some. It is still not anywhere near as streamlined as it could be but, on February 22, 2016, we spent time talking about how we can cut down the academic program template, the academic center template, and streamline that process even more.

We have made some strides in that direction. It is still however, basically a two year process from beginning to end which is an enormous undertaking for all involved. We made some changes. For example, Ritu Subramony has worked very hard on aligning accreditation with program review cycle. Dan House immediately began providing some of the IR data into the BlackBoard site at the beginning of the program review process, which is helpful. Last summer we experimented with doing the summer meetings in a new way. Previously, summer meetings would have been done face to face. Last summer was the first time we

experimented with doing them electronically and asynchronously. We have been working on ways to make program review more efficient, but we need to find more.

The second area, creating more meaning, has fallen into three categories. 1. Aligning program review with NIU's mission and priorities, and that is really where this whole term of NIU's "program portfolio" began. 2. Providing real insight into quality improvement for program faculty and staff particularly with the inclusion of some type of external review possibly through accreditation. 3. Outcomes aligned with resource allocation, and that's really what we have the KPIs for and we will start to talk about those with the two vice presidents that we have in the room today.

There was a real sense of urgency on the part of the task force members that there be some alignment with not only the good quality that comes out of program review, but also with resource allocation. One of the things that they recommended is that we have a dashboard, and if you look at our schedule for this spring, then you know that one of the things that we will be doing is talking about dashboards. I think that's on the 28th of March. Jeff Reynolds will be helping to lead that discussion. In thinking about the dashboard, you need to have a set of Key Performance Indicators that will be on that dashboard. Jeff and I went to Lisa and Al and talked about this process. They were very supportive of the process. We also needed to go back to the college of deans, since a lot of deans are still changing and in the process of changing. We wanted to talk to them about some of the KPIs, so had a meeting with them last week. It was a good, solid, productive meeting and I think we got very good agreement on the fact that we need this and on some of the specific KPIs. But that doesn't mean all of the deans are ready to sign off on all of the KPIs as you see them today. They are willing to have additional conversations so that we can move forward. Basically, what we tried to say to them, are these the right metrics, are these metrics that will be helpful? We recognized that we cannot roll them all out at once. We anticipate a couple of phases although we would like to have something rolled out by the fall. We also had Jerry Blazey, VP for Research and Innovation Partnerships there and Brett Coryell from DoIT was there, with good support from both of them as well as the dean of the graduate school. What we are looking for is basically just for you to start thinking about these KPIs and help to develop them into a dashboard that could be usable by the APC starting in Fall 2016. We need to have these tied in some way to program prioritization, but we are not pushing that right now because we know that we need to get some evaluation out of program prioritization and figure out what worked and what didn't. I will start by asking Al or Lisa if they have anything they would like to say and then we will turn it over to Jeff Reynolds.

I would like to talk a little about the very positive tone at the meeting with the deans. I was not there but Larry Pinkelton, the Associate VP for Finance and Budget was there and we welcomed him to the table. And although there are some unresolved questions, there was overwhelming agreement on the fact that a dashboard for metrics is needed as business intelligence tools to help the deans make decisions. I believe that any little bit of unresolved agreement is really about, can we get this one faster or will this one be slower? Can we make sure that we don't force on the Arts, something that only belongs in a stem discipline? But it was very collegial and very positive and there was much more agreement than disagreement. I think that this reflects the deans' commitment to continuous improvement and the culture that is becoming more data informed as we go forward with activities such as program prioritization and linking existing campus review and budget processes.

To support what the provost said, I am a strong proponent of metrics and dashboards. If you don't measure what you do, how do you know if you are doing better? The real issue is which are the right measures to track and then which ones can you get to more quickly than you can for others. I have regular conversations with several of our trustees who now decided that they want metrics and dashboards and measures that they didn't have. In all cases we are trying to accommodate them the best that we can. Some of that is easier than others and some we can get to more quickly, and some of the information we do not have. I am a strong proponent of measures that help guide decisions, data driven decisions and certainly I am happy to hear that there is a lot of support to move in that direction. I think that will help us in a lot of ways to position the university for greater success as we go forward.

We asked the deans what KPIs are the most relevant for the APC dashboard, we limited it to that, and would be most useful for the academic programs, aligned with the IBHE requirements and feasible to produce. I will give credit where credit is due, Jeff has worked very hard to develop the set of KPIs, so good job.

Thanks. This is still a working draft. We can have some discussion as we look at it on the monitor too. It's a continuing discussion that leverages off of quite a few years, lots of individuals at this institution, some of which are still here, some of which are not. We have baked in certain types of mandates and requirements. We tried to take where we have been before, where we need to go and what's required. These KPIs focus on program review, the IBHE (Illinois Board of Higher Education) mandate and Higher Learning Commission and, obviously, the quality of our academic programs. If other programs need to use them, than that is a positive externality, or a spill-over effect, but it's program review that we are focused on for these KPIs. Although there may be some operational use by a chair or a director, quite a few probably will, but these are targeted for program review. As we go through these, feel free to ask any questions that you might have.

Leveraging off past efforts, looking at what's required, mandated efforts, we want to target towards a couple designee groups: first and foremost, this body, the Academic Planning Council. Second, chairs and directors of program review. We are going to be a bit more nimble and efficient in the program review process, and this is in tandem with that. As we look at this, we want any of the indicators up here to be very clear, very concise. We can go down to the granularity and detail extremely quickly. Provost Freeman mentioned that metrics in terms of one department versus another department matters quite a bit. What relates to Physics may not relate to the School of Music. What relates to Economics, might not relate to the School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders. We want to make sure that whatever performance indicators are available to us, we want them to be broad, but detailed enough that we can see where targets are indicated and where we can go ahead and make changes. We want to start small, start concise and move out from there. What you are going to see is stage one. There's a lot to stage two. There is a lot of interesting stuff in stage two; Dan is shaking it head up and down, he knows that stage 2 is actually more difficult than stage one. Stage one includes the things that we have now and that we can actually roll up into something like a dashboard. The general idea that we are looking at, in terms of these metrics, are threefold. Student characteristics, faculty and instructional staff characteristics, and institutional characteristics. To be sure, there are more sets than just these. But student characteristics is looking at the student from application to admission, registration (registration is linked to the course, it is credit hours, and that is different than the enrollment in the major or minor), degrees and certificates. Certificates indicate that we

should leverage off of program prioritization and what we have done there. We can count minors or independent minors, but we will start with majors first. Degrees are outcome based, and we want to capture alumni. That might also spill over into work force metrics. Certainly there is some work force measures embedded in alumni data that Chris Parker's office works with. One idea down the road is to really take a look at the success of the student and see how it matriculates through the various performance indicators.

I am interested in this alumni one. Do you consider things like response rates and the low rates of responses? In some cases, there might only be three or four people that respond to the survey. How do you get a higher response rate so that that rate is actually usable?

Chris, let's take a stab at that and then you can talk about things on the horizon.

In general, the approximate response rate for the university is about 30%, which is about as much as we could possibly ask for. It takes quite a bit of effort to even get them to answer. Where you are seeing low "n's" in responses, it's because there are low numbers of graduates in that program. For a program that has bigger graduate numbers, than you will get a more useful number. You have to consider at what point the "n" is big enough to be representative. If you have a 30% response rate, my guess is 5, 6 or 7 people per year responding, should be sufficient to make a generalization about the rest of the group that is there.

I'm sure that you looked at questions and trends over time.

The other way that this can be done is to aggregate the data across years, so that you are really looking at a larger pool and it would be more similar.

Do you want to say what's on the horizon?

Yes. That is perception data that is useful. 30% is a standard. There are issues if N=2.

That's actually kind of high.

30% is very high.

Other universities don't get anywhere near 30%. They are usually down in the 10-15%, or something of that nature. A lot of people have abandoned it for that reason.

Is it required by the IBHE or HLC to have alumni data and review?

They no longer require the survey per se, but they do require external review.

We are hoping it will go beyond that.

There are certain questions from the alumni survey that we have to include on a state controls annual report. This then serves other reporting purposes.

To the extent that we care about alumni survey feedback, maybe we can think about ways of getting a more robust assessment to work with.

Yes, you can always improve the process.

Phase one, we have the alumni survey and we have a decent response rate, and maybe phase two performance indicators might be, something I'm working on, but program prioritization got in the way. The Illinois Department of Employment Securities collects data based upon W-2s. So if you have a student that has graduated and is still in the State of Illinois, which we hope they are, and they are in the labor force, we are capturing data on them. If they are employed, we have a lot of data on them. We have their industry, the sub sector, their salary, their job classification, we have a lot of information from there. It's a very new data set, literally, being worked up as we speak.

So you are saying that the data identifies the school that they graduated from?

What we do is to match the data from the state office for our graduates, any students that have graduated from here, so we would have their employment effects by CIP code and by career. And because we have it by CIP code, we really have it at the degree/program level for program review. It is very granular data. That's not to say that it is better or worse than the alumni survey. It complements the survey-they capture very similar things, but different. And I think both are needed.

The community colleges have been using this as part of their data for their program review process for years. This is nothing really new. But it's new for us.

Let me make sure I am understanding this. We need this review to determine if our students are successful or not?

That is one of the reasons. We have been doing this for decades.

Are we talking about program review or the alumni survey?

I am talking about the alumni.

It's employment outcomes, it's what percentage of students are employed and how long did it take them to find a job, number of students going on to graduate school, if they are employed, are they employed in their field, overall perceptions of the university for things like time to completion, relevance of the degree to the work that they are doing now and those kinds of things.

This brings me to my second issue. Would it be better to go and get this data only from the state since you are only getting thirty or thirty-five percent from the alumni survey?

There are market standards for survey results and thirty percent is really good. You can still infer off of those data. We already have this data for program review, we already utilize it. So let's leverage off of that. If in the first year, if the data is not useful, then let's have that conversation. I would say it's useful and with the nods I'm seeing around the table, others agree with me. It provides information.

I appreciate the input, but in terms of where we are today, ultimately, the Council of Deans were the ones that approved this, not necessarily us. We obviously have to use these metrics and try to understand what we are looking at.

The next major group would be Faculty and Instructional Staff Characteristics. This would be faculty and instructional staffing. Sarah Leis and I just this morning finished The Delaware Study. It's a very detailed report, not unlike a tax form on steroids, but extremely accurate. And following from the overhead, this is the type of data that you will find in it. It contains organized course sections and loads, by disciplines, for benchmarking, credit hours for different staff levels, clinical versus tenure and tenure eligible. Then also in Faculty and Instructional Staff Characteristics, research, scholarship and artistry, which we will get to in a minute.

And finally, institutional characteristics. Human Resource staffing, which would include more than just the faculty and staffing individuals that we depend upon every day, and cost of financial metrics.

Next, you will see a student characteristics flow chart. For admissions, there are two different metrics. We collect data in this area at four or five different stages. Most of them, people like Dan and I don't really care about; but there are three that we do. Is the student applying, admitted, or enrolled? This is crucial for a variety of different slices. For ethnicity, sex, this is only at the undergraduate level and leads to the next slice which is New Freshman, New Transfer, and New Other. We can do something similar for graduates as well. Here is the novelty of this performance indicator group. The deans quite correctly indicated that they don't really have control over this indicator set. There is some recruiting and some outreach, but does one really have one hundred percent control in terms of resource allocation use, of who is knocking on your department/discipline door? On the graduate level, somewhat; but on the undergraduate level, to a much lesser degree. We will provide the data, but will not necessarily put a target on these metrics, at least in this first iteration. Any questions?

Registration is the next area. Credit hours can be rolled up in a variety of different ways, lower division, upper division, graduate, law, and derived course level (100, 200, 300, etc.). That last one is most useful, at least for my purposes. Something that Carolinda is a good steward on is remembering who does service courses. So we want to also capture service courses. Prior to the NIU system or the PeopleSoft system, Institutional Research used to produce a report called the Induced Course Load Matrix; let's call that course consumption. Departments and disciplines, faculty and instructional staff produce credit hours and the students consume them. An Induced Course Load Matrix, or course consumption really, targets the service courses, and is definitely in stage two. But what is definitely in stage one, as far as feasibility, is Gen Ed, because we know the general education courses, so this is not that difficult to roll up. Just to give you an idea as to the size and scale of this, how many programs do we have Carolinda?

About one hundred and forty-seven programs.

One hundred and forty-seven, that's a start, right? If you look at Program Prioritization, we had two hundred and twenty-three because it includes certificates and minors. So in reality, we are going to start out small, one hundred and forty-seven programs, optimal by fall, which is what we are going to try for. We are converging towards the higher number.

Enrollment; you can use headcounts and that helps with capacity and advising, especially with small course sections. This matters quite a bit. FTE enrollment however is an institutional measure that is not better or worse, but more effective for what I look at. It's relative to the credit hour, but of course then you're talking about what is a typical load by an undergraduate or a graduate. Fifteen and nine are the standards I believe. Both headcount and FTE enrollment are useful. Some of the other things that we can look at are ethnicity, sex, and for the undergraduates, what your admit type is. Double majors can be captured; these are considerable for some departments. What's not in stage one? The program prioritization stuff, independent minors and minors, for instance, in a foreign language that might not have an easy roll up, or the minors that are interdisciplinary across the university. We still need to figure out how to do that. We look at what we are doing now, start small and build up from that. Additionally, what is the resource allocation right now? This body doesn't currently look at that, but this is obviously an area for discussion. Any questions?

Degrees; the focus here is degrees and we will get to certificates, just like the minors in stage two. Efficiency and effectiveness measures exist. Graduation rates, time to completion but also the distinct degrees conferred. One of the things that the Delaware Study did this year was to ask, how many double degrees there were over a three year average. And, we have degrees per 100 FTE student.

Alumni perception; we talked a little bit about this. We have that data coming from Chris Parker's office.

Can I say something before we move on? Just as a reminder, what we are talking about is, for example, in enrollment, we don't expect every program to have the same level of enrollment. One might have a higher enrollment and one a lower enrollment, and that would be perfectly appropriate. What we are looking for is some agreement with the program faculty and staff, the deans and the provost about what that target should be. And then a target would be set, and then there would be review by this body as to whether or not that target is being met or is being approached and, if it's not, is there a plan in place for how that can move forward in the future. And if not, then also, that is where the resource allocation comes in or if it's growing, then again, that's where the resource allocation comes in. These metrics may not be perfect, but they are feasible. They are things that we think we have pretty good agreement with the deans, although we will continue to work with them to make sure that we have what they want. Basically, this is not meant to be the deep dive of everything that is happening in an individual program, it's really more like if you go to your health care provider and they give you a screening test. This is the screening test to see if the program is healthy or not. And obviously, there would be a deeper dive if that is needed. Please keep that in mind as Jeff goes through the whole flow of the student process and now I think he will be move over to faculty and staff.

This is an important detail to remember. View the dashboard as a starting place and one that you can look at. All degree programs, and therefore disciplines, and therefore undergraduate, graduate, law careers across the entire university. While benchmarking should be done in a disciplinary manner, but we can also benchmark institutionally. The dashboard would be available, and updated frequently, as in every semester, something like that, but it would be reliable and would be one sourced. It would leverage off of the efforts of all of the data reporting offices on campus. And in particular, it would allow a

complementary effect on the program review narrative. This would help the document be nimble, efficient, responsible, and effective, as it can leverage off of the dashboard. Then, the document becomes living and the sub-committee can really take off. Performance indicators and the dashboard are a starting point. Targets lead us where we want to go. We re-task the targets, year after year, and in a frequent way.

Next group of indicators is faculty and instructional staff characteristics. A lot of this will come out of the Delaware Study. We are doing this on a regular basis right now. What do faculty do? On a very high level, teaching, research, and service. What do instructional staff do? We pay them to teach. We want to know what's going on there in terms of resource allocation. It can get very granular, but we can roll that up in terms of metrics. We have seen this in Program Prioritization. The metrics that were chosen were doable and viable. They are comparable and they are 100% benchmarked relative to the discipline. Research, scholarship and artistry include a lot of things. This institution has tried a couple of different things. I'm going to page down to something you might have seen if you were a program author. This is one diagram that covers research and scholarship for the program prioritization. Another one is a very familiar Sponsored Projects Administration report, which I will show in just in minute. What this first one does is look at the diversity within the discipline of the research, scholarship and creativity in artistry, but benchmarked relative to that discipline. We are fortune enough to have Janet Hathaway here and Janet should not have to sit as a chair and compare her programs to Physics. Grants certainly are important but they are extremely important in Physics. Whereas performances and artistry are relatively more important in terms of the Fine Arts. Are you working at Argon lately? Are you working at Carnegie Hall?. What we can do here is we work with Academic Analytics. This report was worked up for Program Prioritization and I want to thank Dan and Sarah in particular because they were in the discussions on this early on. We have a multi-year contract with Academic Analytics and because of that, we also have a good research team. What we have asked them to do is not only combine the national discipline in terms of percentile and where the discipline should be relative to all the data that they have on that specific discipline, but it's also calibrated. The discipline in the national peer set is much too large. And it includes institutions that are lower performing than NIU and also includes those that have higher performance. It includes outside of our usual peer set.

So, what is our peer set? We picked IPEDS (Integrated Post-Secondary Educational Data System). A three year average of an IPEDS peer set seemed to work well across the institution, but it doesn't always work well for the specific discipline. That's why the chair/director from that department or discipline come in and say, some of this works and some of this doesn't even come close to what we are looking at, so we need to fill the gaps in. Again, the dashboard is a starting point. This one report includes quite a bit. I won't bother you in terms of going through it all, but it is the usual material that you would think. Although, for some disciplines, in particular, Law. Law, unfortunately Academic Analytics still doesn't capture benchmarking. I am on them yearly about this. If you go to the Sponsored Projects report, and then you take a look and you see that the Academic Analytics looks at grants. What kind of grants are they? They are the big stuff. They are the NSFs, the NIHs and NEHs, DODs, something easy to capture and publically available that is readily out there. You then go to the office that captures this, Sponsored Projects Administration, and they look at a program called Info-Ed. So what I did with the SPA (Sponsored Projects Administration) colleagues is use the two reports in combination. , You have to remember that these reports are always meant to be used together; they are symbiotic. You have to use Academic Analytics in addition to Info Ed to really get a good

idea what's going on with grants. For this, you can capture the federal, the state, public and non-profits, and anything foreign. Is this benchmarking? No. But it captures what Academic Analytics doesn't. Is this better or worse than academic analytics? That's the wrong question, it's complimentary and it's viable. We had this for program prioritization, so we can do this again.

Finally, for the Institutional Characteristics, there are human resource measures. But it's more than just the tenure and tenure eligible faculty counts. It's a lot more, including instructional staff and office personnel. We depend upon these individuals and we want that type of staffing to not only be appropriately reported, whatever that definition is, but we want to keep an eye on that too, because that is the resource allocation that we need to monitor like any other resource. Cost and financial metrics; these are certainly things that can spill out of the Delaware Cost Study or something similar like the construction of cost per credit hour or cost per FTE student. What's down the road? And I will actually ask Al to chime in here. What I have down the road is the institutional indirect costs. To really get programmatic cost, we can do that, it's a lot of work, but you can get personnel expenditures and other than personnel expenditures. It's just a taxonomy through the cost center. To get institutional indirect costs requires a bit more. But, that's why it's on stage two. Other things in there, do you have any thoughts Provost Freeman?

I think you hit the high points. It's important to always remember that you want to be discipline specific. That we are using comparators that give you information that has to be complemented by qualitative data to be fully understood. We may have a program, the classic example is the one that is on the Delaware Study website for the art restoration department, at the University of Delaware, where they have a very high cost programs, but it's justifiably high because it uses a lot of chemicals and it's unique in the world and an asset. These are all things that give you information that help to build a picture, but the total picture has to be formed other places. It is an important management tool and an important way to respond to public scrutiny. Also an important way to actually enhance the profile and the reputation of university and its programs.

Stage two metrics. I will just hit a couple. This is the stage that we need to work on. We have retention numbers, but not a programmatic level-the degree program level. It's much easier to get retention numbers at the institution level. Migration; the scale of operation for migration reporting for one hundred and forty plus programs is considerable. For two hundred and twenty-three, it's even more considerable. Space and service, student success and SLO (student learning outcomes), what do we want to say about SLOs?

I think Chris might want to chime in here. I think right now we do a very good job of making sure people actually have SLOs within their programs and that they are working to access them on a regular basis, and that they are closing the loop. We do not have information where we can just say that students know how to do this or that in a way that could be used across the university. I don't know if you would like to say something about that, but I think this is something that the Gen Ed and the NIU Plus group is working towards.

Certainly in terms of the Gen Eds we are looking at how to access all of the baccalaureate SLOs and get some data that tells us how well we are doing relative to those. As a model, we are trying to use the revisions that we have made recently, the University Writing Project we have, the data that we are collecting from freshman, in the first year of comps sequence

and then comparing that to the data we collect from seniors across the University Writing Project to show the gains in writing and critical thinking. We are using a model like that to broaden this to oral communication, collaboration, and the other SLOs. That is the path that we are headed down right now and trying to figure out how to do that in a way that doesn't choke us with overhead is the challenge.

The Innovation Entrepreneurship stage one and stage two, that was a recommendation that came out of the Council of Deans meeting and that they wanted that to be more explicit. But all of these things we have to figure out including operationalizing and creating metrics for them. Many of them will end up in stage two as we figure out ways to operationalize these better. I am hoping for, and I'm open to suggestions or comments, for all of you to understand what the KPIs are and what we are talking about as we talk about the dashboard. This would be the type of information that we would be putting on there. We will continue to work with the Council of Deans to refine these and get back to you on these. We have the dashboard presentation coming up on March 28, 2016 and maybe by then we have some of those worked out so we can show you what those might actually look like. We are really pushing to look at what we might want to look at in stage one by the APC for recommendation to the two senior leaders that you see here, by fall of 2016.

Would you like to say anything about the enthusiasm of the deans on using SharePoint?

Yes. A dashboard can mean a lot of things. We needed something about two or three years ago. But, we had many items on our plate, like HLC. And then we had Program Prioritization. But now, the time is ripe for action. Plus, there are a lot of conversion points. For Program Prioritization, we just produced deliverables in a very different way, and a data informed culture matters. So, how do you do that? We supplement what we already have. It was a very smart move by DoIT and Brett Coryell to go ahead and get into the Office365 licensing. It is a powerful license and one of the things that we have is SharePoint. SharePoint has evolved. SharePoint is very powerful now and it has something called Power BI which allows you to create a dashboard efficiently without putting out additional resources. And this would allow us to work with what we have and enable us to pull up data from an Excel spreadsheet up to a dashboard on the equivalent of an intranet. That would be at least one place to go, more importantly, a central place to go. Specifically, for program review, chairs, directors, deans, associate deans, etc., they can go to the dashboard and have a better understanding of some of the data out there. Depending on the data, this would be potentially updated monthly or at the end or the beginning of the semester.

Thank you. Are there any other questions on this topic?

Another key concern here, is the amount of work involved in managing this amount of information, and especially if we never done that before. We are dealing with this right now with the trustees and they want a dashboard and far more information than we would think would be necessary. We are trying to figure out what kinds of things aren't difficult to provide on a regular basis. Some of this is much more difficult and requires much more analysis, so part of the balance is also finding measures that aren't going to require additional staff to crunch the numbers and provide the stats. There are hundreds of measure, we need to get to the point where we can pick the ones that we can key in on. We need to make sure these are universally accepted but may not be ideally, specifically what

we would like. It is not an exact science. We will not be able to come up with all of the measures in one day, and instead will start small and build our way up.

That is something that will depend on the department and their own agenda. I'm not going to tell anyone what their three most important measures for them are. You guys are going to look at your own situation, and determine what the most important measures are. Further, the most important items at one time of the year, may not be the most important at other times.

And I do think that there are some that are listed there, that are important and collected on other campuses for reasons that we are not really going to have. The campuses that are extremely aggressive about tracking migration tend to be responsibility centered management campuses, where when students migrate it might impact the budget of an individual program. We are going to happy when students stay at NIU and aggressively tracking migration might have some value in understanding student behavior but it's pretty low on the list of business management measures.

The only mantra I hear here, is increase in enrollments. We go back and forth on the part of the college, the department, the university, everyone here, but do we really want to increase enrollment?

Why wouldn't we?

Well because if we increase enrollment, we need more faculty, so do we really want to? Or do we want to because it hurts my reputation? I guess if the university were to come out and say, 'Geoffrey from marketing, for every five percent bump in enrollment, X happens.' I don't know if it would be funny or to, but it is X metric that I can go and drive my people to go and make more calls or whatever we need to do. The same thing in scholarship. If you increase your scholarship by this much, or if people serve on more committees, those are…

It's not up to us to make those edicts. I will give you an example. Computer Science said we could double the number of graduate students in their department if you gave us another faculty line in a half, we could have one hundred more students. And so we said, ok, let's try it. We did the end calculations and knew that it would pay for itself with the extra one hundred students.

I think you guys are doing it, but this needs to be in a way that is more transparent.

I think this is a step in getting there.

I just think that the fewer numbers we use to get to a decision, the better.

I agree with you, but I think those numbers still need to be different for every department. I think you pick your goals and then the numbers follow. I think those numbers can be communicated. I think what I am used to and I try to do with faculty, for each tier, here is my expectation.

It's actually good that you are sitting next to Rebecca because we will get reports from the Program Prioritization. And those will have some general recommendations in them. And as we get feedback on their report from the campus, and the recommendations, we will be

tasking deans and vice presidents to create action plans within their colleges or divisions to respond to those recommendations. And then as those are created within divisions and colleges, they will come up to a higher level and we will be explaining all of this as soon as we have all of the details. Most likely, within the next month. Then there will be some reconciliations where we deal with potential synergy across the university. But then, coming out of those plans, people will know what their priorities are and they will have data that they can use to inform that. And will everyone use fifteen things? No. Nor will everyone's goal be the same, but I think out of responding to the Program Prioritization process, and the action plans that come as a result of that, there will be more clarity as to what should be targeted.

Just to be clear. Geoff, I think you were asking for a decision rules and both Lisa and you were talking about metrics that inform the decision rules that follow. Both are important, but what we are talking about here in the dashboard, are the metrics that start that conversation. I just want to be clear that I am not putting any decision rules up on the dashboard.

No, but with program review, there will be recommendations made by the subcommittees and by the APC, and those would also throw a light on which metrics would be the most valuable to those programs.

I guess I apologize, because I think my request to you two weeks ago was that we would go over the ten key metrics.

So we had the conversation with Al and Lisa with metrics that are feasible, but really, it's the Council of Deans that has to decide on what metrics will be included. So we went to them, and they were very supportive, but they weren't willing to or able to say these are the metrics we are going to use. We will need more time with them. I think the point that Lisa makes is a good one, not everyone may have the same goals in their programs. So there has to be a system, and this is what I thought you were asking for, what is the system by which those..

I don't remember those words…

What is the process or the mechanism, by which those decisions are made and how would the APC play a role in that process?

I'm somewhat confused or naïve about this. I thought the purpose for having key performance indicators was that everyone had the same KPIs, so I'm confused how that might work. I realize that everyone has different programs and what is important in Art may not be important in Accountancy or Physics or whatever. But for me, that was what the deans would be saying, that this is what we will be looking at. So then I can't get my hands around what you said, which is that they are all different.

There will be consistent measures across the institution. We are putting those together for the Board of Trustees. On the other hand, many of these are financial measures and I have been asked by some of our Trustees to provide rather detailed financial reports. We will provide the reports based on measures from all of the parts of the university. On the other hand, I will also have a separate group of measures that will be used internally to help manage my operation, but will never go to the board and will not feed into the rest of this. These are still critical to the management of the operation. So you will have some measures

to get a sense across the entire institution and the aggregate, but it will be tailored based on the individual department or division that will be relevant to them.

And even with the Board of Trustees, they want a front page that has somewhere between ten and twelve indicators across the institution (very broad), and then they expect each division to have their own sub dashboard measures that they manage too.

So, as the provost said, there is a base set of ten. These are very broad measures and then the next page has a completely different set of measures that also want to know about. This brings it back to the APC and what we will be looking at here.

I can tell you what's on the Board of Trustees dashboard if you would like.

I'm just saying that complicates us in program review. Unless we are given those specific measures.

It would seem that what we might want for APC, I mean everyone has need for the dashboard, but what we might want for APC is these are the eight or ten measures that the deans have come up with that we think everyone should be looking at. And within that, they have set targets, they themselves, in consultation with the deans and the provost, have set academic targets for those. I think that's what we have envisioned. Is that correct?

I think that is the only way for us to be effective. It would be really hard to evaluate like Accountancy if I'm from Philosophy, and I didn't know their specific metrics. So that is getting the point that you make, maybe it's more just that there will be a lot of different data flowing and available.

Two things, one, whenever the reporting happens through the APC, it's done in the context of the program explaining the metrics and the targets and so forth.

Right, but all of the data that I've seen on the APC provided in my reports is the same for each department.

Did you have a clarifying piece?

One of the things that the task force wanted was a process that made the information more meaningful and reported more often. So this wasn't an every eight year glimpse at the data. At the very least, this is providing more data updated almost constantly.

An example is History. It's well known that at a research high institution, historians should, on average, produce one book every four to five years. That's a target. But historians do more than that. And the chair definitely does more than that in her/his administrative capacity. But the chair and the dean knows this. For many disciplines, they know that at a research high level institution what the expectation is. I'm using research, artistry and scholarship inclusively: what is the discipline expectation? That's the differentiation needed, and we are picking that up during the narratives. And, we are already seeing that from program authors indicating in their narratives, "I'm not sure why you put this, but this or that defines the type of department or discipline we are." It's a necessary conversation that needs to happen. But I get what you are saying in that you are looking at the dashboard as an APC member and saying wow, I have no idea how to best incorporate that

in a dashboard.~~...~~

This is the best analogy I can give you. Ed Dunlap said that the way to improve business performance was to cut cost, cut cost. He's giving the narrative, right? Just like the History department professor or whoever, he's saying, this is the way to go, this is the way to go. Well, of course it wasn't the way to go. But the people that were evaluating him at the time, investors, bought into that. And so my point is, just on APC, that if I'm going to evaluate History and History should be publishing at whatever rate, it shouldn't be history having to tell me that. It should be you telling me from an external stand, this is the History report, these are the most important measures.

It's confirmation from History, yes, but we also go through accreditation and so forth. I picked History for a pretty good reason, in Economics, we do not go through accreditation, so it is all discipline norms and standards.

Right, but on my point just on Program Prioritization, and the APC, we were given good data. And it was the same data for every department. Then the departments created their own chart the way they wanted. And that's where the dangers lie. The dangers lie in that, if those are the most important metrics, the department reports them, which is great, but then whoever is on Program Prioritization that looks at this after and say wow, that's really important for marketing. From now on, I will start reporting it, so that everyone knows it's not only reliable but also valid. And that is where I am saying that the complexity, but the beauty of APC could come in, and if we can get that data, then you actually have something to measure the facts against. I totally agree, it should be different, but I've always from a research standpoint, the data given to you should not have a hint of bias. There's always going to be suspicion since you are working in your own best interest. So my point is, whether this complicates for APC or simplifies, we do need metrics that are objective and that are specific to the department. And that to me is step two.

I do think, I am looking now at the Board of Trustees dashboard, and a lot of what they have is really institutional level, but there are things there that we could introduce here. Things like six year graduation rate, student credit hours at graduation, and I think some of those things won't vary much. Some will vary a little bit according to degree, but in ways that are totally explainable.

Ibrahim, you've been patient. Please go ahead and ask your question.

My question may not be related to this. Let's say we have the metrics and we are doing a very good job and the departments are getting us very reliable data. My question is to Lisa and Al, do you have the resources to be able to meet these demands or would you say, I don't have any? So would you say you have any other resources or not?

We can probably share this one and I will go first before I toss it to you. I think part of the historical problem with program review was always, we could do this if we had more resources, and there was nothing to tie the review to resources. And I think linking program review with Program Prioritization says that we will be linking our priorities to a budget and a process and we will allocating resources regardless of what resource base we start with to things that we think are priorities according to our mission, the programs that have the potential to grow or the programs that are so excellent that they define the university. So everybody will say we need resources because everyone always says that, and not everyone

will actually get more resources. But we will have a rationale for the decisions that we make. And the programs that are being resourced less aggressively, it will be explained and transparent why they are not getting the resources and why someone else might be getting them. And I think also, the resources will come from various places, so there are resources that Al and I have available to us to allocate that might come from the state or funds that come from tuition. But there also might be opportunities that are identified and shared with the Vice-President from Advancement because although these are not resources that we have, there are other attractive philanthropic avenue available. There are multiple answers. If the question is, will we have resources to give everybody what they say that they need in their program review, we've never those resources and never will have them regardless of if the state tripled our appropriation. People would still ask for more than we actually have available.

You will have enough resources to have a positive impact on the whole university and it will be better after you support them even if you could not give everybody what they want. Is that a true statement?

I think it is a true statement, I'm not sure everyone would define positive impact the same way.

I would say that, especially in the current environment, that there is going to be more money. What this allows us to do is, as Lisa said, is make better use of scarce resources and help to establish criteria and the priorities or where we allocate the resources. The other part of this is that we look to pushing the budget so that it is more than one year, and to perhaps five years. This gives us an opportunity to look more towards the future and be more strategic in how we try to position the university going forward. So now we are looking at making decisions three and four years out, or even five years out. This helps to guide near term decisions and certainly will enable you to make even better use of scarce resources and prioritize and reinforce success. As I have said, it is one thing to make decisions in a three or four month time period, but you are in a completely different discussion when you are talking about three or four years out and based on positions in Program Prioritization, environmental factors, funding and enrollment, those types of things, many of which, we will be tracking with these measures.

And to speak more on the previous point, you cannot cut your way out. What we have historically done is to across the board cuts. That is just the recipe for managed decline instead of doing something other than that in a data informed way is an improvement.

Thank you.

Other questions or comments.

Thank you for sharing your time with us.

The next agenda item was to look at the program review template. We didn't make it all the way through the academic template. Are people up to do that for the next fifteen or twenty minutes? Here is the constraint. We have to tell the individuals that are going for program review next year, what they have to turn in. We have the academic centers template, we've done the process, but we haven't gotten all the way through is the academic programs template. One of the things that we have talked about potentially doing is letting them take

their narratives from Program Prioritization along with any accreditation reports that they have and add a few key pieces that you all think they should have. I know it's not much time, and it's the end of the long day, but if we don't do it today, we may have to have a small group work together to do that, so we can get it done in a timely manner. I will turn it over to Marc.

Just the way you phrased that, I didn't realize there was an option, at least for the short term, that we could go with the Program Prioritization narratives, supplemented by what the IBHE and the HLC needed. And I don't think when we went through this last time, we were thinking quite that way, but I like that.

That's for this group to decide, not for me to decide.

Even just doing that, we probably don't have time now to do it. But if that's what our task is, it seems like something that we can do a meeting with relative efficiency.

Our next meeting is on March 21st, and at that point, we really want to complete this process so that at the end of the month, we can tell those people what they have to do. That is the only item we have.

We could totally do that.

So we could get the changes that have been made up to that point and walk in and roll up our sleeves and work on that together at that meeting.

Sure. I think that would be a fabulous way to start. Get it down to the bare bones and it only has to be for one cycle.

Yes, time constraint is for one cycle, but I think we were trying to do it for what we really want going forward.

Yes.

Is that still doable?

Yes.

You look confused Geoff?

No, I was thinking with this template, do you have the knowledge to know what metrics are important, right?

Let's back up. I have been thinking about what you have been saying, real quick, we have been operating with what was a standard set up metrics for program review for years. All this is changing whatever the composition of that standard set is, but we have been working with a standard set for a long time. By having a standard set, then programs and the narratives, supplement the standard set with other variables that they think are important.

And their reporting of the results and the variables.

Yes, and the benchmarking of the scholarship or whatever. Now we are going to supplement that standard set of metrics but in my mind, it's the same model. I will say this, I had a horrible realization recently when someone had said they had been on this committee for six months and I started thinking about how many years I've been coming to this thing. I've read how many thousands of these things, I have a pretty good idea of what is exemplary in most disciplines, although there are some that I don't. All of us that have sat on this committee for years and read these things, we have a pretty good idea of what's excellent in those disciplines. And this set of metrics gives you a standardized starting point. And in my mind, just as in the case before, then the disciplines will supplement it with things that are unique or special about that specific program. Does that make sense?

Yes, I guess I am suspicious of anything that is self-imported.

As well you should. The check on that is benchmarking.

This is a report of what you are doing compared to the peers in your discipline on teaching and instructional. And Academic Analytics is for the research and scholarship. Now, that can be explained away, or at least every program might try to explain it away, but that provides you with a base line. The Provost coming in and telling you that every discipline has to be in the 70th percentile…

I think this goes back to what Geoff said. The real entity that would call you if you were to try to do something really out of balance, are your colleagues on this committee who will say, is that really a sensible peer group for this or is this really a sensible expectation of scholarly productivity for that discipline? So in some ways, yes, we all game it, but then this is part of the checks and balances.

Yes, I would say, especially being a sub-committee chair, this committee, in the past, has not called people out.

Then that raises the other question of, then what are we here for?

Exactly, thank you.

Even that question aside, when looking at what we will ask programs for, we can still make decisions what that will look like.

What we are here for, is to ensure the quality of the programs through program review. We are also here, and this is something we have not done previously, is we are here to provide recommendations on resource allocation to the people that just walked out of the room.

But, we have never done that.

That's what I am trying to get at and for us to be able to do. That is what this body is supposed to be doing. And, if you don't want to do that, then I would go back to saying, then what are we here for? If we say, "great job" and then we don't give you anything or if we say "gosh, we noticed that your faculty of twenty has produced one article in the last four years," and we don't do anything about it, what's the point?

There is a lot of validation and reliability when someone is providing external review. For all of our programs, the ones that are accredited or have the doctoral programs, that exchange will provide a lot of credible data. They are a check and balance step. The others that don't have external review, which should probably be considered.

I think they should be required for all programs.

It came out loud and clear in the task force, that one of the most meaningful parts, was the external review.

I agree, it is more important than the self-reported data.

I will throw one thing in, we were looking at prioritization and at the Academic Analytics data. We have an intuitive sense of what we think are our best programs. When you start looking at some of the external benchmarks, some of the programs that we think are great, may not necessarily have risen to a certain level. And some of the ones that we kind of write off as so-so, actually compare to their disciplinary peers and look really good. I think as we build out some of these data, I think the people on APC are going to come away with very different perspectives about some of our specific programs.

I think that is the point that I am trying to get to. You guys have access to all of the great, right data. It's the people here that don't have access to all of that.

Actually, you do. You have Academic Analytics access.

From my department, but if I don't know the data for Engineering, how am I supposed to evaluate it?

Good point. With Program Prioritization, suggestions came in, hey, I'm trying to look for this. And a bunch of us were, oh, ok. Roll up the sleeves again. And for most of those, we found some type of fit, and it was new data. We have never done that in this institution, at least institutionally.

And we did something that I think was real important. We finally settled on what's a rational empirical peer group for the place. That was huge.

For the norming and benchmarking.

In benchmarking, we were finally able to settle on something.

But not the discipline peers.

Not at the discipline level.

But it is something that can be used across the 223 academic programs. It might not always apply, so chairs and directors were encouraged to go and say, ok, you're not including MIT in here, but you're also not including a less performing institution. It's making sure that you are comparing apples to apples. An institutional peer set, we never really did that, we always leveraged off of IBHE or MAC or whatever. And that's fine, but it was never calibrated to what our scale size and scope of our institution was and is, for research high.

As well as enrollment, FTE, faculty and a whole host of things. I would say that requires a chair/director to dive deeper and say, ok, that's a first cut, but for my discipline, I have a peer set for comparables and aspirations and I need to calibrate to that peer set to have a meaningful conversation.

That is exactly what chairs have done as part of the program review process for years. Is for certain benchmarking data, they define their own set of comparisons in other schools. But they have done it with greater or less success. And many of them have called at the last minute and asked, who are my peers and what are my benchmarks. Which means it's not a meaningful process. It has not always been well thought out. I'm not saying it's their fault, they just didn't think about it.

Well, one of the things that I like about this, is that we are finally thinking in terms of peers as we've tended to be a fairly parochial kind of deal.

I think it was actually John Peters that said to Virginia Cassidy, "Hey, why don't we benchmark externally?" And that's when Virginia Cassidy put external benchmarks in that portion of program review.

He was also the one who asked why we didn't do external reviews for our doctoral programs. And now we do.

I've pushed my colleagues really hard to get external reviews for every single discipline. In terms of research, Ritu hit it, it's accreditation and doctoral. In terms of the whole institution, I'm not sure that's even feasible for available resources, but it would be useful for buy in at a department level and discipline level. And it would certainly add to the conversation.

I think that you have to demonstrate the value. We've heard that over and over again, and Chris has heard it with his surveys and focus groups, the external part is extremely valuable. Is it worth the investment?

I think we are at the end of the agenda. No further items, then we are adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Essex