

ACADEMIC PLANNING COUNCIL

September 24, 2018

3:00 p.m. Altgeld 315

Minutes

Present: Abdel-Motaleb, Barnhart, Chitwood, Daniel, Douglass, Einolf, Falkoff, Gordon, Ghrayeb, McCord, McEvoy, Mogren, Reynolds, Siblik, Strid, Subramony, and Ysasi

Meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m.

1. Announcements

- Douglass welcomed everyone and mentioned that Presidential and Board of Trustees Professorships nominations are due October 5, 2018.

2. Role of the APC in the Budget Process

- McCord provided insight on this topic.
 - Many Academic Planning Council (APC) members were involved in the conversations on how to appropriately involve governance bodies into the university budget process.
 - I. There was an extensive discussion regarding this topic at the last Spring 2018 APC meeting.
 - NIU is attempting to make the budget development process more structured, inclusive, and transparent.
 - I. Northern Illinois University's shared governance delegates budget involvement to the Resources, Space and Budget (RSB) Committee and the APC.
 - a. One of several responsibilities of the APC is to advise the Executive Vice President and Provost on academic priorities and strategies for the achievement of those priorities including the establishment of priorities in budgeting.
 - 1. Historically, the committee has not been directly involved in the budgeting process.
 - What are appropriate ways to help the APC be involved in the budgeting process?
 - I. During the last Spring 2018 meeting, there were counter-arguments.
 - a. The amount of time commitment, background knowledge, and effort that may be needed for greater involvement were not what members signed up for when they signed up for APC.
 - b. Training and orientation may be appropriate.
 - This last year, the University went through a budget development process.
 - I. The budgeting development process unfolded over the months of January and February, where budget assumptions were made regarding revenues, expenses, and the closure of the budget gap.
 - a. APC's Vice Chair, along with representatives from the RSB Committee were invited to participate.

1. The Vice Chair and RSB Committee representatives were not provided with training or orientation.
 2. There was no effort on gathering thoughts from APC members for the delivering of messages by the Vice Chair and RSB Committee representatives.
- Another item for consideration, are there other tables that are more important for APC members to be representatives at?
 - I. Is the University's annual budget development process really the right place? Or would being a voice at the table when academic faculty hiring decisions are being made be more impactful for APC to be a part of?
 - a. Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Sarah McGill and Executive President and Vice Provost (EVPP), McCord are working with the RSB Committee to build training and orientation programs.
 - II. Does the APC want a more in-depth understanding of the budgeting process, want to send a representative to attend budget hearings, or look at other venues that may be more productive?
 - Abdel-Motaleb asked what role can APC play in order to advise on the budgeting process?
 - Without the training it will be very hard to make decisions regarding the budgeting process.
 - Falkoff mentioned that he, as a representative, has been sent to the Executive Budget Committee (EBC) meetings and other venues with a limited understanding of his role there.
 - This is not the most efficient way to work.
 - Perhaps bringing representatives from the EBC to the APC meetings with explanations of where priorities are and what budgeting decisions are, may work better.
 - I. This will allow a representative at a later date to be more equipped to participate at the EBC meetings.
 - John Siblik mentioned that departments and programs that are reviewed on a particular year are more available to bring issues to the EBC than those who are not.
 - McCord agreed with Siblik's comment.
 - The suggestion of the APC being more involved in the faculty hiring process is a conversation that has not yet been had with the college deans.
 - I. That's a process that is more connected to the recommendations that the APC makes than the annual budget development process because the faculty hiring process is made in a different cycle than the annual budget developing cycle.
 - Mogren mentioned there is a structural idea on how to engage the APC in the budgeting process.
 - Making comments on the budgeting process based on structural items such as new proposals.

- I. What is APC's responsibility regarding making comments about the budgeting process?
 - II. What is the philosophy of what APC should do?
 - III. How is this going to impact the academic side?
 - There is a sense that in the drive to be financially responsible, the academic side does not get the voice that it needs.
 - I. Perhaps APC can critique whether or not the budgetary decisions promote the University's academic mission.
- McCord mentioned integration of academic integrity and fiscal responsibility has yet to happen.
 - APC can advocate on academic integrity and the college deans or EVPP can take care of the integration.
 - I. Ultimately the responsibility does rest with the EVPP.
 - McCord indicated that if you are comfortable with being involved in both the financial and academic aspects, help can be given to get there.
- Mogren suggested that the APC can take part in integrating, but must have a clarity of what the mission is in making assessments regarding the budgetary process.
 - Being able to advise on the academic quality or academic impact on budgetary decisions is something the APC can do.
 - I. It's important for the integrity of the institution to have a body that can stand up for certain decisions.
- Douglass mentioned that bringing ideas to the APC will allow for commentary on the effects certain decisions will have.
- Mogren gave an example, if there is a hiring freeze, the APC can gather information from units and provide the potential impact that decision will have on the academic side.
- Siblik mentioned that the CFO has discussed putting together a dashboard on how money is disbursed.
 - The CFO gave a presentation that showed that percentages spent on faculty and academic support is in line with the University's peers.
 - I. Northern Illinois University (NIU) is on the right track in regards to resources for academics, research, and facilities.
- Chris McCord suggested bringing administration to the APC meetings on a regular basis to discuss issues the APC should be aware of or to allow the APC to ask questions.
 - Background information will be provided.
 - The RSB Committee has a similar process where the vice president addresses certain questions twice a semester.
 - This will try to be incorporated into the APC's agendas.

3. Approval of minutes from August 27, 2018

- First motion made by Ibrahim Abdel-Motaleb
- Second motion was made by Judy Chitwood
- Motion passed

4. Discussion of subcommittee reports

- Chitwood gave an overview of the Subcommittee A report: M.A.T.
 - Departmental Context
 - I. Strengths
 - a. There was a really good discussion with the College of Education and Department of Curriculum and Instruction.
 - b. Students have many bilingual opportunities in the program and teacher shortages provide growth potential.
 - c. Faculty members are recognized in their field.
 - II. Discussion Points/Areas of Improvement
 - a. Trying to ensure enrollment is centralized.
 - 1. Trying to get a graduate advisor that will work with managing inquiries and pointing individuals in the right direction.
 - b. Enrollment includes 19-25 students and about 10-15 degrees conferred each year.
 - 1. Have a great reputation of pairing teachers.
 - c. Discussion regarding the use of online course offerings was mentioned, but prefer to remain as a face to face program.
 - 1. A hybrid program is a possibility.
 - d. More faculty is desired, but with budget constraints this is unlikely.
 - M.A.T.
 - I. Strengths
 - a. The program has partnerships with school districts such as Elgin.
 - b. Enrollment in the program continues to increase.
 - 1. Currently, there are seven graduates teaching.
 - c. During the last semester, students must be student teaching.
 - II. Discussion Points/Areas of Improvement
 - a. The program has found a better home in the College of Education than its previous location in the Provost's Office.
 - b. There are core offerings in Rockford and Naperville.
 - 1. The program is considering other parts around the Chicagoland area.
 - c. Plan with community colleges for a 2+2+1.
 - d. The program does not have any data management to track institutional waivers.
 - 1. Would like to hire a dedicated data manager for the department.
 - e. There have been many faculty retirements and faculty leaving for higher paying positions.
 - 1. A long term strategic plan for personnel issues has not been created.
 - f. Discussion during a retreat regarding senior faculty fellowships.

- g. The program would like to have increase enrollment and course offerings, but more work is needed to gather data and there is a heavy workload.
 - 1. A consideration is consolidating faculty.
- III. Douglass mentioned the recent change in leadership, and that the program was offered in the Provost Office, and Graduate School, but the review was not in sync with the other programs in the department.
- IV. Recommendations for the Future
 - a. Pursue offering hybrid courses.
 - 1. The program is an in-class program.
 - 2. Students are able to teach during their last semester with high job placements.
 - b. The program has been findings ways to evaluate and improve recruitment efforts.
 - c. Working on creating a narrative so as not to get conflicting information.
- V. There was a question during the subcommittee meeting regarding assessment and aligning the program with Program Review.
 - a. Douglass mentioned that there is a lot of reporting that must be completed.
 - 1. In an effort to align all of the programs that wanted to be aligned with their Program Review and accreditation cycles, some programs ended up having their mid-status report happen with their Program Review.
 - 2. After this cycle, the programs will be aligned.
 - b. Subramony mentioned there is a group that Carrie Zack from Office of Educator Licensure and Preparation and she are leading to eliminate redundant reporting.
 - 1. Efforts are also in place to ensure that 2019-2020 programs primarily in Education, do not have to complete the Annual Assessment Updates due in June.
 - The September report turned into Carrie's office is more comprehensive and useful.
- VI. McEvoy commented on the scarcity of faculty positions.
 - a. There is a heavy graduate load compared to others.
 - b. The only way to grow is to have more faculty with a graduate status to teach courses.
- Strid mentioned that the department has had many data centralizing issues and having a data manager may be useful.
- Falkoff gave an overview of the Subcommittee B report: Philosophy
 - Departmental Context
 - I. Strengths
 - a. Everyone on the committee was impressed with the programs.

- b. The faculty is well credentialed, the M.A. program is nationally recognized, high teaching productivity, and graduates are satisfied with the program.
 - c. Efforts at continuous quality improvement continue.
 - d. These programs are fundamental to the University.
 - II. Challenges/Areas of Improvement/Discussion Points
 - a. The department has lost several faculty members since 2002.
 - b. There have been budget cuts particularly, library budgets.
 - 1. Access to only electronic journals is a concern.
 - Barnhart agreed, and stated that with more money there could be more subscriptions.
 - c. There was a question raised regarding the morale given the budget cuts.
 - 1. Morale remains in good shape due to the success of the M.A. program.
 - d. Diversity among faculty is also a challenge, but the department has not had the opportunity to hire anyone.
 - III. Douglass asked about the decline in credit hours taught as a function of lower levels in consequence of NIU Progressive Learning in Undergraduate Studies (PLUS).
 - a. McCord mentioned that NIU PLUS has reduced the number of general education requirements, but has diversified how students may satisfy those requirements.
- B.A./B.S. in Philosophy
 - I. Strengths
 - a. The program is efficient compared to research-high state peers.
 - b. Students are satisfied with the program.
 - c. The program provides great service to the University.
 - d. There is notable engaged learning and high impact practices.
 - II. Challenges/Areas of Improvement/Discussion Points
 - a. As a response from the last program review, the program created “bookend courses” which are writing infused courses.
 - 1. These have been assessed to be effective.
 - 2. The program added a junior writing seminar and a senior writing capstone course.
 - b. There is a gender disparity among the undergraduate students.
 - 1. The majority of students are women.
 - c. The dedicated writing tutors have been effective.
 - d. The program continues to identify diversity in the student body as a challenge.
 - III. Recommendations for the Future
 - a. Consider reaching out to alumni for monetary support for scholarships and professorships.
 - b. Promote the undergraduate program through their alumni network.

- c. Strid recommended, overall for diversity issues the program needs to be more strategic in their thinking. Philosophy is very Eurocentric. They need to think strategically about how they can get different schools of thought. This needs to be from the ground up.
 - IV. Douglass asked if Strid's recommendations should be added to the Falkoff's report and Falkoff approved that Strid's recommendation be added to the B.A./B.S. in Philosophy report.
- M.A. in Philosophy
 - I. Strengths
 - a. The program is ranked #2 nationally.
 - b. Demand for the program is high.
 - c. The program faculty want this program to be the best in the country.
 - d. Improved time-to-degree.
 - e. Found that students were struggling with comprehensive exams and changed the system as it was outdated and not measuring achievement.
 - 1. A new structure was introduced where students are expected to be prepared in several areas rather than broadly.
 - 2. This has increased the retention rate.
 - II. Challenges/Areas of Improvement/Discussion Points
 - a. Historically there has been a gender disparity.
 - b. Diversity is also an issue.
 - III. Recommendations for the Future
 - a. Consider the impact of differential tuition, at the M.A. level to help give the department financial resources.
 - b. Consider applying to the University Diversity Equity and Inclusion Fellowship.

5. HLC Review Findings

- Douglass mentioned that another responsibility of the APC is to understand how accreditation works at NIU and support his process.
 - On June 15, 2018 the 4 Year Assurance Argument was submitted.
- Subramony gave a presentation on the HLC Review Findings.
 - The presentation can be found under: Content Collection\Institution Content\VP Acad Plan\APC 2018-2019\Meeting Materials\September 24, 2018\HLC 2018 Assurance review- APC presentation 9-24-2018.
 - NIU successfully completed the 4-year assurance review.
 - I. Five criteria and 21 core components were met.
 - a. NIU will not complete interim reports.
 - II. Individuals who participated during this process were thanked.
 - a. There were over 40 individuals who were part of the criteria groups, resource support groups, and individuals who fulfilled data requests.

- b. This was a University-wide effort.
- Why this is important?
 - I. It's a continuous quality improvement for all academic programs.
 - II. Attested to NIU's alignment of institutional priorities.
 - III. Having a regional accreditation ensures NIU has Title IV funding, transfer agreements, and enrollments.
- Strategies that we are using during this process may be useful for projects the APC is involved with such as Program Review and Program Prioritization merging.
 - I. Criteria groups would meet on their own schedules and the Steering Committee would meet on a monthly basis.
 - a. There were two co-chairs for every criteria group.
 - II. Ideas and themes were found that were embedded into the Assurance Argument.
 - a. The HLA findings recognized NIU faced external stresses and internal challenges.
 - 1. Climate environment
 - Freshman retention has been decreasing.
 - Budget passing impact.
 - There have been leadership transitions in the last four years.
 - III. A project management approach was used with the help of Susan Smith, Institutional Effective's Projects Coordinator.
 - a. About 1,400 pieces of data were systematically collected.
 - IV. Individuals were always notified and informed as to how the project was going.
 - a. Many people were involved in writing and requesting data, the entire process was known at the University level.
 - V. Reviewers kept current with NIU's websites.
- Five criteria of the Assurance Review
 - I. Mission
 - II. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct
 - III. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support
 - IV. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement
 - V. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness
- During the site visit in 2014 there was a follow-up report due which was provided in Criteria 5.
- Five themes that were highlighted in the narrative
 - I. Program Prioritization Process and Outcomes
 - II. Transparency
 - III. Diversity
 - IV. NIU PLUS
 - V. Engagement
- Overall Findings from the 4-Year HLC Assurance Review
 - I. "Program Prioritization process which has shaped and guided the institution, and tied strategic planning and budgeting together"

- II. All five criteria were met.
- III. “Processes related to Core Components 5.A and 5.C have been resolved by the establishment and implementation of Program Prioritization and the new transparent and effective budgeting model”
- IV. Must continuously improve quality.
- V. Criteria 1: Mission
 - a. NIU is true to its mission and role in the region.
 - b. NIU has also expanded its emphasis on diversity.
- VI. Criteria 2: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct
 - a. “...the institution is in a remarkably good position given external pressures endured, speaking to the integrity of its people and operations”
 - 1. The reviewers were aware of the Office of the Executive Inspector General investigation, bond revenues, and inventory tracking.
 - Included these issues in the argument along with responses of how they were addressed.
- VII. Criteria 3: Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support
 - a. “A strong collection of student support services, and co-curricular education, enhance the prospects of student success and holistic learning”
 - 1. Provided evidence regarding GenEd, NIU PLUS, academic and resource support programs.
- VIII. Criteria 4: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement
 - a. “NIU has an extensive faculty-driven assessment process...a campus culture of assessment...continuous improvement of academic and co-curricular programs”
 - b. Shared governance has been involved in Program Prioritization.
 - c. Applauded efforts in collecting, analyzing and using data on retention, persistence, and completion.
 - d. Encouraged the University to be more ambitious in goals and KPIs.
 - 1. Reviewers will look at this in the years to come.
 - 2. McCord and Douglass mentioned that this does not necessarily mean to set higher targets, but more in terms of presidential goals and cascading down from those to strategic areas for enrollment.
 - 3. NIU is on track to accomplish such goals with Summer Enrollment Retreats and the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) group.
 - e. Subramony asked if it would be helpful for certain groups such as the SEM team to come to the APC meetings to discuss such goals.

1. McCord mentioned that a plan is expected to come back by the end of October and will then be taken to various groups.
 - APC will be an appropriate group.
- IX. Criteria 5: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness
 - a. "...commended for activities during times of stress and is encouraged to continue on its path of making strategic resource allocation decisions to further strengthen the institution for the future"
 - b. Program Prioritization significantly influenced the alignment of resources.
 1. Significant administrative restructuring in diversity and inclusion.
 - c. Commended on the current efforts and the institution's direction.
- X. There are no follow-up reports required by the HLC.
- What do we do now?
 - I. Years 1-3: 10-year cycle with Open Pathway
 - II. Year 4: Assurance review with no site visit
 - III. Years 5-9: It is the time to decide what the Quality Initiative will be.
 - a. A Quality Initiative that is true to NIU's mission.
 - b. Douglass mentioned that the quality initiative will most likely relate to equity gaps and student success.
 - IV. Years 10: Assurance Argument with a site visit
- Falkoff asked why NIU selected the Open Pathway in 2014.
 - I. Subramony mentioned that this was the least restrictive option.
 - II. Douglass described the different pathways.
- NIU opened an international location in China.
- The next step is to choose a Quality Initiative.

6. Other Business

- Douglass mentioned that on October 1, 2018, subcommittee meetings will take place.
 - Gordon and Cripe will be the subcommittee chairs.
- Mogren mentioned there is an increasing sense of reporting that is making it difficult to recruit people for chair positions.
 - McEvoy commented spending a lot of hours on the reports is time well spent.
 - I. The challenge is finding time to grow enrollment and engage with faculty and students.
 - Gordon also mentioned he stepped down as chair to launch a new program and there is a lot of reporting.
 - Douglass commented that this is a known issue and we must continue to streamline and reduce some of the burden.
 - McCord mentioned this is a level of compliance.

- Subramony mentioned that program reports helped with compiling evidence for the Assurance Argument, but that there is no doubt there is much reporting.
- Gordon commented that there is an increase in reports from all over, including Human Resources.

Meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Crystal Doyle and Jessica Jaimes