Program Review Committee
Minutes
November 6, 2007

Present: Marianne Robins, Ray Rosentrater, Warren Rogers, Eileen McMahon, Mark Nelson, Andrew Mullen, Tim Wilson, Bill Wright and Barb Kennedy

Marianne opened with a reading from Philippians to help us as we consider some of the personal issues confronting this committee. The verses she read inspired us to be “one with the Spirit and purpose”. This she followed with prayer.

Marianne began the meeting by reviewing the progress of our PRC goals for the year which were detailed in a handout. We have adopted a 6 Year Departmental Program Review template and she has done an orientation for new chairs in the area of Program Review responsibilities.

Today’s goal is to begin educating the Program Review Committee. She asked members to read reports from some of the departments who have “struggled” with assessment. We need to plot a course in how to work effectively with these departments. Marianne hopes committee members will learn as we go—she believes that assessment can be “learned” in a certain amount of time. We need to develop effective means to help departments move along.

Warren announced that the Academic Resource Committee of the Board had voted to hire a full time Director of Assessment by the Fall of 2009. The College will need time to find resources to fund the position. The trustees supported this knowing that many of our peer colleges, like Biola and Point Loma, already have positions in place. The advantages of having a full time person would include improving overall consistency of the reports, provide better education to departments through better communicating, suggesting ideas and good models as well as helping them use the right language. Marianne emphasized how important it would be to recruit someone with a strong background of research in assessment. She also advocated the position have “faculty status” with a limited teaching load to ensure they will have credibility and be in a position to earn the respect of the faculty. The committee hoped that the timeline could be advanced to January 2009 to allow some transition between Marianne and the new hire.

The Committee then discussed Marianne’s proposed chart with the departmental 6 year Program Review due dates. While release time from the classroom to write reports has provided no guarantee of getting quality reports, it remains the only way to reward and compensate faculty for the extra work. There is good rational to award release time during the period when the report is due. Departments who have been delinquent in report writing would receive their course reduction the following year after submitting an acceptable document. The Committee also discussed punitive action that might be taken against a Chair or report writer.
Mark raised the analogy of the adolescent gardener who is asked to weed the garden and sabotages his work by pulling the tomato plants, thus insuring he will not be assigned to do the work again. What are the sanctions available to us, particularly the full professor who is not doing his/her job in the assessment area? Possibilities might be to assign the report to an outsider from the department. We might want to borrow from the Calvin model of assigning a faculty member from outside the department to chair the department.

The Committee also focused on whether course reduction might be offered to someone other than the department chair who is willing to accept the accountability, attend training and be a sort of “assessment coordinator” for their department. We would need to find another title as this might confuse faculty who remember our Assessment Coordinator model created to help gear up for the WASC accreditation.

The Committee agreed that we need to adjust the template for the non-academic departments.

Andrew raised the question of whether Marianne had asked what cycle of accreditation Music has with their national accrediting agency? The ’08-’09 slot for Education will work well for their national accrediting timeline. We need to check with Music.

Marianne’s immediate goals include:
1. Constructing a template for the non-academic departments
2. Create a calendar to phase in a new Director of Assessment
3. Decide where to put GE in the timeline of 6 Year Reports

Andrew asked if there had been any consideration for filling his Committee slot for the Spring term? He would recommend Laura Montgomery if she is willing. Apparently Faculty Council has not addressed Spring vacancies.

Marianne asked that Committee Members send notes on the departments they reviewed to her.

Recorded by,
Barb Kennedy

Revised 1/3/08