Program Review Committee  
Minutes  
March 31, 2008

Present: Laura Montgomery, Mark Nelson, Bill Wright, Ray Rosentrater, Dave Marten, Warren Rogers and Barb Kennedy

Marianne Robins was away on a WASC Team Visit. Laura Montgomery chaired the meeting.

Ray Rosentrater opened with prayer.

Minutes from 3/10/08 were approved as written.

Two departmental proposals for stipends were reviewed. Biology has asked for money to hire an outside reviewer. The Committee agreed that this type of request is outside the purview of this group. Bill Wright noted that the Provost’s Office has certainly been encouraging this type of activity but Warren Rogers and he are the ones who should approve the expenditure. Regarding the second half of the proposal, the group concurred that it was too lacking in specifics. They would like more detail on the specific activities that would be covered by the stipend. Specifically, what data are they collecting and what are they proposing to do. We would also like to have the principal author identified. The Committee agreed that we communicate to the department that Biology has met the “deadline” for requesting the stipend but they need to follow the proposal guidelines.

Communications Studies presented a well-thought out proposal for a stipend which was approved.

The Committee also reflected on the fact that most of this spring’s proposals have been for stipends. There was concern that this trend is not following the intent of the program which is to free up faculty time to write reports. The committee agreed that we need to encourage the use of course releases and single authors in order to obtain reports which are well-integrated and thoughtful.

Bill Wright reviewed the content of the Program Review Web Pages which are currently being constructed under his supervision. Bill noted that Marianne has voiced a preference for not making our departmental reports and minutes open to the public. Restricting access to these was debated at some length. The Committee asked if those pages could be password restricted so that if a faculty member were working off-campus they could still view them? Barb will ask Greg Smith’s advice on this matter. The Committee agreed that we should eliminate the contact information from the Committee Member’s page. Laura expressed the desire to see evidence which confirms the quality of our program posted on this site. We discussed the vision of linking the site to departmental websites where we might find 1. Mission Statements 2. Student Learning
Outcomes 3. Rubrics 4. Summary. Or is this a separate document compiled to list each departments' goals and objectives?? Publishing results of the CLA (Collegiate Learning Assessment) and NSSE were discussed as well. Laura said we should be very careful to compare our seniors to other seniors rather than claim we have developed them (CLA for example is not a longitudinal study which would measure the same students over a period of years).

Laura shared some observations from a recent WASC Educational Effectiveness Team Visit. Participating helped her to be more aware of what is important to WASC. There actually are federal regulations which the regional accrediting agencies are responsible for up-holding. However, there is some pressure coming from the federal government to put standards on higher education, similar to the “No Child Left Behind” regulations which could limit a college’s autonomy and ability to set their own courses. She had several recommendations which we should consider when writing the next proposals and reports.

1. Do exactly what you propose. Faculty should be involved in the writing.
2. There should be good continuity between the 3 documents. There are big problems when they don’t match.
3. Have strong link between claims and evidence. The evidence should be presented so team member doesn’t have to dig for it. Qualitative anecdotes are acceptable. We shouldn't make statements like “I say it’s better because I can feel it”. Changes to program and claims have to flow from the evidence. If a syllabus has changed, give evidence of why it was changed.
4. Evidence of pre and post tests are good for claiming improvement.
5. Reports are partially written before the team even comes to campus. The team visit is mainly for them to ask questions and clarify. They expect that the people they meet will know the evidence. It is really bad when the team gets blank stares from a question.

Recorded by,

Barb Kennedy

Revised 4/11/08