

# Academic Senate Meeting

April 8, 2011

**Members present:** Deborah Dunn, Bob Kuntz, David Marten, Paul Morgan, Andrew Mullen, Tatiana Nazarenko, Richard Pointer, Warren Rogers (chair), Brenda Smith, and Paul Willis.

**Others present:** John Blondell, Alister Chapman, Greg Spencer, and Bill Wright.

**Members Absent:** Ron Enroth, Jane Highstreet (WCSA), and Susan Savage.

- 1. Approval of the minutes of the 3/11/11 and 4/1/11 meetings was deferred to the next meeting.**
- 2. Welcome to our newly elected 2011-2012 senate members.**

Russ Howell, Chris Milner, and Greg Spencer

- 3. Discussion of the newly proposed Institutional and General Education Learning Outcomes, which embody the newly revised eight learning standards.**

Warren Rogers stated that the Learning Outcomes deserve and need careful conversation but there is insufficient time left in the academic year. At the same time work needs to continue over the summer in preparation for the WASC visit in the fall. The question before us is how to move forward to meet obligations for the coming year and still make space for the needed discussions.

At a minimum it is essential that we have at least a provisional document for next year.

Bill Wright stated that we must demonstrate to WASC that we are actively engaged in departmental program review level of assessment and institutional level of assessment. We must also demonstrate that they are both being done well and that one is not being done at the expense of the other. It is not an either or situation. We must demonstrate that we are carrying out a plan and Bill believes it is essential that we are working from an approved plan.

Rick Pointer echoed Bill's statements and said that an approved plan is needed for the Westmont Board of Trustees as well.

Tatiana Nazarenko distributed a document that lists the top 15 institutions with the best Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). They focus on fewer outcomes: writing and quantitative reasoning only and everything else is assessed via program review at the department level.

Bill Wright stated that we need a coherent plan. We have communicated to WASC that we have been working diligently since 2007. It has been an organic, evolving process with changing leadership.

We need a more coordinated, coherent and reasonable plan for going forward. It is likely to be revised by the faculty going forward but it does provide a direction for where we are headed. We can say with integrity that it represents good work that has been going on for several years.

Warren Rogers stated that the plan still needs a lot of work. He asked to what extent the plan can be incomplete given the intent of an in-depth review in the coming year that might result in changes at the end of the discussion?

Bill Wright said changes would not be a problem vis-à-vis WASC. However, it is important to define

which plan we will talk about. The 2002 plan is not a viable plan, we cannot roll back the clock to the last approved plan.

John Blondell stated that the plan can be a living document.

Deborah Dunn expressed concerns about the goals and the ILOs. What do they mean and what are we committing ourselves to?

Rick Pointer stated that every ILO was written by a group of faculty, not just the Program Review Committee (PRC). They have been crafted and vetted by groups of faculty but have not been voted on by the entire faculty. We need specific examples of what needs to be excluded or added.

It was observed that we only assess what we have not what we want to be.

Greg Spencer pointed out that ILOs don't restrict what we do, they mandate what we assess. Not every aspiration needs to be represented in the ILOs.

Deborah Dunn and others expressed concern about the removal of research and interdisciplinary studies from the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). We will tie resources to what we assess. What we assess begins to shape the entire institution. Reservations and concerns were expressed that need in-depth discussion.

Westmont's ILOs don't adequately incorporate the Natural and Behavioral sciences. The word research does not appear.

Bill Wright stated that we are defining research today differently than we did in 2002.

Do the ILOs reflect the broad spectrum that each division can see themselves represented?

Today, can we embrace process, the work done by the PRC and Tatiana and move forward?

Dave Marten stated he has trouble supporting the current plan and believes we should go back to the 2002 plan.

Tatiana stated doing so would mean assessing 104 outcomes, which is unfeasible.

Rick Pointer reminded everyone that the 2009 Senate approved the additional standards Learning Standards.

It is understood that the faculty will need to approve "something" to enable Westmont to proceed with preparations for the WASC visit in the fall.

Alister Chapman observed that the PRC has attempted to reduce the assessment plan to something that is manageable. We have hired someone to formulate a plan we can assess. Perhaps what we need in addition is an aspirational document that describes what we care about?

Deborah Dunn said we could start with the document entitled *What We Want for Our Graduates*.

Andrew expressed concerns about larger architectural issues. Who is doing the assessment?

Rick Pointer stated that faculty committees have done their homework. Must the senate review all of their work, and then pass it on to faculty who must review all of the work again? Shouldn't some benefit of the doubt be given to other faculty, acknowledging that they have wrestled with and done due diligence? He suggested that the Senate vote the four documents up or down and send them back to the PRC.

As time was running out Warren mentioned that he would be scheduling another Senate meeting on Study Day. He said based on today's discussion the Senate is not in a position yet to endorse or approve anything.

#### **4. Agenda item priorities for the coming academic year.**

Deferred to next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Kuntz  
Registrar