

NCA Accreditation-Team IV Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 18, 2003, 12:15-1:45
BUS N440

Attendees: David Petering, Team Chair, Mary Lynn Collins, Roberta Corrigan, Richard Marcus, Terry Nardin, Jude Rathburn, Linda Sabatini, Rachel Schiffman, Alan Zweben

Absentees:

Briefed minutes from previous meeting. All motioned to move to next item on agenda.

Introduced Laura Pedrick, who is developing a website which is available for everyone on campus and community.

Laura: Website will be available Friday, September 19, 2003 in the p.m. Will send email when site is available. The site available that's public has all the typical documents about accreditation and time lines, and has links to pdf of the handbook at the NCA site. There is also a team page, listing who the team members are, reflector, minutes and meeting schedules. There is also 'Reports Submission, that is password protected. It is used for teams to put their draft documents before putting into the public space. The user name is: NCA and the password is: Teams, which will also be emailed to everyone.

David: Continue discussion on 4a. Need to develop lines of evidence as part of self-study. Organized information from previous meeting into headings and sorted comments received under those headings.

On page 1, I put down the NCA lines of evidence. On page 2, starts out with overview of Core Component 4a. It is an overwhelming task for this group, getting into research and basic education. I have a page from the UWM Extramural Funding Report that probably has everything we will need. It covers campus wide, breaks down individual investigators, according to schools and colleges. The key factors are deciding what is important for us to look at.

Another good background document is the Graduate School Analysis Group Report to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. This past year a group was called together to do a quick study of the graduate school. First page is the introduction, and looking at the first paragraph, you would say this group essentially in support of the things that we would be supportive of as well with respect to research. At the back of the document, it includes a previous study of the graduate school that was done in 1996. This give an opportunity to make a comparison of what is taking place during that time.

Laura: The committee strongly supported the 1996 study.

David: Are there any comments on the documents?

Dick: Is there a University Read-A-Book?

Ans: I think the answer is 'no'. It could be done, it hasn't been done, that is something institutional research should be doing. It is an issue to be addressed and will be addressed.

Quest: Couldn't you ask departments to do the collating and the data for their department? And, all we have to do is add together all the different departments/schools.

Comment: If it is too much information, there is a things called "biographical sketch", which is simpler to do. Gives two-three pages and give people a real sense of where people are. Maybe an abridged version, instead of 25 or more pages.

Comment: Standardized format might be helpful. But, doesn't make sense for some types of researches. Yet, to have some type of uniformity in how it's set up would make it easier to be compliable to a unified book.

Comment: The argument against that is we want to show a lot of activities. The interest is not making us look good, but actually finding out where we are.

Suggestion: That departments not compile the vita's themselves, but do a count. Give everyone on campus a standard format, and have them submit this in word format to the institutional researchers. Another suggestion is do it in web form. That would standardize it.

Quest: What is the goal of having this or doing this?

Responses: I want us to get accredited, and documents that show what we're doing would be the vitas that people do and we give it to the NCA and say look people are doing stuff. If the objective is to say people are not doing enough, then I see us having two objectives in our committee. One part criticism of what is going on and another part advocacy.

Question: Where are the needs, where are the deficiencies and the gaps that needs to be addressed? There are some real deficiencies in terms of research scholarship, and where do they lay? What mechanisms are/are not in place to address these deficiencies?

Comment: Types of issues that are important to identify are structural problems that impede the other 90%. Should some of the data be evaluated is looking at UWM in comparison to peer institutions. Maybe we should get feedback from departments about how we can do that sort of thing.

David: On page 6, under the heading 'Our Community Benefits From Presence Of A Poet Doctoral Research Universities, that sort of heading also links up with other groups. This heading relates to the engagement topic (which is Team V) of an essay written about the arts in Milwaukee by Richard Blau, who is absent today. We should be sending this information to the other group and we should be talking with them.

Dave: On Page 8, the original criteria 4a says, "The organization demonstrates through the actions of its board, administrators, faculty, student and staff. Jude brought to mind we need to think of the students with respect to opportunities that relate to this. I put another heading titled "Student Learning Opportunities Are Linked to Inquiry and Discovery".

Dave: Asking for volunteers to be on a subcommittee that would start with this document and then work towards getting us a method by which we are going to get information in lines of evidence.

Question: David, are you going to split the group into two and half work on 4a and the other half on 4b?

David: I'm just taking volunteers. If you want to work on half, that's fine, and if you want to work on all, that's fine. In order to move us along, we have four different components. We have to start on this. We have the general ideas that are good basis for moving ahead to develop a concrete plan about how to do this. Now we have to get a smaller group together to talk about this intensively.

Question: Are there any volunteers? Two people have volunteered.

David: Any further input, please forward to David, but it will be put aside for the subcommittee to take a look at. Moved on to the second core component. The 2nd component states the following, "The Organization demonstrates that the acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skill in the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs. This is described as the general education part of the portfolio. On page 20 of the NCA workbook, the commission statement of general education is the more detailed exposition of what NCA is talking about under this core component.

Question: Why is senior level which is not general education is not an exercise of intellectual inquiry? Why is it only general education?

Response: It could include more. These are coming down to me from Rita, but these dependencies are important for understanding where the NCA was coming from when it put together these criteria and core components.

On second page of agenda, the core components and the lines of evidence that the NCA enlisted into this. First, organization integrates general education to all of its undergraduate degree programs. Second, organization regularly views relationship between submission and value. Third, the organization assesses how effective its graduate program is established. Fourth, the organization demonstrates the interest between curricular and co curricular activities that support inquiry practice. These are ideas for evidence headings that would help guide us through this area.

Comments: Perhaps the creation of freshman seminars was an attempt to do something like that at an early stage with small groups would be some piece of evidence. I have a gut feeling that something becomes a general education course because a department wants to get more students and is affective in persuading groups it is a general education, whether it is or isn't.

In the Undergraduate Bulletin towards the back under Academic Information states: General Education Requirement lists Math skills, Competency in English composition, Foreign Language in 1999, and Distribution requirements. The catalog does not give a lot of detail, but does list website.

Comment: We are definitely going backwards with meeting GER goals. GER has been gutted; it's basically a set of meaningless requirements. They got rid of the proficiency requirement in writing because it was too expensive to sustain. Set a higher standard for GER and University, we might document the relatively demanding and well thought out character the way we think of education.

Team leaders thought there might have trouble with this, since not dealing with it since the 1980's as a University. Get a proliferation of courses that are designed to get more resources into departments.

Question: To what extent do individual departments or majors have control over these distribution requirements? (Ex: a science major student taking six credit in natural science, and then still taking their other required courses).

Ans: The problem would not be in the science requirement, but for example: in the fine arts area there might be a problem for a science major student. One of the problems is how the majors utilize the general education, or do they in the major.

Comments: The last Core Component state, "The organization provides supports to ensure that the faculty/students/staff require applied knowledge responsibly". The good stuff is giving to the non-majors; the stuff broadening is not given to majors.

If there were a way to assess students upon graduation, then we would have a way to assess the impact. We don't have a way of demonstrating the quality of UWM education. The most prestigious institutions have the most qualified freshmen class, but it doesn't measure is value education. There is a lot of value education in freshmen class at UWM, but we don't have a good way of assessing it. The same questions could be asked of the graduate programs, which might be easier to deal with. Integrate the sciences, etc. into courses that may work into a students' major/program.

There are a lot of issues on what the faculty thinks about this. In the past, have tried but can't get faculty interested. What is the relationship between the GER and professional degrees? Students have confusion about this (for example; how can an instructor grade a student on their writing in a class other than English?)

We need to know what other universities do, and how we are different from them. Whether we are doing something that is normative or way out of line.

David:

In another handout from Purdue University of Indianapolis, it was put together to guide them into what they want to get out of their GER.

There are some key words to keep in mind: In the Core – Integral part, in the first bullet – the internationality, the next two – effectiveness, then linkages, and outcomes.

Focus on graduate programs – think about intellectual inquiry. In clinic/lab sciences emphasis is on critical thinking skills. Demonstration of knowledge of critical thinking is in some syllabi. Departments involved with thesis and dissertations de-roof intellectual inquiry.

Graduate level: Look at number of papers students publish, internships. Most graduate programs have some sort of requirement. Used to have it, but expensive and time consuming, so it was given up. There are some minimal level masters programs around.

Next meeting:

October 2, 2003, BUS N440

See whom on campus, individuals who had responsibility for general education, who is the academic course/curriculum committee, who has a subcommittee, who has better, current or historical information about where we started out.