

NCA Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Preparation Committee
Minutes
Friday, April 18, 2003 (Fourth Meeting)

Present: Tom Manning, Peggy Davidson, Nick Dvoracek, Craig Fiedler, Susan Finkel, Elliott Garb, Margaret Genisio, Jaya Jambunathan, John Koker, Quintin Sullivan.

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. Elliott Garb represented Jean Kwaterski who was not able to attend.

Co-chairs Margaret Genisio and Tom Manning reported on their all-day seminar in Chicago for the NCA Higher Learning Commission Self-Study.

- Good information and resource materials presented.
- Establishing a self-study process is most important so we know what our focus should be and what we need to work on in order to address the NCA criteria.
- Genisio passed out *Illinois Central College Self-Study Summary* which organized the college's data and actions to fit NCA criteria. Many different types of models but a model that addresses the 5 NCA criteria seems to be the best way of succeeding. The five criteria are:
 - **Criteria 1: Mission and Integrity** are closely related to preparing for the future theme; use of documents, diversity, directing leadership and collaboration; making sure all is unified and honest
 - **Criteria 2: Preparing for the Future**: planning; managing resources effectively; evaluation of the processes; link all these components into our mission.
 - **Criteria 3: Student Learning and Effective Teaching**: assessment of these using our resources.
 - **Criteria 4: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge**: Most of this deals with teaching and learning; clarification of learning; breadth of general education; relevance of how the application of this knowledge relates to the real world; responsibility.
 - **Criteria 5: Engagement and Service**: understanding; engagement in; responsiveness to; evaluation of.
- Manning added that there are two different ways of looking at the accreditation process: According to 1) the five criteria (required) that address the core components with examples of evidence; or 2) an overview of four themes – a) future-oriented, b) learning-focused, c) connected, d) distinctive.
 - In the discussion of the relationships between the 5 criteria and the 4 themes, the metaphor of a building was used: core components are the rooms in the building; themes are certain features pervasive in all of these rooms; themes are like carpeting that run throughout the building.

Manning discussed the different types of models that can be used for accreditation.

In the handout, *The Criteria for Accreditation, Higher Learning Commission Criteria*, page 34, there is some practical advice for conducting a self-study.

1. Make good preparation
2. Set the goals for the process
3. Consider which of the following self-study models you want to use:
 - a. Outline process centering around the 5 criteria
 - b. Outline the process centering around the 4 themes
 - c. Structure process around the strategic planning process
 - d. Outline the process around functional areas of the university
 - e. Organize the process to fit continuous quality improvement structures
 - f. Build the process around mission revision
 - g. Build the process around selected topical headings
 - h. Create the process to support a learning organization
 - i. Develop a customized process and ask NCA to approve

Discussion on what the main goal should be and which model the Committee should use. Members need to address what process to use for accreditation. Choosing a particular model will help determine how the Committee is doing and what information to include/gather.

Genisio discussed some examples of evidence that could be used within the self-study for core components of NCA Criteria, expressing the fact that there exists solid good work ready to be included, such as the following that come only from the first three NCA criteria. The Committee was pleased to note that it is on some solid footing at the beginning of the re-accreditation process.

- Criteria 1: Mission and Integrity
 - **Examples of evidence:**
 - Governing Ideas
 - Select Mission: Plan 2008 – Phase 1
 - Budget initiatives and priorities that flow from Mission (where the money goes)
 - Faculty Handbook; governance structures and their effects
- Criteria 2: Preparing for the Future
 - **Examples of Evidence**
 - Office of Institutional Research
 - Enrollment Management Team that projects student enrollment
 - Diversity Plan 2008 –Phase II and Phase III (in process)
- Criteria 3: Student Learning and Effective Teaching
 - **Examples of Evidence**
 - Program reviews – effectiveness and strengthening of our programs
 - Assessment planning initiative – implementation is a current concern
 - Merit/tenure process
 - Self-studies by various departments

Discussion about the selection of a model that fits the 5 NCA Criteria followed. Genisio suggested that selecting the model that fits and follows the 5 criteria may be the path of least resistance since the criteria have to be addressed to meet the NCA Accreditation standards.

Use of a hybrid model was discussed – one that parallels our strategic planning process with what fits in with the NCA criteria. The group discussed a theme threaded through each criteria, focus on strategic planning goals, and the integration of this with the 5 NCA criteria. In this way it was thought that the 5-criteria could be used by cross-referencing our strategic plans and substantiating the criteria.

Self-studies should identify weaknesses as well as strengths. Program assessment/implementation of changes and general education are the two issues that need to be addressed. With strong assessment plans in place, reporting of results and implementation by programs is needed.

Craig Fiedler moved that the Committee adopt as its 2007 self-study re-accreditation, a model where the process is organized around the 5 NCA Criteria for Accreditation with appropriate cross-referencing with our *Five Strategic Directions* and the NCA accreditation themes. Jaya Jambunathan seconded the motion. No more discussion. Eight voted in favor of the motion and one member abstained. Motion passed.

Next step is to decide on what organizational framework/structure is needed to match actual working of the model. Committee co-chairs will draft a summary of models with details and delineation of tasks. Key organizational questions from the Committee members are needed.

Next meeting is set for **Thursday, May 22, at 10:00 a.m. in Dempsey 301.**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marleen Flack, Recorder