

# **NCA Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Preparation Committee**

## **March 17, 2004 Minutes**

### **Special Meeting with Dr. John Taylor, NCA Higher Learning Commission**

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Present: Margaret Genisio, Sam Adams, Nick Dvoracek, Craig Fiedler, Joe Franklin, David Jones (APGES), Jean Kwaterski, Quintin Sullivan, Mike Watson

The special meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by Margaret Genisio. She introduced Dr. John Taylor, Director, Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality, the NCA Higher Learning Commission who is the staff liaison between the Higher Learning Commission and UW Oshkosh.

Dr. Taylor noted that UW Oshkosh is right on track for the 2007 Accreditation and is here to clarify the new standards and philosophy of the Higher Learning Commission.

- Learn about our institution
- Present information about the new criteria for accreditation
- Discuss accreditation process
  - Accreditation is a voluntary process of self and peer evaluation that has two purposes: quality assurance and institutional improvement.
  - NCA Higher Learning Commission uses the institution's mission statements in the accreditation process because of the varied makeup of their member organizations.
- NCA Higher Learning Commission assesses student academic achievement (helping students to learn)
- NCA Higher Learning Commission assesses institutional effectiveness
- Regarding the Five NCA Higher Learning Commission Criteria: These criteria must be addressed
  - Criterion 1: Fulfilling our mission statement is most important.
  - Criterion 2: Institutional concern - make decisions to determine its future in regard to strategic thinking, students, community and UW System.
  - Criterion 3: It is very important to NCA Higher Learning Commission to know if students are learning; assessment should be part of our university culture.
  - Criterion 4: Providing professional development opportunities for everybody.
  - Criterion 5: How do students use their learning/education to interact with their community?
    - What are we doing for various constituencies and have the constituencies tell NCA Higher Learning Commission how they benefit. Example: UW System sister institutions are part of our constituencies; document UW Oshkosh' effectiveness based on mission
    - Integrity is very important.
- In Accreditation, there has been a fundamental shift from inputs, resources, and structures to results and outcomes i.e. evaluation.
  - Shift from past to present and what we are doing now to fulfill our mission vision and values.
    - Don't spend a lot of time on improvement in specific area (from last accreditation); show what we are doing now.
  - Shift from teaching to learning - impact of faculty on students
  - Shift from autonomy to connectedness, interdependence - a new relationship with community and role in community through collaborative efforts, articulation agreements.
  - Shift to becoming more distinctive - not uniformity
- Regarding the Four Themes of NCA Higher Learning Commission - use as a frame of reference; cross-cutting themes.
  1. Future-oriented
  2. Learning-focused (assessment, lifelong learning)
  3. Connectedness (collaboration)
  4. Distinctiveness (in all areas of diversity)

- Assessment
  - General Education: How to assess intended learning outcomes when framework of general education is embedded in courses.
  - Need to identify what students should know to live independently
  - Know thyself - alignment of programs and services with our mission statement
  - Look at your institution through multiple lenses
  - Know our assessment stance and prove it
  - Use input that shows external demand for accountability
  - Think holistically
  - Assessment is essential ingredient of outcome of student learning; Criteria 3, 4, 5 focus on learning.
    - Evaluate how we recognize student learning
    - More than accountability - a means for focusing on understanding and improving learning and then using what you learn about yourself to improve
    - *9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning* on Higher Learning Commission Web site - AAHE Assessment Forum
    - Programs should have clearly explicitly stated purposes
    - Include student experiences that lead to those purposes
    - Direct measures include: pre and post testing, capstone courses, oral exams, internships, portfolios, theses and dissertations, juried reviews for performance in the arts, standardized tests, licensure exams (education)
    - Indirect measures include: job placement data, surveys of alumni and students, surveys of employers, program completion rates, retention and transfer, graduate follow-up studies

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marleen Flack, Recorder