

September 23, 2005

To: Judith Ciampi, Joanna Fortna, Kristen Ganley, Susan Grolnic, Ellen Grondine, William Heineman, Judith Kamber, Richard Lizotte, Janice Rogers, Suzanne Van Wert, Anne Zabriskie

From: Ellen Wentland

Re: First meeting of the outcomes and assessment advisory group (official name to be determined) – 9/22/05

Attendees: Joanna Fortna, Kristen Ganley, Ellen Grondine, Judith Kamber, Richard Lizotte, Janice Rogers, Suzanne Van Wert, Ellen Wentland

Ellen W. had convened this meeting, and said that her intention was to form an interdisciplinary, cross-campus advisory group to assist with certain efforts associated with her new position as Director of Academic Program Review and Assessment. Specifically, she envisioned her role as having at least two “fronts” or areas of focus, being program review and the development of outcomes with associated assessment plans. With respect to program review, nine programs have been scheduled for this activity this year, and a handbook has been developed to guide these efforts.

Although the development of outcomes and assessments are a part of program review, this work can also be seen as operating independently in that all programs can work on these activities even if they are not conducting program reviews at this time. Ellen W. thought that this group could focus on this work, through sharing resources, discussing ideas, providing feedback regarding program efforts/drafts, etc. The overall purpose would be to guide the development of outcomes and assessments for all programs at NECC.

Most of the meeting members had been involved with POAG, so had had training and experience in the area of developing outcomes. Some of this history was shared as well as information about the current status and ideas as to what might be useful in terms of shaping this effort for the future. Support was expressed for the idea of developing structures which would facilitate the development and reporting of outcomes, as well as the identification of program coursework which contributes to these outcomes. Some uniformity in reporting structures would also allow for easier interpretation of this information from program to program.

Ellen W. shared some information from NEASC and other readings concerning use of terminology as well as reporting structures (forms/templates on which information can be recorded.) In the interests of communication with NEASC, she suggested some adjustment to the use of certain terms, namely objectives and outcomes. She also suggested possible use of a template – a curriculum map – similar to the type of format presented in a book by Maki. Members liked that format, and thought that it would be useful in that it looks very manageable while conveying a great deal of information.

Another idea discussed concerned attendance at assessment conferences. Ellen W. noted that there are many such conferences scheduled in the near future, and it is useful to have more than one person attending. Information about the conferences will be shared.

Ellen W. wondered what specific concrete steps it might make sense to take at this time. She noted that she will be contacting those individuals who are in charge of program reviews this academic year, and working with them on the process which will include development of outcomes and assessments. In addition, Ellen W. and Suzanne agreed to meet to review the outcomes developed for the English and Foreign Languages Department, and to pilot the use of a curriculum map structure in which to place these outcomes as well as to document the relationship between these outcomes and the Department's course offerings.

Because Thursday afternoon appeared to be the best time to meet, the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, November 3, from 2-3:30.