

November 29, 2006

To: Members of the HOAP (Help for Outcomes Assessment) group

cc: Lane Glenn

From: Ellen Wentland

Re: Third meeting of 2006/07 academic year – November 29, 2006

Attendees: Judith Ciampi, Rose Dittmer, Joanna Fortna, Rick Lizotte, Gerry Morin, Paulette Redmond, Suzanne VanWert, Ruth Young, Bill Zaninni

Others: Nita Lamborghini, Janice Rogers, Anne Zabriskie

I informed group members that my position is now included in the Academic Affairs area, and I therefore report to Lane Glenn. Paulette and Rick were aware of this because of Lane's recent attendance at an Academic Affairs Committee meeting where he raised the topic of program review, asking the group to consider reviewing any proposed changes to the program review contents and process. We had a brief discussion about this subject, including that some ideas for change might come from those who complete program reviews, as they may wish to have additional topics included, or on the other hand, may feel that certain areas covered are not particularly relevant or useful, at least in their current form.

One of the topics discussed concerned the **program review/outcomes assessment budget**. I indicated that I had asked Lane about my managing this budget, and he had asked for some information about what types of resources/activities would be supported by these funds. Group members expressed support for some type of central management to insure a fair distribution of funds to all those who need financial resources to complete program reviews or to carry out assessment activities. This fair distribution includes not only a consideration of programs across the campus, but also that payments, for example to DCE faculty or to those working with assessments, are uniform across the programs.

Because of my involvement in program reviews and assessments across the academic divisions, and my awareness of the various programs' needs in these areas, requests for these funds could be made to my office. One suggestion was to follow the Professional Development distribution-of-funds model, where deadlines for funding requests are given, and the various requests then reviewed.

As far as specific categories of needs, being able to pay faculty who rate student products stands at the top of the list. Other areas include payment to DCE or part-time faculty who serve on program review or outcomes assessment teams. Content experts or some other types of consultants are also mentioned in the Program Review Handbook for possible inclusion in

program review activities, but they would likely need to be compensated. Other activities include survey preparation and mailing as well as data entry.

Another topic concerned the possibility of having a **workshop** on campus for faculty concerning the **development of rubrics**. I mentioned that Lane, Joanna, Suzanne, and I had recently attended a conference where one of the topics discussed was the creation and use of rubrics. I said that Lane had asked if I thought a workshop on rubrics would be useful to NECC faculty. I said I told him that I thought many of the faculty were already very good at developing rubrics, and those that were not were able to create good and useful rubrics when they had a use, as when they were doing a program assessment and a rubric to evaluate student products was needed.

Group members thought that faculty would be very much interested in such a workshop on developing rubrics. Many do not know how to do this, and yet they can be a very useful tool for evaluating student work. One suggestion would be to include a workshop on rubric development as one of the activities occurring during a professional day, such as those organized by Professional and Staff Development. The group thought such a workshop would have very good attendance. There is a call for proposals, with a due date of December 7. I could submit such a proposal and will run this by Lane.

Another topic concerned the **college-wide competencies**. Recently, several coordinators working on program reviews had asked that some uniform language be developed for use by all degree programs at NECC when they develop their objectives and outcomes statements. At the same time, I asked the group their opinion concerning whether these competencies should be revisited, and there was strong support for this. The standardization of the language (into objectives and outcomes statements) could flow from a revision of the competencies, with perhaps revisions being made to those that already exist, and additional competencies such as quantitative reasoning being added.

More generally on this topic, there were thoughts that the computer fluency competency could be changed to something more like information literacy, and that communication skills could include not only written, but oral and electronic communication. Teaching models include “across the curriculum,” where communication, mathematical, reasoning, and technological skills are infused in all types of courses rather than as stand alone. This topic has recently come up in discussions with those completing program reviews, as a need for certain skills is recognized, but that often the program curriculum is “packed” and cannot accommodate additional courses. One model is learning communities, and another is teaching partnerships among faculty from various disciplines.

Another topic had to do with the **perceived redundancy of having accredited programs complete NECC’s internal review**, yet accredited programs are on the program review schedule. One possibility discussed is to have accredited programs on the schedule during the year they are already preparing accreditation reports (I believe this is already being done at least to some extent). The report would suffice as the internal self-study with perhaps some add-on forms (e.g. action plan) to insure comparability across program reports when allocations of resources are being considered.

As far as the assessment part of the accredited programs, it is thought that accredited programs do different assessments each year, and that possibly these assessment activities could have some input/oversight from my office. In this way, resources perhaps needed by these programs to conduct their assessments, e.g. on-line survey tools, data entry, quantitative and qualitative analysis, could be made available to the programs. Requests for funds to support assessment activities could also be coordinated along with the requests from non-accredited programs (so now we are full-circle – back to the budget topic again!).

I will look into the opinion of NEASC concerning whether accreditation reports meet their standard of programs having internal program reviews in place.

Another part of this topic discussed was to have some sort of mapping of the contents of NECC's program review against accreditation organizations' requirements. If anything is not called for in the accreditation report, it could be done as an "add-on" for the purpose of meeting NECC's program review requirements. This exercise may also point out areas which may be good to include in NECC's reviews.

Although we did not set another meeting time, it will likely be in late January. I will check with everyone about their schedules sometime early in that month.