HLC Steering Committee
Minutes

Sept. 21st, 2012
9:00 – 10:15
SC 206

Present: Beth Weatherby, Betsy Desy, Jan Loft, Lori Baker, Doug Simon, Alan Matzner, Deb Kerkaert, Chris Hmielewski, Will Thomas, Kathleen Ashe, Bill Mulso

Absent: Scott Crowell, Betty Roers, Raphael Onyeaghala, student representative, Dan Baun

Guests: Mike Rich and Danielle Schmidt, Southwest Marketing Advisory Center

I.   *Survey and focus group discussion*
   A. *Possibility of SMAC helping to administer (Guest: Mike Rich and Danielle Schmidt)*
   B. *Gathering and comparison of questions from criterion teams*
   C. *Any further direction or charge for the working group*

Representatives from SMSU's Southwest Marketing Advisory Center (SMAC) joined the Steering Committee for this agenda item. Lori displayed a list of the surveys that were done during the previous round of accreditation in 2004 and Alan handed around print versions of these survey packets (the survey plus the results, conducted by what was then the Office of Research and Institutional Grants).

Mike Rich from SMAC described the services that SMAC could provide and how the survey process would likely work. His group can look at the survey questions from last time and see what might be useful or if there is any longitudinal value to some of the questions. Online survey distribution and collection would be the primary method this time but supplemented by paper surveys as needed, merging the data and possibly running correlations between the online and paper responses. Focus groups would be the best method for testing out the questions and making sure the questions are asking what we want them to. Alan noted that recently we have had a better response rate online with other university survey instruments.

At issue is whether or not the surveys should be done by target population (as they were last time, with surveys going out to faculty, staff, administration, students, parents, alumni, and community members) with a mix of questions from the different criterion groups or whether the surveys should be primarily organized around the criteria. It might be possible, especially with the online survey collection, to ask demographic information first, and the answers to that then automatically direct the survey taker to the appropriate questions. Mike noted that the populations represented in the focus groups would have to be carefully constructed so that the focus groups are effective.

Beth noted that the results need to be simple and the clear to be usable but done in as sophisticated a manner as possible. Mike agreed that we need to make the questions as simple and clear as possible and that the focus groups were a good method for addressing this. Beth also noted that we should include in our narrative the work SMAC does and how unusual it is to have a stand-alone but in-house marketing group that works all over the region.

Kathleen asked if a survey is always necessary or if results from a focus group alone could suffice. Mike answered that it depends on what you want the research for and what it needs to show. If qualitative data is sufficient, then it's possible to use the focus group only.

The group agreed to proceed with working with SMAC, pending budgetary approval by the President. A representative from SMAC will attend each of the five criterion teams' meetings along with Mike if he can make it, to work with each of the teams in distilling what material and audience they need to survey. SMAC will draft questions and consider the methodology. Mike and the SMAC teams will then meet with the working group from the Steering Committee to look at drafts and troubleshoot any issues. Ideally, survey questions will be drafted by the next Steering Committee meeting on Oct. 12. However, this is a very tight timeline and not very realistic given that the criterion teams' meeting schedules and different stages of readiness for surveying. Regardless, Mike will attend on Oct. 12th to update the whole Steering Committee on the process and any progress towards focus groups.

This process takes the place of the Steering Committee's original plan for a working group to develop and administer the surveys, though the working group will still be involved in finalizing the surveys and survey design. The end goal is still to run the surveys by the end of the semester in order to use the information and data analysis in chapter drafts in early spring semester.

II.   *Updates on criterion team membership for 2012-2013*
        A. Addition of faculty: David Sturrock to Criterion 3 and Neil Smith to Criterion 1
        B. Addition of students: Nick Dorman to Criterion 3
        C. Recruiting needs?

Lori announced the Steering Committee additions noted above and asked if there were others. Criterion Teams 2,3, and 4 are now full; Criterion Teams 1 and 5 could use another faculty member. Lori will check with Vicky Brockman about sending out the call for members and will announce the need for more members at the next SmSUFA meeting.

III.   *Assessment and data collection processes*

        A. University goals and assessment

Lori noted that we can't lose track of the 13 university goals listed under the mission and vision statement (which we commonly refer to as the "Brown and Gold" goals since they arose out of that task force). We need to cross-reference how these goals are being assessed as part of the strategic plan and other assessment efforts on campus. Discussions about this are ongoing.

        B. Professional development meta-data

We need to capture data on professional development for Criterion 4. While this information is contained in PDRs, the specific information in PDRs is confidential. We are looking for other ways to provide evidence for HLC about this issue. The group discussed whether it might be possible to create a checklist based on categories from Appendix G of the IFO contract which the Deans could use as they read PDRs simply to keep a count of the different kinds of activities but with no identifying features that track back to individual faculty. The point would be to simply have a tally of different activities (for example, # of faculty who presented at a professional conference). The

question is whether such overall quantitative data would be useful in addition to the college annual reports that have narrative summaries. A focus group of faculty might also be another route or could complement such a checklist tally. This would allow us to contextualize tally numbers and address how have faculty used or applied professional development, providing more qualitative data. Depending on the survey that is developed, some questions could be addressed there. It would be best to be able to triangulate data across several sources.

Bill noted that the Advancement Office needs information about faculty outreach and we could consider how HLC data collection methods might address this need.

> *C. Any invitations to Steering Committee for large group interviews? (comparison to 2004 process)*

Not addressed at this meeting as time ran out.

IV.   Other criterion team updates if not addressed earlier in the agenda

Not addressed separately at this meeting. Most criterion team information was shared during the survey discussion, as that is what most teams have focused on so far this fall.

V.   Other

> *A. Style manual*

Jan asked which style/documentation manual criterion groups should follow. Lori answered that this hasn't been addressed yet; most self-studies simply use a series of endnotes with links because there isn't much in the way of sources external to the university. Lori is comfortable with just about any style guide given her work in the Writing Center. The group arrived at consensus to use the MLA style guide.

> *B. Marcy's template reminder*

Lori reminded the group that the template and instructions that Marcy Olson prepared last year for using Word "styles" feature is up on D2L. Criterion team members should be reminded about this so that as teams begin to draft, we are using Marcy's guidelines.

> *C. Scanning of old program reviews*

Betsy has a student to scan older program reviews that are in print format only. Jan clarified that as Dean, she provides an administrative review, so for each program review, there should be the program's self-study document, the external reviewer's report, and the Dean's administrative review report.

VI.   Next Meeting: Oct. 12, 2012, 9:00 – 10:15, SC 206