

**HLC Steering Committee
Minutes
April 6th, 2012**

*9:00 – 10:15
SC 206*

Present: Betsy Desy, Corey Butler, Jan Loft, Beth Weatherby, Scott Crowell, Lori Baker, Raphael Onyeghala, Deb Kerkaert, Dan Baun, Kathleen Ashe, Doug Simon, Alan Matzner, Betty Roers

Absent: Bill Mulso, Chris Hmielewski, student representative

Agenda

I. Reports from the HLC Conference

Each member of the Steering Committee who attended the conference gave a brief report on a selection of the sessions they attended. Beth noted the session on federal regulations and the new credit hour definition, and went to a useful session on retention. She has put in the budget to send more people to the conference next year, as she thinks it is highly useful. Jan focused her session choices primarily on those regarding retention, assessment, and first year experience courses. She found the IDEA Center's work and papers useful, and heard many sessions mention mapping as an important element of assessment. She thought Susan Hatfield's session on how to find weaknesses in assessment maps and plans useful. Raphael likewise focused on assessment and retention sessions, as well as program planning and review and faculty involvement and leadership. Betsy went to the self-study workshop and to assessment sessions; she felt the good news is that we are on the right path, as the sessions she attended reassured her of our process so far. She showed a brochure on how to create and promote transparency in assessment, and noted that we have made good progress in many of the items in the brochure, plus we now have good ideas and suggestions to use from it. Lori shared that Marcy found the engagement sessions during the self-study workshop highly valuable. Lori also thought the Federal Compliance session was useful as well as a session on "collegial leadership." Lori also shared information from two sessions as agenda items D and E below.

A. Retirement of our HLC Liaison, Dr. John Taylor, coming in August

Lori shared the news from the conference that Dr. Taylor will be retiring. We won't know for a while who our new liaison will be. The new liaisons have been hired but do not start their training until summer.

B. Brief Pathways (new assessment model after this round) description

Lori explained the difference between the Open and Standard Pathway, with a focus on the Open Pathway. We will not know which Pathway we are placed on until the end of our visit in 2014. Both Pathways require an "assurance argument" to be filed during year 4; in the Standard Pathway, a visit team and comprehensive review takes place in year 4; for the Open Pathway, there is an online review only. The Open Pathway requires a "quality initiative project" during years 5-9 that is reviewed at the end of year 9. For either Pathway, an assurance report, full visit and review takes place during year 10. The entire process will go online, with a server and file space hosted by HLC, and rather than a "self-study," schools

will write “assurance arguments” that are based on a template with text boxes and word limits. Evidence documents will be uploaded to this system in an on-going fashion every year.

C. Example from a session on evaluative writing

Lori distributed a handout she created based on a conference session presented by HLC staff member Dr. Eric Martin. The example demonstrated the difference between descriptive and evaluative writing and how to provide evaluative evidence for claims made in the self-study chapters. Dr. Martin stressed how the self-study naturally contains a lot of description but that the evaluative component is vital.

D. Template from a session on how to cover each core component

Lori shared a second handout of a template for how to address the criteria and core components in each chapter. This material was adapted from a presentation by representatives from American Public University. Essentially, the template requires background information and historical context; an evaluation of strengths; an evaluation of challenges; and recommendations for improvement. This is not dramatically different from how we have conceptualized the chapters so far, but the template, with some helpful guiding questions and evidence reminders, might be useful for the teams as they enter the drafting stages.

II. Table of Contents/Outline review from each team based on new criteria

Criterion groups shared what they had created so far, though there was not time for full review. Criterion Team #4 shared that they have a table of contents with lists of topics and evidence for each, but that they realize they still need to evaluate in the chapter itself. They also have plans for gathering material on assessment going on in the co-curricular areas and adding that in; Student Affairs will be focusing on that this summer and have already been working on it. Betsy noted that at the HLC conference it was said that the subcomponents under each core component are not required to be addressed but are examples of what might be appropriate; however, all agreed that it would be best to still cover the subcomponent information, as reviewers will be looking for it even if not highlighted with headings in the text. Doug suggested how helpful an appendix/appendices will be. For now, teams need to include and track all of their evidence documentation, and the publishing and editing team will pull out the appropriate materials into the appendices.

To move from tables of contents/outlines to rough drafts, Lori stated that teams could do full writing with the data referenced or could do something more like bullet points, as long as the bullet point language is complete enough that she is not inferring what the connections and points are that are being made. It is important for the criterion teams to put enough into the draft that the teams’ recommendations and concerns are clear because Lori is not the content expert in each criterion area like the criterion teams have become; only they are fully familiar with the evidence and findings. Lori and the editing team will work to pull things together into a cohesive voice and narrative so that all of the parts work together. Later in the meeting Beth added that as chapters emerge, she will go through them as well and utilize her macro-view of the university to help provide any additional information that might be useful. Beth noted that in part because of our meetings and HLC work, she sees a positive effect on how some university structures have become

much more connected and are not duplicating efforts or working at odds but working together, and this will be an important point to note in the final self-study.

Beth noted that she will keep the HLC progress and updates a standing item on all meet and confer agendas. She feels good about the process and that the document is starting to emerge, and she complimented Lori on managing the process so far. Lori stated that she is reassured after going to the conference and now seeing the tables of contents come forward; she feels we are making good progress even though it was difficult to wait for the finalized criteria.

III. Dates submitted for review team visit

Beth shared that it appears fairly firm that March 31, 2014, will be the start date for our visit.

IV. Assessment updates: mini-grant applications to date; LEP assessment meetings overview and plan; any Student Affairs update

A. Betsy has received 7 mini-grant applications, a good response; the CIA will review these and decide on grant awards at their next meeting on April 13. Perhaps Student Affairs might be able to utilize some of the remaining funds.

B. The second LEP open assessment planning workshop took place, and Corey is collating reports from all of the work groups. These reports will be used by the LEC and CIA to help create the full LEP assessment plan. Will Thomas will take over as the LEC co-chair next year and be joining the Steering Committee in Corey's place at that time. The group thanked Corey for his hard work.

V. Data and field research (surveys, focus groups, etc.) if necessary to revisit at this time

Surveys and focus groups will need to take place in the fall semester. It was suggested that the Data/Evidence Team act as a subcommittee for this effort and that the criterion teams bring their suggestions to them. Alan noted the importance of doing surveys electronically in order to make analysis much easier, and that we do not want an avalanche of surveys to go out to the same groups. Alan also noted that he needs any suggestions for revisions to the Senior Survey by July 1.

Lori noted that already at this year's conference she heard a school present whose resource room consisted of only one file cabinet; the resource room was really a workspace for the review team more than a place to house review materials. Many school are already finding, as we are (our resource room is still mostly empty), that most documentation is now electronic.

The importance of things like snapshots and interview excerpts in addition to quantitative data gathering was noted. These qualitative pieces can be very useful in the self-study document.

VI. Other

A. Suggestions and recommendations

- Betty asked about the "recommendations" section in the tables of contents created so far and whether we shouldn't be pursuing some of the more simple things right now. It was reaffirmed that indeed we should be putting as much in motion as we can right now; for example, Jacob Speer (webmaster) can make small changes easily

and has already been very responsive. Doug suggested each criterion team keep a list of the “little things” in addition to the bigger picture issues.

- It is important to keep the HLC and assessment efforts in front of the faculty, such as at professional development day in the fall. One suggestion for faculty that is an easy but powerful bit garnered from the Hatfield conference session is to list course and program outcomes on each syllabus.
- Lori noted that Marcy and the marketing folks will be very involved in keeping HLC efforts evident, and they will be rolling out PR efforts in the fall.
- Betsy noted again the usefulness of the “assessment transparency framework” brochure from the HLC conference and how we can use that to help us.
- Lori asked that the ideas like these keep coming for the next meeting; these are all useful.

B. Alan noted that the HLC Annual Report was being worked on. There is an issue with 33 additional locations being listed. The Department of Education, HLC, and MnSCU do not have a common definition of what an “additional location” is, so he is working on making sure the HLC listing is accurate and appropriate for HLC’s definition. Any change requests needed for additional locations will roll into the next self-study and site visit.

C. Lori confirmed that Beth is the “ALO” – the university’s designated Accreditation Liaison Officer. This was a role mentioned in some HLC conference sessions.

VII. Next Meeting: April 27th, 9:00 – 10:15, SC 206

A primary topic will be planning for next term (especially focus and surveys and any other methods necessary for evaluation) and revisiting the timeline