

HLC Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes

Fri., Oct. 12, 2012

9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

SC 206

Present: Lori Baker, Dan Baun, Betsy Desy, Alan Matzner, Kathleen Ashe, Kyle Berndt, Betty Roers, Will Thomas, Jan Loft, Raphael Onyeaghala, Scott Crowell

Absent: Bill Mulso, Chris Hmielewski, Beth Weatherby, Deb Kerkaert, Doug Simon

Guests: Representatives from Southwest Marketing Advisory Council (SMAC): Executive Director Mike Rich and student employees Shelby Broders, Erika Rust, Dani Schmidt, Whitney Behrens, Jenna Radke, Larae Kor

Agenda

- I. *Survey and focus group discussion*
 - A. *Report from SMAC about meetings with criterion teams (Guests: Mike Rich, SMAC representatives)*
 - B. *Review of grid of possible focus group and survey question targets by criteria and core components; comparison of similar needs by different criterion teams, winnowing of list if necessary*
 - C. *Incentives for taking surveys?*
 - D. *Next steps in the process*

Mike Rich described SMAC's approach to the task of working with the criterion groups. Three students have been assigned to work with each criterion team. Each student is assigned to multiple teams, with the result that at each criterion team meeting, the three students have a combined knowledge of all five criteria and so can understand the larger context across all criteria. They have met with all five criterion teams, with the final team meeting occurring just before this Steering Committee meeting.

Mike shared two handouts with the Steering Committee. One is a grid representing the seven different survey populations across the top with all criteria and core components down the side. The cells within the grid were marked with an F (focus group), S (Survey), or I (in-depth interview) depending on which, if any, methods were deemed likely for the different populations based upon SMAC's meetings with the criterion teams. Essentially, if a survey is indicated, a focus group is also indicated, as the focus groups will be used to help develop the specific survey questions. The only exception is for employers, for which in-depth interviews will be used rather than a focus group. The second handout, titled "Connections between Criteria," is a table that lists which core components appear to refer to the same constructs, according to a SMAC member's reading of the criteria descriptions. For example, 1.B.3, 1.D.1, and 3.E.2 appear to share a similar construct.

Mike noted that Criterion Team 5 had several pages of questions that will be useful to SMAC as they work on developing moderators' guides. He asked that if other teams had similar documents to send them on to SMAC. Criterion teams should review these two handouts to see if what was

discussed during the team meetings is accurate here and if there is any more feedback to provide to SMAC.

SMAC will next build moderator guides and pass those to criterion team leadership for feedback. This part of the process will need to happen quickly in order for the focus groups to move forward. By the end of the day next Thursday, Oct. 18, SMAC will forward moderator guide drafts to criterion leaders. Criterion leaders need to get feedback to SMAC by the end of the day on Monday, Oct. 22. SMAC will then run the focus groups over the following two weeks, ideally finishing before Nov. 2, the date currently scheduled for the next Steering Committee meeting.

During the discussion, it was agreed that Alan and leadership from each of the criterion teams will review the rough cut of survey questions first, in order to see what questions we might already have from other sources. The goal is to keep the surveys manageable for the target audiences. We might hold that meeting Nov. 2 if the rough cut is available then, and push the full Steering Committee meeting to Nov. 9. It also might be possible for the rough cut meeting to happen before the 2nd. SMAC will see what it can manage, especially given their other clients' needs and keeping in mind that these are students who have coursework responsibilities as well.

The surveys themselves are based on one survey per target audience, with questions representing all the different criteria/core components within it. Mike described it as "an assembly—disassembly process," in that we are putting together comprehensive surveys but then each team can pull back out the data relevant to their area of investigation. He also noted that often survey results will help people identify other secondary information to include that might not have come to mind immediately until identified in the survey.

The surveys will run online, though we can add paper surveys if we find we need to for some populations. Regarding incentives, Mike stated that in our area, he finds that appealing to people's sense of duty has been sufficient in many of the other surveys they have done. They provide a meal of pizza or subs to the focus groups, done over the noon hour, to draw folks into those. Lori wondered about drawings rather than paying participants, and Mike said that if we wanted to do that, it was possible with the online system to have a separate link show up at the end of the survey where people could put in their contact info and not have it associated with their survey responses. If the committee wishes to pursue that, it is possible. Lori asked Kyle what he thought, and his main point was that the survey should be manageable and take as long as it is stated to take; that is a more important point, he felt, because if surveys get too long, survey-takers abandon them partway through.

Scott and Alan brought up aspects of the NSSE survey process that will run in February. To encourage students to take the NSSE, first the President sends them a letter saying how important it is, and then the Provost does a similar letter. The survey itself is given, and then the Provost follows up with more letters to students who don't respond the first time. There was some consideration about perhaps waiting until spring semester to alert students to two important surveys and running them closer together. Others in the committee felt it would be better to administer them separately, as long as there is enough time between them, with the HLC survey happening yet this term. Some concern was voiced about "academic time" and that the time between Thanksgiving and the end of the semester is crunch time for students and faculty.

Sampling concerns were raised, especially regarding feedback on programs from employers. At issue is providing enough representation in the samples for the results to be valid and consistent. Even within one academic program, multiple employers with highly specialized needs exist, so it

will be difficult to apply findings depending on the sampling. Lori noted that another way into similar data might be program review data, if programs have done employer or alumni surveys that also provide information specific to their areas.

II. Customized self-study needs: integrating any substantive change requests

Lori wanted the Steering Committee to be aware that if we have any upcoming substantive changes that would need HLC approval, we can embed them into our self-study rather than having a separate visit. This requires approval from our HLC liaison. Although this was not part of our self-study design, we need to keep this in mind as we move forward. She has asked the Deans to think about what new programs or initiatives might be coming from their areas. Next we will have to consider HLC's requirements and whether we simply need to notify HLC or whether the changes are substantial enough to warrant a change request. There is gray area here that we will need clarification on from our HLC liaison. In addition to academic programs, other substantive change areas include change of structure or organization, location issues, and number of programs delivered electronically. More information will be forthcoming as Lori, the Deans, and Alan work through this process.

III. Assessment and data collection processes--any need at this time for invitations to Steering Committee for large group interviews? (comparison to 2004 process)

This item was held over from the previous agenda. Lori noted that during the last self-study process, the Steering Committee invited key people from the university (such as the Registrar or head of Admissions) to visit with the entire Steering Committee in an interview. We have approached this differently so far through our criterion teams. The Steering Committee does not see a need for these kind of interviews at this time, but it is possible we might later on as we develop the self-study chapters.

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

The only note was that Team 1, Mission, is thrilled to have had three more members join their team (new members were noted in minutes from the last minutes).

V. Other

No "other" items were noted.

VI. Next Meeting

Tentatively hold Nov. 2, 2012, 9:00 – 10:15, SC 206 on your calendars as previously scheduled; please also hold Nov. 9th from 9:00 – 10:15, as it might be needed as we iron out the survey process and questions.