

Sonoma State University
Accreditation Steering Committee

Tuesday, October 4, 2016, 3:00-4:30pm, Academic Affairs Conference Room (STEV1040)

Minutes

PRESENT: Ben Ford, Emiliano Ayala, Cathy Kroll, Janejira Sutanonpaiboon, Jason Wenrick, Melinda Milligan, Richard Whitkus, Sean Johnson, Thaine Stearns, Laurel Holmstrom-Keyes

Co-chair Ben Ford called the meeting to order at 3:00pm

1. Agenda was approved

2. Minutes from prior meeting on 9/6/16 were reviewed. Emiliano requested the following addition to the minutes, item 4c: During Rich Whitkus' status update report, Ben observed that the members of the Accreditation Evaluating Team are heavily represented by R-1 institutions – meaning they primarily come from research focused Universities.

3. AVP Report – Ben relayed the report submitted by Karen Moranski, who was attending the Academic Affairs Council meeting in Long Beach. Her report follows:

Collection of documents, including the MQID, the IEEI, and the CFR is moving forward successfully. Rich Whitkus will provide an overview later in the meeting, but we have roughly 65-70% of the MQIDs and 75-80% of the IEEIs. The two workshops we held in September seemed to be warmly received—we had small numbers (4 at each workshop), but the faculty attending seemed to get the help they needed to produce those documents, and all who attended have completed the assignments. We are collecting the rest of the CFRs, and are sending out reminder letters about those today. EPC began its work with MQIDs last week, and we already have a report of themes and patterns from the School of Science and Technology. Other reports will be reviewed at the next EPC meeting. I have agreed to provide a report on graduate programs as a specific cohort. I have reviewed almost all of the MQIDs and they testify to a rich array of curricula, pedagogies, and assessment strategies.

The MQIDs and IEEIs both indicate that academic programs are in a variety of stages regarding assessment. As you know, programs with accreditation have a leg up on other programs in this regard, but there are some robust examples of assessment process, with multiple measures, in other departments. One of the issues that recently came up regarding assessment has to do with the use of indirect assessment vs. direct assessment, and it is evident in the IEEIs that some programs are relying primarily on student satisfaction/learning outcomes surveys or surveys of employers. The Program Review Subcommittee, which is revising guidelines for program review, is having discussions with programs about incorporating authentic, course-embedded, direct assessment into their processes. It is important to note and share with our colleagues that the Faculty Development Center has two workshops this fall on assessment, and one focuses on the development of rubrics, which would help the development of direct assessment at both the course level and at the program level. Please remind colleagues to attend those workshops.

Since our last meeting, I had a discussion with Chris Oberg, our liaison at WASC. As Rich has earlier reported, Chris is remarkably reassuring that Sonoma State will be reaccredited. I asked about what WASC wants to see from institutions regarding institutional assessment of the five core competencies. What he explained that I don't think I had realized before is that this is the first year WASC is expecting institutions to have measured all five core competencies. I told him that we had looked at three of the five this past summer and had produced valid, reliable data from across the institution. He encouraged us to go ahead and measure Quantitative Literacy this fall and Oral Communication in the spring. While the OC results would not be available in time for the February report, we can explain in our narrative that the last of the five competencies is being addressed. He said that would be perfectly acceptable, and that the site team would want to see the results in the fall when they visit the campus.

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To move Quantitative Literacy forward, I met with Susan Herring from Math, and we brainstormed about the process for QL. Susan informed me about the department's work to measure student learning in areas like Written Communication and Critical Thinking, as well as QL. She gave me information about some programs with possible QL courses. Later this week, a letter will go out to department chairs asking them to identify courses that meet the WASC definition of QL. We also brainstormed about people to serve on the QL assessment committee. If the accreditation team has suggestions for QL committee members, please give those to Jill or Rich today, so I can send out invitations to those faculty. We would want to look at student work products in January before the term starts, but we could develop the rubric this fall. Again, the rubric will need to mesh the AAC&U VALUE rubric with the WASC definition—Susan and I were not, I think, very sure that the VALUE rubric would be as useful in QL as it was in other competencies.

Finally, I and at least one other faculty member will be attending the WASC workshops on Core Competencies and MQID later this month. My goal at those workshops is to focus on learning WASC expectations for the narrative, so that we can turn our sites in November to the drafting of the manuscript. A writing team is ready, and Cathy Kroll from English will help us edit the document in January. We will be figuring out the writing process and meeting with the team soon.

Thanks as always should go to Jill Hunter, who is tracking and merging all the accreditation documents as they come in and posting materials regularly to the website, and to Rich Whitkus, who has agreed to do the Academic Affairs CFR (a huge piece) and continues to help me figure out the process.

Follow Up: Ben asked for suggestions or recommendations for faculty to work on Quantitative Literacy assessment. Brian Gillespie, Pat Jackson, Dan Crocker, and Sean Place were named as possible participants.

4. **Student Success Survey** – Laurel showed the committee the survey she drafted in Qualtrics. She requested feedback and asked if the committee wanted to move forward with using it.
 - A. Survey form - Laurel hopes to continue the effort to develop an institutional definition for student success, building on the work done at the faculty retreat in January 2016, and ongoing for several years.
 1. There would be separate surveys for faculty/staff and students.
 2. Participant is asked to rank the characteristics of a successful student (using ideas compiled at the retreat), placing them in categories: Most Important, Moderately Important, & Least Important.
 3. Survey solicits ideas on ways that faculty can support & contribute to building successful students, and ways the institution can support and contribute to student success.
 - B. Review of form by Committee - feedback was requested on the format and content.
 1. The group liked the format of the survey, especially the interactivity, and that it was mobile friendly.
 2. Suggestion was that additional demographic information should be collected, such as # of years at SSU, student level, etc. This can be developed further.
 3. Suggestion was made to add more clarifying instructions about dragging and dropping the choices.
 4. Suggestion was made to add selectable statement saying “I can’t take it this way” which would redirect to a note about who to contact for accessibility.
 5. Suggestion was made to include ideas from the Mission Statement, and/or connect the characteristics to language in the mission statement.
 - C. Discussion on usefulness - discussion continued at length regarding whether this survey could provide useful input for accreditation. To aid and inform the discussion, Ben read aloud the guiding information and prompts from WASC for the Institutional Report chapter on Student Success (chapter 5).
 1. It was noted that this effort parallels the broader discussion/efforts by ACT to tell the story of SSU.

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2. Thaine, who is on the Institutional Report writing team, observed that the survey could provide good information for the writers to use, noting that this kind of input is more useful and interesting than straight data, which is “dull and boring” to write about.
 3. Most agreed that although useful information could be gathered in an institution-wide effort to collect data with the survey (and conduct forums as discussed during spring semester), there isn’t enough time to complete that effort for accreditation. Therefore, it was suggested and agreed that the survey should be given to targeted groups, to collect data for the accreditation report and, as a pilot for a broader institution-wide project. Suggested target groups for the pilot are:
 - a) the Faculty Senate
 - b) the Associated Students Senate
 - c) Some capstone classes representing students at or near graduation
 - d) An FYE class and/or other freshman classes
 - e) An alumni group
 4. Continuing discussion: data collected from targeted groups is not scientific, and there are problems with attaining good response rates. The conclusion was that it is not scientifically representative in this format but we can explain that in the report. It is a snapshot in time, and another piece of the SSU story that can be connected to efforts and accomplishments since the last accreditation report.
 5. Continuing discussion about how to shape the survey - what is the goal and focus – and whether the data collected from the faculty retreat is of value to this effort. Potential goals discussed included:
 - a) Shape a definition of student success at SSU.
 - b) Understand student perceptions on how & why students succeed, vs. institutional perceptions.
 - c) Learn whether students are getting what we think they are (or should be) from their education.
 6. ACTION ITEM:
 - a) Ben agreed to work with Laurel to refine the survey and bring another draft for the committee to review at the next meeting.
 - b) Survey to be run as a pilot to the targeted groups identified in order to collect data for accreditation, and then evaluated for broader, institution-wide use.
5. **Status of Data Collection** – Rich provided an update on the status of accreditation activities.
- A. Report - Deadline for submitting the report to WSCUC is February 22, 2017. An overview of the report contents that includes guidelines and prompts from WSCUC is posted on the accreditation website on the Important Links and Resources webpage (under the Other Resources list) and can be downloaded here: http://www.sonoma.edu/aa/ap/accred/important_links.html
 - B. Core Competency Assessment data to be included in report:
 1. First three core competencies assessed in spring/summer: Writing Literacy, Information Literacy, and Critical Thinking.
 2. Karen is working with Susan Herring on completing Quantitative Literacy, but needs other faculty to assist.
 3. Oral Communication to be assessed during spring 2017, and addressed in the report as in progress.
 - C. MQID Prompt and IEEI worksheet – update on departments that have submitted the documents.
 1. EPC is working in small groups, organized by School, to evaluate patterns in the MQID prompts received. The first evaluation done by the SST group revealed some interesting patterns and provided a model for others to follow. Karen is working on the Grad Studies evaluation.
 2. IEEI worksheet is nearly complete – Academic Programs is working to gather the last few inputs.

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3. Missing documents – Rich provided the data on which departments have not turned in reports. Jill handed out a tracking list to the School reps to ask for their support in requesting the missing data.

D. Review Under the WSCUC Standards and Compliance with Federal Requirements Worksheet (View the worksheet here: <https://www.wascsenior.org/content/review-under-wscuc-standards-and-compliance-federal-requirements>). Rich explained the effort to collect data to complete the worksheet.

1. The worksheet is a required part of the accreditation report. The worksheet contains Four Standards further defined by 39 Criteria for Review (CFR) that must be addressed by the institution as a whole.
2. Academic Programs has sent requests to offices and groups across the campus asking for their input. Few responses have been received. All Steering Committee members are asked to assist with contacting the offices and groups and urging participation. Below is a copy of the email request:

Sonoma State University is preparing the documents needed for our accreditation by the Western Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC, but formerly known as WASC). This is our last semester to compile all needed information for our Institutional Report. Last spring, the Accreditation Steering Committee requested help with input for the Criteria for Review (CFR, attached). We ask that you or your office/department, or appropriate offices/departments under you, fill in columns 5 and 6 in the attached worksheet for the criteria [specified].

You are welcome to provide self-review and importance to address ratings (columns 3 and 4), and these will be included in our overall ratings for the institution. However, it is the information in columns 5 and 6 that the Steering Committee is specifically seeking input.

Column 6 is the evidence in support of the criterion (column 1). If column 6 is shaded, information is not required. If column 6 is unshaded, there will be examples of the type of evidence sought by WSCUC. If the suggested evidence is appropriate, leave it in place, otherwise delete. Fill in any additional appropriate evidence that supports SSU's efforts with respect to the criterion. When providing information in column 6, a link or reference to the specific evidence should also be included.

Column 5 is to capture your insightful comments on the evidence and how it relates to the criterion. The comments you provide will help our writing team as they compile the information and draft the Institutional Report.

Examples of what we are seeking are found at CSU East Bay [HERE](#) and San Jose State [HERE](#).

After each standard are tables for Synthesis/Reflections on the standard. You are welcome to provide your input from the perspective of your office/department.

Your careful and considered input is greatly appreciated. The Institutional Report is a reflection of a thoughtful self-study and the Criteria for Review is a major component of that effort. The Steering Committee looks forward to receiving your input by the beginning of November. You can fill in the information in the attached table and forward to Karen Moranski, AVP for Academic Programs (cc to Jill Hunter), or, use a Google input form [HERE](#). Feel free to contact me if you have questions filling out the Criteria for Review, or you can visit SSU's accreditation webpage [HERE](#).

3. A status report showing the requests made and responses received is posted on the communications page of the accreditation website here:

http://www.sonoma.edu/aa/ap/accred/Criteria-For-Review_Status_August-2016.pdf

6. **NEXT MEETING:** November 1, 2016, 3-4:30pm, Academic Affairs Conference Room (STEV 1040)
Meeting adjourned at 4:30, minutes prepared by Jill Hunter