

ACADEMIC COUNCIL
Meeting of October 25 , 2011
Mendoza Business School, Room 161
3:30p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Members present: Panos Antsaklis, Robert Bernhard, Thomas Burish, Laura Carlson, Rev. John Coughlin, O.F.M., Greg Crawford, Michael Desch, Rev. Tom Doyle, C.S.C., William Evans, Judy Fox, John Gaski, Nasir Ghiaseddin, Rev. John Jenkins, C.S.C., Jeffrey Kantor, A. Graham Lappin, Alexander Martin, Christine Maziar, Dan Myers, Nell Newton, William Nichols, Hugh Page, Cathy Pieronek, Donald Pope-Davis, Neal Ravindra, J. Keith Rigby, Laura Ritter, John Robinson, Jeffrey Schorey, Jon Schwarz, Cheri Smith, Ann Tenbrunsel, Julianne Turner, Diane Parr Walker

Observers present: Earl Carter, Chuck Hurley, Warren von Echenbach,

Members and Observers excused: John Affleck-Graves, John LoSecco, Jason Lovell, Michael Lykoudis, John McGreevy, Greg Sterling, Carolyn Woo, Darren Davis, Nick EntriKin, Peter Kilpatrick.

Members absent: Don Bishop, M. Brian Blake, Margaret Doody, Dennis Doordan, Mary Frandsen, Ramachandran Ramanan, Brett Rocheleau, Claire Sokas,

Guests: Kevin Abbott—OIT, Jay Brandenberger--CSC, Ted Fox—Provost Office

1. Welcome and opening prayer: Provost Tom Burish opened the meeting and invited William Evans to deliver the opening prayer.

The prayer is an excerpt from St Thomas Aquinas's "A Prayer before study"

Grant to us keenness of mind, capacity to remember,
skill in learning, subtlety to interpret, and eloquence in speech,
you who are true God and man, who lives and reigns, world without end. Amen

Holy Mary, our hope, seat of wisdom, pray for us.

Following the prayer, new members were introduced.

2. Approval of minutes:

The minutes of the September 30, 2011 meeting were unanimously approved.

3. Election of the committee to review the Vice President for Research

Prof. Dan Myers conducted the election for members of the committee which will review the performance of the Vice President for Research, Bob Bernhard. The election of five faculty members and one student member was conducted electronically. The results of the election are as follows:

Faculty: Nora Besansky, Ani Aprahamian, Paul Bohn, Kevin Bowyer, Alan Seabaugh.

Student: Jon Schwarz

Mr. Burish congratulated those elected and thanked them for their service.

4. University Undergraduate Learning Outcomes--Dan Myers

Prof. Dan Myers initiated the discussion of the University Undergraduate Learning outcomes. He welcomed guests Ted Fox and Prof. Jay Brandenberger, members of the committee, who have been invited to today's meeting to assist in the discussion.

Prof. Myers reviewed the history of the document, which had been distributed to members prior to the meeting. A committee was charged with the formation of a set of university learning outcomes for undergraduates. Working from key documents, including the University undergraduate mission statement and Notre Dame's Vision for Undergraduate Education, the committee formulated goals which then were vetted several times, through the Deans' Council, other advisory groups, and twice with the faculty of the University through the Provost's web site. They are presented to the Academic Council for approval today. The impetus for the creation of these goals is that the University will be undergoing the accreditation process in 2013, and university learning outcomes are an expected element of the university's supporting material. These goals will be incorporated into the du Lac handbook and the University web site when finalized.

Prof. Myers stressed that these goals are different than departmental or college goals. These university goals represent standards all students should experience during their time on campus. Programs may have different goals pertinent to the specific program. The university goals are not meant to constrain or otherwise handcuff other institutional units.

Prof. Myers concluded his review by outlining the possible actions to be taken: the goals can be approved as is, they can be remanded to a committee, or they can be amended and then approved.

Members discussed the document. There were many compliments for the thoroughness of the goals. Prof. Rigby asked about a metrics for measuring the outcomes of the goals. Prof. Myers stated that once the goals are approved, the committee will turn its attention to crafting effective and useful measurement tools. He noted that the committee's attention was always on goals which had the potential to be meaningfully assessed. He also noted that data is already collected which may assist in measuring some of the goals. For instance, each student completes an entry and exit survey from which data can be drawn. Prof. Brandenberger noted that because other institutions have also formulated similar goals, there will be measurement tools which can be built on. In addition, there is institutional history of using and measuring learning goals, as, for instance, in the Center for Social Concerns, which can inform the development of metrics for the

University learning goals. Provost Burish noted, too, that should the committee need to, it can come back to the Council to ask for a modification of one or more goals in order to more effectively construct a measurement tool.

Student representative Ben Noe asked if students had been given an opportunity to comment on the goals. Mr. Fox explained that this had not happened because it was determined that, by definition, learning goals which assess the acquisition of skills and knowledge should be crafted by those who have expertise; in this case, that would be the faculty.

Father Tom Doyle complimented the goals and the committee. He asked if there would still be opportunity for the Office of Student Life to have input as partners with the academy. Prof. Walker, University Librarian, interjected that the Libraries would also be logical partners, especially as the goals express a concern with interdisciplinary work. It was agreed, after discussion, that there is opportunity for these partnerships after the goals are approved, during the next phase of development. Mr. Fox noted that care was taken in developing the goals to be cognizant of learning experiences which take place outside of the classrooms.

Members discussed whether the goals sufficiently speak to the university's focus on internationalism. It was noted that the goals effectively address the question of student self advocacy. Members discussed whether the goals should explicitly name a quantitative mastery goal. After discussion, it was agreed the goals aim is not to be overly prescriptive, more narrowly focused goals for the disciplinary level. The university goals, thus, will map onto goals at lower institutional levels. Father Jenkins noted that goals which are sufficiently broad allow for some institutional freedom in application and in measurement.

It was asked how these goals benchmarked against peer institutions. Prof. Fox noted that Notre Dame's peer institutions lag in the creation of University goals. In this endeavor, ND is out front, part of an emerging group of institutions tackling this new standard.

In response to a question about including reference to leadership skills, a trait promoted and valued at Notre Dame, Prof. Fox reported that ultimately the committee determined not to use the word leadership because it would be difficult to assess in a consistent manner across the varieties of leadership qualities. In response to a question about the inclusion of a reference to faith, the committee determined that it impossible to adequately evaluate individual students' faith development across the student body.

Dean Nell Newton moved that the Council adopt the proposed language of the University Undergraduate Learning Goals; the motion was seconded by Prof. Mazier. Members discussed the motion.

Mr. Burish reiterated that these goals are university goals, not discipline goals. Prof. Myers said that different measurements might be used for different categories of students. Father Jenkins reported, from his experience with the accreditation process, that the evaluators are interested in

the existence of goals and a demonstration of effort to meaningfully measure outcomes. Prof. Myers also reminded members that the goals would be just one part of a package of materials which would be reviewed by an accreditation team, including the core documents from which the goals were developed.

Student representative Laura Rider stated that students would approve of the goals as proposed and support moving forward to address metrics. Prof. Mazier noted that there is some urgency to moving forward, as the university needs to demonstrate to the accreditation team that it has implemented the goals and performed measurements. Dean Page noted that goals, being organic, can be revisited after initial implementation. In that context, broadness is preferable.

Mr. Burish put the motion to a vote; the motion was unanimously approved.

As there was no new business, the meeting was adjourned to committee meetings.