

Northland Pioneer College  
Strategic Planning and Accreditation Steering Committee (SPASC)  
04-24-09

Members in attendance: Donna Ashcraft, Eric Bishop, Russell Dickerson, Blaine Hatch,  
Cindy Hildebrand, Michael Lawson, Mary Mathias, Mark Vest  
Advisory members in attendance: Ann Hess, Jeanne Swarhout, John Velat  
Guests: Hallie Lucas (recorder)

- I. Approval of 04-03-09 Minutes
  - a. Russell moved to approve the minutes; second by Mary.
    - i. Unanimously passed.
- II. Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Annual Meeting Report
  - a. Eric went to the session “Conducting a Self-Study in Turbulent and Changing Times”, which was created by Youngstown State University.
    - i. They gave several scenarios of things that actually went wrong during self studies including (this is only a sampling of the scenarios):
      1. Criteria changed / institution changed / new leadership since last visit.
      2. Faculty/staff on strike.
      3. Provost died unexpectedly.
    - ii. They discussed what you would do if these things happened to you during a self study.
    - iii. The word of encouragement was that no matter what things go wrong during your Self Study, do not worry; because, things could always be worse!
  - b. Jeanne, Mark, Blaine and Eric B. had opportunity to speak with Dr. Breslin at the conference.
    - i. They were able to ask several questions.
    - ii. She encouraged us to be consistent.
    - iii. Instead of receiving the Self Study in electronic form, she would prefer to have hard copies that are spiral bound.
    - iv. She cautioned the use of links, as the Self Study should stand on its own.
    - v. Jeanne noted that she doesn’t think we will have a problem and we will use judgment regarding changes.
  - c. Blaine went to a session on financial ratios.

- i. His sense was that the HLC is still trying to figure out how to incorporate this concept.
        - ii. He felt like the bar was set low for financial red flags.
      - iii. In response to Blaine’s question, Mary Breslin did not suggest incorporating this into the Self Study, as there are not enough evaluators who are familiar with this area.
      - iv. Michael asked Blaine to clarify the financial ratio concept.
        - 1. Blaine said that there are four specific ratios used as financial indicators.
        - 2. He gave the example of the total reserves (being the numerator) and the annual expenditures (being the denominator).
        - 3. Michael asked if any indicators were related to student enrollment. Blaine replied that enrollment is related indirectly to the financial aid indicators; however, there were no specific ratios incorporating enrollment figures.
    - d. Mark attended a session on distance learning.
      - i. Nothing is easy or cheap with delivery mode of education.
      - ii. If NPC makes the decision to provide more distance learning, we need to put our resources and support behind it, to provide a quality program.
        - 1. John asked, “Why not offer online learning?”
        - 2. Mark said that first we need to decide if it is appropriate for our student population. If so, we should do it.
      - iii. Blaine said that the at-risk indicators include development of online learning programs. If we don’t advance in this area we need to be prepared to face the financial consequences in the future.
      - iv. We may be closer than we think, as Jeanne mentioned that we are using the same technology for student ID’s, as is the University of Phoenix.
- III. Self Study Update
  - a. Donna stated that she will have Chapter 5 to Betsy Ann today and Chapter 3 to her by Monday.
    - i. She has provided some interesting feedback.
  - b. She should be able to get the Self Study out to everyone by the end of next week.
    - i. There are still some holes; and, hopefully, people will respond as they identify problem areas.
  - c. Jeanne said that she has had opportunity to speak with the chair of our HLC visiting team and is beginning to establish a link with the team.
- IV. Assignments for Strategic Plan/Pillars
  - a. Jeanne, Donna and Eric discussed this in some depth. They feel that by bringing new members onboard the Pillars, we will see more involvement and additional perspectives.
    - i. Once these additions/changes are made to the Pillar members, the teams should review and update their Pillars.

- ii. The lead will choose one person inside SPASC and one person from outside SPASC.
- iii. Pillar changes are:
  - 1. Pillar 1 - Eric H. as lead, choose two faculty members
  - 2. Pillar 2 - Mark as lead, choose one staff and one faculty member
  - 3. Pillar 3 - John as lead, choose one staff and one faculty member
  - 4. Pillar 4 - Mary as lead, add Peggy Belknap and choose one staff member
  - 5. Pillar 5 - Maderia Ellison as lead, add Faculty Association President (Sandy Johnson) and choose one staff member
    - a. Michael will speak with Sandy regarding Pillar 5. Donna said she will be happy to meet with Sandy to give her information regarding this Pillar.
    - b. Blaine noted that the Legislature is still working through the details regarding Federal Stimulus money.
  - 6. Pillar 6 - Blaine as lead, add David Huish, choose one faculty member
- b. Donna noted that the Strategic Plan needs to be updated with the changes as noted by SPASC in a recent meeting.
  - i. Eric B. told the Pillar leads that he would be willing to make revisions (that were determined by SPASC) to the Strategic Plan if that would be helpful to them.
- c. There was a great deal of discussion regarding when the Strategic Plan should go to the District Governing Board (DGB) for approval.
  - i. Of particular importance in this discussion was the fact that the faculty is off work for the summer. Eric B. said that there could possibly be compensation provided for them if they are off contract.
  - ii. Jeanne thinks that it would be alright to take it to the DGB 09-15-09 (later than that would probably not be good).
    - 1. An idea is to do a short retreat with the board before the September DGB meeting to review the Strategic Plan (first read), so that we would be ready to include it as an action item at the regularly scheduled meeting. Members of the Pillar Groups may also participate in this retreat.
      - a. Russell said that he thinks we may want to consider using e-mail to communicate during the summer, and then meeting the day before the faculty report back to pull everything together. The team seemed to agree that this made sense
      - b. As the Pillar leads contact/select new faculty members, they should make them aware of this possible retreat, as well as the strong possibility of needing to attend a meeting before they are scheduled to report back.
      - c. It was decided that 08-28-09 is a good date to have the board retreat.

- d. Task: Each pillar will use the Strategic Plan template to make their changes, using the track changes/comments feature and bring it to the SPASC Meeting at Convocation, 09-21-09, where SPASC will review it.
      - e. Task: The document will then go to Russell to package it up and have it ready for the 08-28-09 board retreat.
    - d. Michael asked Eric B. to speak to the issue again regarding revisions to the Strategic Plan.
      - i. Eric B. said that, in March, SPASC members went through the entire Strategic Plan and updated the goals of each Pillar and Priority item to reflect if something was done and completed, on hold, etc.
      - ii. All the updates are in the SPASC Meeting Minutes.
      - iii. Eric B.'s suggestion was to take the Strategic Plan and combine the changes into one Strategic Plan with annotated notes.
        - 1. Michael feels that it will be helpful in creating renewed interest in the Pillar discussions. New Pillar Team members may experience a learning curve, and this should alleviate it some.
        - 2. Task: Eric B. will work on this next week and will post it on the SPASC page in JICS.
        - 3. It was noted that we are talking about the Strategic Plan that goes through 2012, so we will want to project out, if we can.
    - e. Donna pointed out that the Self Study can help guide this process, somewhat, as we look to NPC's future. When we look at the recommendations, it will help us know where to fix things, create new things, etc. There will be recommendations for each criteria, which should help.
- V. Summer and SPASC
  - a. Jeanne feels that it would be helpful for SPASC to meet at least once over the summer.
    - i. We hope to send out the Self Study the first part of July.
    - ii. We are looking at 06-24-09 for a SPASC Meeting. Task: Eric B. will arrange the logistics and will send an e-mail out to everyone to see if that will work for them.
- VI. Other
  - a. Mark said that it would be helpful in the recruitment of his new Pillar members if he could have information to e-mail to them indicating their assignment.
  - b. Motion made by Russell to adjourn; second by Blaine.
    - i. Unanimously approved.