

CSOA Meeting, Nov. 15, 2004

Minutes – **Bold letters are the original agenda items.**

1. Meet with Dean Lubker to discuss charge to the committee

The Deans met with the committee to give the committee its charge.
Comments included:

Outcomes assessment is an accreditation mandate. However, and more important, outcomes are something we should want to do because we are all educators.

At the recent annual Deans' meeting, Dean Lubker went to a session on outcomes assessment. The following points were central:

- 1) Outcomes assessment is a nation-wide mandate.
- 2) Outcomes assessment must be meaningful for it to work.
- 3) Outcomes assessment consists of answering two questions: How are your students doing and how do you know how they are doing?
- 4) Each academic unit needs to develop its own assessment model that fits their subject and their students. One size will not fit all.
- 5) Every department that is already fulfilling its teaching mission is already doing assessment – it simply may not be doing it systematically.
- 6) Because the LAC may be considered a kind of second major, many schools are trying to link major outcomes with LAC outcomes.
- 7) If assessment is meaningful, it can be empowering for a department faculty and its students.

Associate Dean Bubser reviewed his experience with the early years of outcomes assessment work at UNI. He indicated that the most important observation from that time was becoming aware that an academic culture for assessment needs to be created. He also indicated that in the CHFA visits of prospective students, parents already are asking about majors in terms of learning outcomes.

The deans asked that the committee move with care and caution in fulfilling its charge. The key is to create a context for reflection and work on outcomes in CHFA that will facilitate faculty participation. Faculty are the key to the outcomes assessment process.

2. Discuss goals for committee

A. Information gathering: What is each CHFA department doing by way of SOA (program plans, reporting, updating curriculum)?

After the Deans left, the committee reviewed the list Reineke had prepared on the status of the SOA process in each department. Corrections, amendments, deletions, were

suggested. A revised version of this list will be sent to committee members for review (separate attachment). **Please open that attachment, check your department's entry, and send any additional corrections to me before the next meeting.**

B. Evaluation: What improvements are being made or should be made in the future in each CHFA Department's SOA work?

Committee members were unanimous in reporting that the early stages of outcomes assessment work at UNI had left a very bad taste in the mouths of many of the faculty of the college. Committee members indicated ways in which they and/or some members of their departments also have had positive experiences with outcomes assessment. They noted, however, that the major challenge facing the committee in its efforts to fulfill its charge will be determining ways in which faculty could see outcomes assessment in more positive terms and decide to buy-into the process.

In the process of discussing the list describing current plans, committee members indicated where their departments stand on needing to improve their plans. Music, Philosophy and Religion, and Communication Studies intend to build on their current plans. Other departments in the college intend such major revisions of their plans that their current plans may be completely replaced.

The need for information and resources in order to answer question B is clear.

C. Resources: What resources do CHFA Departments need to assist them with A and B above?

1. University SOA procedures
2. North Central Accreditation goals
3. Workshops (internally or externally led)
4. literature on SOA (web and print)
5. Access to other department plans
6. Other?

The committee asked that Reineke collect and send to them prior to the next meeting items 1 and 2 as well as 5 (only department plans for music, P&R, and communication studies). The committee asked Reineke to share literature with them on SOA. Choices on that literature will be made at the next meeting, as we get a clearer sense of needed resources.

D. Reviewing commonalities in CHFA: Are there outcomes shared in common by CHFA Departments that could form a starting point for articulating an SOA Plan for the College?

Reineke noted that this is a long-term goal that we will probably not be able to address until the end of the 2006 academic year. Key to fulfilling this goal will be the

development of a common, general vocabulary about outcomes across departments in the college.

- 3. Reporting work of the committee: The Dean would like an initial report from the Committee at the end of spring semester. Graduate SOA plans will be the focus next year, with another report anticipated at the end of the 2005-06 academic year.**

- 4. Schedule next meeting for week of Dec. 6 or 13 and discuss agenda.**

We are trying to schedule the committee for finals week, in the hopes that all members can attend. With the call for availability for next semester, we will again work to find a time when all committee members can attend. Our agenda for the December meeting will be to discuss the items committee members requested from the chair and to determine how those items may enable us to make further progress on Item B above (thinking about improvements and how these improvements might be accomplished).