CSOA Minutes – October 3, 2005

Agenda for October 3 meeting:

1) Welcome new member from Modern Languages.

Jennifer Cooley was welcomed as the newest member of the CSOA.

2) Review September 12 minutes for accuracy and completeness.

The minutes were accepted.

3) Dean's annual report reporting process and format update

Martie distributed the Dean's annual report SOA template that the committee devised last year with typed additions of the NCA guiding questions, as requested by the committee at the September meeting. These questions come from the NCA Fall, 2005 document on conversations with universities and list five questions NCA will ask universities about SOA work on their campuses. The committee discussed placement and wording of the questions in the Dean's report template. They believe it is a positive step to link the Dean's report template not only with academic program review at UNI but also with the NCA questions. Departments will be well prepared for program review work on SOA if they have followed the program review guidelines. They will also be well prepared for conversations with NCA about their departmental work if they have followed the NCA guiding questions in their SOA work. The revised draft has been typed up and is included as a separate attachment with these minutes.

Martie shared with the committee Dean Bubser's recommendation that we set an April 15 deadline for the 2006 reports. The SOA section of the Dean's annual report needs to be completed prior to faculty departure in the summer. Committee members pointed out that by April 15, key spring data will not have been completely collected or analyzed. They suggested that October 15 be the new date for the SOA reports from the previous academic year to be due. This would enable faculty to complete analysis of materials that come in late April or during finals week and report for the year. These reports could also appear in the June report the subsequent spring. At that time, a new section "D" (how changes in the SOA process planned in October had in fact been implemented during that current year) could be added to the June report. Martie will share this suggestion with the Dean.

Martie shared with the committee Dean Bubser's suggestion that members of the committee meet with each department head this fall to discuss SOA. A member of the committee and Martie would visit each department head, dividing the heads and their departments among committee members. The committee members expressed that they very much want the heads to get on board this year with SOA. However, an alternative proposal was brainstormed. The committee as a whole could meet with the department heads as a whole at one of their weekly meetings with the dean to discuss the entire process of moving the college forward this year.

Such a meeting would focus on several items of note. It could focus on the revised Dean's Report SOA template which will incorporate the five NCA questions (from the NCA fall, 2005 document) into the template. This change will align the SOA Dean's Report SOA template not only with the university SOA program review reporting template but also with the NCA key questions for SOA. The template would be a good discussion piece for talking about kinds of activities that need to be undertaken this year in order to respond to the template categories.

The second focus of a joint meeting of the committee with the department heads recommended by the committee is for department heads who have been active in the last year to share how they have lent support to SOA work. For example, Gretta Berghammer believes that Eric has really taken SOA to heart and was successful last year in leading the department forward. She believes that the strategy he used (starting with a faculty retreat) is a model for other departments. He had a multi-step plan that the department followed last year to identify steps they would take with SOA work and to get the SOA structure in place. . There may be other heads (e.g., John Fritch) who would be willing to volunteer how they are working with faculty to support SOA.

Third, the committee believes that the planning process described in the book we are reading is very helpful and that this process could be shared with the group, as a supplement to Eric's example of the process being used in Theatre.

The CSOA likes the idea of all key players being represented at a common table together: dean, department heads, and faculty. They believe that the articulation of the dean's support for this is critical. They also think that some department heads are prepared to be effective models for the others of this process. They want the department heads to experience also how a group of faculty members have invested in assessment so that the faculty committee as a whole can model how an invested faculty discusses assessment. In sum, the CSOA idea is that if all players are sitting at a common table together, everyone will be able to see that ownership of SOA needs to be taken across the board, from the top down and from the bottom up.

The committee also discussed how the Dean had mentioned that department heads have divided some of the key duties of the associate dean amongst themselves. It occurs to the committee that a department head could be asked to take responsibility for coordinating department head reflection and information-sharing about SOA this year. Just as the CSOA functions to keep faculty across the college informed about SOA efforts in each department, it would be good for department heads to be aware of how each is supporting and lending the leadership of the head to SOA work.

The committee indicated that a meeting of this kind would set the stage for ongoing collaboration. For example, departments that are working on performance oriented outcomes and measures might share strategies and information. Writing objectives and portfolios are also interests that cross departments. As we get to the hands-on part of SOA work, sharing our experiences across department lines will enhance our efforts.

4) **Discuss Allen, Ch. 4**

The committee began a preliminary exploration of Chapter 4. Dick pointed out that when faculty members hear assessment, they think about the course assessment questions in the faculty assessment instrument that students fill out. Chapter 4 did not make sufficiently clear that faculty assessment needs to be kept separate from program assessment.

Lauren mentioned that in the ethics examples, Allen does mention that when a criticism of a course outcome can be traced back to a specific instructor, that linkage should be addressed outside of the assessment process. Names need to be deleted from program assessments completed by students. Ken pointed out that there may be a problem with a major outcome in which the achievement of the entire outcome is traced to one course and one professor. It would seem that outcomes are going to typically be broader than this and if they aren't we should probably reconsider them.

Dick observed that a key issue with coming up with an assessment plan is that faculty view this in terms of a loss of autonomy. They see SOA as someone telling them how to teach their classes. They are quite unfamiliar with the collaborative emphasis that is the hallmark of assessment. One of the keys to success will be in creating understanding about collaboration and why it can help us with our teaching. We need to get out of our silos in regard to our teaching and work together.

Martie indicated that the graduate students assigned to SOA work this year are working on a short piece on validity and reliability for the UNI Assessment web site that is in production. She asked for committee members to volunteer to be guinea pigs to read the piece and give feedback. Lauren, Jennifer, and Ken all have 1 p.m. free on Tuesdays, which is the hour during which the grad assistants are typically free to meet. Martie will see that they get the piece when it is done and set up the meeting to discuss it. Lauren indicated that it will be important to have examples of validity and reliability that come out of assessment literature. Even Allen gave an example of an error in validity but her example was not from an assessment problem.

5) **Update from Martie on resources for which she has been looking on behalf of committee members.**

Martie mentioned that she was trying to figure out how to share materials she is finding with the committee. She is going to have Rita copy relevant materials and send them to committee members who have expressed interest in a particular topic. There will be a cover sheet asking for persons to respond for items they find useful or not useful. This will be a guide for Martie to find more of the helpful stuff and less of the unhelpful stuff.

Agenda for November 7 meeting, 3:00 p.m. room TBA:

1) Complete discussion of Chapter 4.
2) Further business to be determined as suggestions from October meeting are/are not implemented in the interim.