The first meeting of the 2014 Higher Learning Commission Steering Committee was held on Friday, December 9, 2011, 1:15 pm in Swen Parson 258.

Attendees

Members: Doris Macdonald (chair), Brianno Coller, Marc Falkoff, William Goldenberg, Mary Elaine Koren, Murali Krishnamurthi, Kristen Myers, Carol Patitu, Elizabeth Towell, Laura Vazquez.

Ex officio: Virginia Cassidy, Carolinda Douglass, Dan House, Donna Lynn, Jeff Reynolds.

Guests: President John G. Peters and Provost Raymond W. Alden III.

1. Welcome: Doris Macdonald, Chair

2. Introductions: Members and guests introduced themselves.

3. Remarks by President Peters – Peters thanked committee members for their service and stressed the importance of the committee’s mission. He gave a short history of the accreditation process and stressed importance of committee’s mission. Peters then described charging Provost Alden with launching a mission statement rewrite. NIU’s mission statement has to be reflected in the work that the committee does.

Committee should pay attention to the following goals and demonstrate that we are achieving these goals:

- Great Journeys-Strategic Planning
- Core Values
- Vision 2020

Members were encouraged to take advantage of HLC spring meetings in Chicago.

4. Remarks by Provost Raymond W. Alden – Alden expressed his gratitude to committee, indicating that their work is one of the most important things done at the university. He indicated that NIU’s mission is a critical part of the report. He told the committee that we will be one of the first major institutions to go through the new criteria—there are five criteria all centered around mission, two solely focused in academic areas. He then went on to list the five criteria and give a brief description of each.

He also emphasized that this is a two-year process; it is not trivial; it is absolutely critical to the future of NIU. Alden further informed committee that after this accreditation there will be a whole different process. Keep the future in mind when compiling information for this report.

5. Peters and Alden take their leave.

6. Overview of Accreditation Process by Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Development Virginia Cassidy

Cassidy explained that the accreditation process is twofold.

A. We must show compliance with criteria. Compliance in every criterion must be demonstrated.
B. We must show that we are continually improving. HLC staff view the second part of the process, which is more consultative, as having greater importance for the institution and is why accreditation has value. Emphasis of the second part will be on improvement.

Cassidy continued with information about what to expect during the site visit:

- We are large institution with on and off-campus initiatives, so the visit will include a comprehensive team with between 10-12 members. They will have expertise in areas generally related to our academic programs and be able to evaluate the facilities and operations side of the campus as well. They will likely have expertise in outreach.
- The team comes on a Sunday night will leave on a Wednesday evening.
- Our report and evidence will be submitted to HLC Board for their review before the actual visit.
- HLC Site Team will meet with HLC Steering Committee, with colleges, and with open forums
- You will be given a preliminary set of documents which will help you identify resources
- A Blackboard community has been established for disseminating information

The committee members will decide together what information and documentation will go into the report.

7. Overview of subcommittee composition and Spring 2012 meeting times by Macdonald.

8. Higher Learning Commission overview by Macdonald - Some of the online resources available Committee members were encouraged to explore the HLC’s web site. Some of the documents and links will be posted on Bb community so committee won’t have to look around.

9. Additional information regarding new criteria by Cassidy - Criteria are so different from last time that it will not be necessary to read the prior self study report because it was organized so differently. However, the committee should read report from the last site team. New PEAQ criteria will go into effect for site visits in 2013.

10. Macdonald gives marching orders
   - Explore HLC Website
   - Sign up for conference
   - Keep your eye on the Blackboard site

Macdonald indicated that appropriate subcommittee members will be assigned to committees.

January 20th meeting will give more details about what is expected from the committee members.

11. Meeting adjourned @ 2:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Lynn, Office Administrator, Office of the Executive VP and Provost.