Academic Foundations Committee
Minutes

February 24, 2009

Present: Oliver Chen   Kurt Toenjes
                 Mark Hardt   Dan Lennon
                 Richard Pierce   Jane Howell
                 Lorrie Steerey

Absent: Jay Shaw
                 Diane Duin – ex-officio   Tasneem Khaleel – ex-officio
                 Gary Young – ex-officio   Mary Susan Fishbaugh – ex-officio
                 Karen Heikel – ex-officio   John Cech – ex-officio
                 D'Ann Campbell – ex-officio   Stacy Klippenstein – ex-officio

Presiding: Mark Hardt, Chairperson

The meeting was called to order at 3:40 p.m. in the Bridger room of the SUB.

I.   DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Academic Foundations Functionality, Assessment, & Committee Membership
Lorrie Steerey, Chair, Academic Senate

Dr. Steerey noted we are really under the gun with assessment. NWCCU is coming back in 2010 to make sure we are making the progress we promised in Academic Foundations and the College of Arts & Sciences particularly. This is the third semester we've been trying to assess Academic Foundations and it's just not working.

The membership of the Committee needs to be changed so that the members will be instructors in Academic Foundations. Dr. Steerey noted she teaches in Academic Foundations and will join the AFC as COB representative and also for Category I (Information Literacy). Members should teach an Academic Foundations course during any year of their term. The Senate can rewrite the bylaws during this week's Senate meeting. Perhaps terms should also be reduced from three to two years.

The AFC also needs to meet at another time since Tuesday afternoons the Arts & Sciences department chairs meet. It was agreed the committee will meet weekly at 2:30 on Wednesdays, with the next meeting after Spring Break.

Assessing all the sections of all the Academic Foundations courses taught every semester seems to be too much. It has been suggested that every course, but not every section, be assessed, resulting in about 60-70 sections. We've had a lot of difficulty with part-time instructors entering their assessment data, so having a lead instructor to enter the data may

be better. It was also suggested that across all sections of the same course, the instructors could agree on the same assessment tools, but this gets into issues of academic freedom.

Dr. Steerey noted that she is going to have one of her student aides do some research on how other institutions are assessing, since almost all colleges and universities must do it now.

It was cited that the AFC has discussed and resolved to use major capstone courses for an upper level Academic Foundations assessment, since students should be able to prove they have used their Academic Foundations skills in a capstone project.

It was noted that there have been some technical difficulties with the assessment database. Some instructors have entered all their data, only to get an error message. Is it being stored or not? Someone from IT will be asked to the next meeting.

Dr. Steerey noted that she has the list of all the Academic Foundations instructors who have not entered their assessment data, which she received from the Provost. It was cited that with the Provost's permission, this list should be distributed to the department chairs and the AFC members.

It was stated that the simplest way to get faculty to input assessment data is to link it to grades. There would be two separate databases for assessment data and grades. A faculty member teaching Academic Foundations would be required to input Academic Foundations assessment data before they can enter grades. The faculty would be locked out of the grade database until the Academic Foundations data entry is complete. This idea will be discussed with IT to see if it's possible.

II.   MINUTES

The minutes of January 20 were accepted as presented.

The meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.