Academic Foundations Committee
Minutes

April 8, 2009

Present:	Melinda Tilton	Kurt Toenjes
	Mike Havens	Matt Redinger
	Tom Regele	Mark Fenderson
	Lorrie Steerey	Richard Pierce
	Brent Roberts	
Absent:	George Czyz	Bernie Quetchenbach
	Neil Suits	
	Neil Jussila – *excused*	Mary Alice Walker (student) – *excused*
	Rita Kratky – ex-officio	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
Presiding:	Lorrie Steerey, Chairperson	

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. in room 355 of the College of Business.

The minutes of March 25 were accepted as presented.

I.   DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Contacting Faculty

It was noted that for part-time faculty who are long gone, some department are simply using how many students passed the class to report assessment data. It was stated that there is not a down side, accreditation-wise, to reporting the data. However, there is a down side to *not* reporting assessment data.

It was cited that currently IT will not allow Department Chairs access to the reporting database. This would be useful for filling in part-time data. It was noted that some departments are bypassing this because the part-time faculty member's passwords are still their birth dates. It needs to be easier for Chairs to access the reporting mechanism and report data.

It was stated that there are still faculty who, for various reasons, will not enter their data. There are also faculty who have lost their data either through technical problems with the assessment database or through the transition from eCollege to D2L.

It was cited that faculty are also leaving blank objectives which they find inappropriate to their course. It was stated that there are way too many objectives in all categories. Most

have six, and some have more. We need to reduce the number of objectives to perhaps three or four per category. It was further noted that such diverse categories as Social Sciences or Cultural Diversity will be even more difficult to assess. It was cited that many of the current objectives are much too narrow.

The question was raised as to why there are public speaking requirements in the Information Literacy category. It was noted that this is to meet Board of Regents requirements that students have a public speaking course in their general education core. The issue of "public speaking" in an online course is a serious problem. It was noted that online chats are considered verbal communication.

It was noted that the AFC should probably have the NWCCU report, as well as their response to us, to continue modifying the assessment objectives. Dr. Steerey stated that she will get MSUB's NWCCU report, the NWCCU's response, and the NWCCU Standards for the Committee. It was noted, however, that NWCCU does not tell us how they want us to assess, they only want us to tell them what we do and how we do it.

It was stated that we must stick with the current Academic Foundations objectives through next year. However, we can also report to NWCCU that we have found this system cumbersome. We can then revise and report that we are working on a more manageable amount of objectives, which will give us better data and increase participation because of the relative simplicity. Since NWCCU will be visiting again in January or February of 2010, we can then implement a new list of objectives in Spring 2010.

It was noted that the deadline to enter Fall 2008 assessment data is May 1, 2009.

It was cited that getting the Spring 2009 data will be a problem. Faculty are not going to enter this data over the summer. It was noted that Department Chairs are paid through the summer and they should be asked to help with this issue.

Dr. Steerey noted that she will be talking to IT about getting a link on the grade entry page to the assessment database, with a notation that it is for the convenience of the faculty. It was stated that we cannot require that faculty enter their assessment data before they are allowed to enter grades.

II.   ITEM FOR APPROVAL

Item 59 AF Course: MUSC 150 Musics of the World. Move from V.A. Fine Arts to IV.B. Cultural Diversity.

          - Motion by Matt Redinger, seconded by Tom Regele to **approve Item 59.**

          - Motion carried.

III.   DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

B. Reports

It was noted that the reports currently designed by IT are not very useful. We need to clump all sections of each course together and use an average of the group. This will prevent data from being directly linked back to faculty members. It was noted that if there is only one faculty member teaching a given course, all of that data will be linked to that one person. It was suggested that the AFC write up some provisions to protect faculty from having this information used in tenure evaluations. It was argued, how can this information *not* be used in evaluating faculty?

It was noted that in categories with many different disciplines, the reports should perhaps be sorted by discipline, rather than grouping the results of many different courses in a category together.

It was stated that in the AFC's original discussion about the 70% rule equals passing an objective, the rule was the faculty member gets to count a student who achieves at least 70% on a given objective. If the student does not achieve at least 70%, he or she does not count for that objective. However, this rule has morphed into the objective being met if at least 70% of the whole class passes that objective.

C. Next Steps

It was cited that the next thing the AFC needs to do is revise the outcomes for the categories. This should be done by consulting with faculty who teach the courses to get their suggestions regarding which objectives can and cannot be measured in their classes. The revised outcomes objectives must be ready by November, 2009, so they can be launched for the Spring 2010 semester. We can also include all of these efforts in the AFC's section of the report to NWCCU. Since NWCCU will be here in January, 2010, the assessment database will be open within the first two weeks of the Fall 2009 semester, so faculty can enter data as they go.

The next meeting will be April 22.

The meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Rita J. Rabe Meduna.