

JOHN A. LOGAN COLLEGE
CRITERION FOUR COMMITTEE MEETING
The Higher Learning Commission of North Central Association

April 25, 2005

Those committee members present for the meeting were as follows: Jerry Bechtel, Clay Brewer, Roberta Brown, Monique Galvin, Stacy Holloway, Nita Lowery, Dale Marrs, Susan May, Steve McLaughlin, Carol Mitchell, Eric Pulley, Greg Stettler, Robyn Stevens, Cheryl Thomas, Barbara Throgmorton, and Sue Trammell

Those committee members absent for the meeting were as follows: Mary Ellen Abell, Nathan Arnett, Linda Graves, Keith Kendrick, Ron Parks, and Mikolaj Sawicki

The guests were as follows: Kim Dixon, Mabel Hayes, and Deborah Payne

The committee met on Monday, April 25, 2005 at 11:00 a.m. Stacy Buckingham distributed handouts to the committee members. She opened the meeting by thanking everyone for being there. Stacy explained that Rebecca Borgsmiller's absence was due to her travel to the Netherlands. Rebecca had been able to attend the NCA conference in Chicago. The conference was held April 9th through April 12th. Rebecca attended the conference that Saturday and Sunday. Stacy was planning on attending the conference, but at the last minute she was unable to attend. She asked Dr. Deborah Payne to attend the Criterion Four meeting to give an overview of the Chicago conference and what they learned there. Eric Pulley and Kim Dixon also attended the conference. Stacy would have liked to wait until Rebecca got back to meet, but by the time she returned the semester would almost be over. Stacy informed the group that Jo Nast had resigned earlier this year. She had been helping coordinate the NCA effort previously and also had been a co-chair. Dr. Payne has stepped up into that role. Since early spring, she has now been overseeing and coordinating the NCA effort. The end result was there had to be some shifting around of the co-chairs. Kim Dixon is now co-chairing Criterion Two with Donna Glodjo. Terry Crain had to have a new co-chair, since Jo left, and Lauralyn Cima has stepped in. There has also been some shifting around, because of pending retirements, such as Carol Mitchell. Stacy announced that Robyn Stevens is now on our committee. She is our new full-time faculty member in English. Also, there had to be a few shifts on other committees. Overall, the committees are still pretty much the same. We still have Criterion One through Five. Mabel Hayes has been brought into the effort to help with some of the writing and editing. She is going to make sure the self-study flows and has one voice. She will make sure it is not repetitive, because of the overlap of the Criteria. Mabel also attended the NCA conference in Chicago. Stacy informed everyone that we are still not certain when the on campus site visit will be. We originally thought it would be in the Spring of 07, but now it might be the Fall of 06.

Dr. Payne announced that the date has not been set, but they usually try to honor the first date. However, we are planning for the earlier date of Fall 06, just in case. Then, if they do not come until Spring of 07, this will just allow us extra time to collect additional evidence and make revisions.

Stacy Buckingham stated that we will be using the Word program to write in. Mabel Hayes and Dr. Payne will be creating writing guidelines and structuring the format we are going to follow in our self-study. Stacy said that there is going to be some posting on the College's Intranet. We will be using G202 as a resource room for storage of documents. The information will be organized by Criterion and also by subject. Also, there will be a survey going out to the Full-Time and Term Faculty the week of May 9th. Any questions needed for Criterion One through Five will be included on this survey. It was decided to do one survey instead of several small ones. Stacy stated that Brenda Erickson has been working on the faculty survey. They want more feedback from the different committees. There will be a broader spectrum covered by the survey than originally planned. Nita Lowery's sub-committee (4-A) has already been working on survey questions.

Nita Lowery said that she had distributed the survey information to all her committee members and collected questions from them. She has already submitted everything to Stacy Buckingham that was turned in from her sub-committee.

Stacy Buckingham stated that she was going to submit those questions to Brenda Erickson. They may relate to the faculty surveys or to other surveys going out in the future. Sue Trammell, Cheryl Thomas, and Eric Pulley are going to collect survey questions from their sub-committees. Stacy Buckingham said that she needs to get them to Brenda Erickson by April 29th. Therefore, Stacy Buckingham would like the information back to her by April 28th, so she can put them together. They will be sending out the survey to the faculty on May 9th. They will try to get them back with the grades on May 19th. The reason for the quick turn around is so we can start gathering some evidence. Stacy stated that the faculty survey is the most immediate thing happening right now, and developing any questions that we (Criterion 4) need included on it. Stacy Buckingham informed everyone that there will be more opportunities for campus wide feedback during the Fall faculty meetings. They want to get as many of the faculty and staff to these meetings as possible. We need to collect as much 3rd party feedback as we can from both internal and external sources, whenever possible.

Stacy Buckingham went over the handouts that she had distributed earlier. The first one is a listing of the nine purposes of the self-study for accreditation. The second one is a list of questions that came from someone at the conference. It lists the components of each Criterion in question format. If we answer each of these questions, then we will be addressing each component of the Criterion. The third handout is a theme that the JALC steering committee is going to be operating on. It is called "John A. Logan: Learning for Life." If anyone has any questions or comments about the theme, this is just a draft. Stacy Buckingham said that Dr. Payne will tell everyone more about the purpose of it in just a moment. We also have a handout called "Institutional Snapshot." This is from the Higher Learning Commission. The College is also working on an institutional snapshot for its own purposes. Mike Bitting and Eric Pulley are working on this. The College will have one of its own to submit with the self-study. She instructed that if anyone had any feedback about this snapshot, they can get with Mike Bitting or Eric Pulley about this. The last handout, which she felt is the most important, is a listing of web site links (resources). The first is the web site for the Higher Learning Commission (NCA). It

has a lot of information on policy and document resources. Also, it has a list of institutions that are up for review in 04-05. Stacy Buckingham said that if you look at any self-studies, you have to make sure that they are using the new Criteria. The Criteria were not mandatory, until January of 05. On the same handout, there are some web sites for other schools that you can pull up and look at their self-studies. So, you can look at examples of Criterion Four. You can go pull up any that you want to review. She suggested that you try to keep in mind that some of the links listed are for much bigger institutions. Some schools have hired a single person to coordinate their self-studies. But, these will still be a good starting point to get some ideas as to format and types of evidence. Stacy Buckingham stated that she was turning the meeting over to Dr. Payne. Sue Trammell had a question.

Sue Trammell stated that she knew that she could go to the web site, but do we have any bound copies of self-studies that we could look at?

Dr. Payne said that there will be some available in the resource room (G202). They are in the process of getting them printed. However, the presenters at the NCA conference stated that these first self-studies were not great overall. The self-studies are everybody's first time for using the new Criteria. The old accreditation process was about compliance. There are three major reasons why accreditation is important to the College. The most important is we have to be accredited for our students to receive financial aid. The second big reason is so that our credits will transfer to other schools. The third is the core question of accreditation is "to what extent can you prove that your students are learning?" By answering the following questions you tie these all together. Are you hiring qualified personnel? Is your financial aid being used correctly? To what extent are learning opportunities available to Faculty, Students, Staff and Administration? Under Criterion Three and Four, effective teaching and learning go together hand in hand. There will be some overlaps in the writing, but we will sort those out in the final reports. Dr. Payne stressed that as you are writing your responses always cite where you got your information. You have to show evidence. When we make statements, we have to be able to support these, and prove that we know what we are doing in our institution.

An alternative accreditation process is a focus on continuous learning and continuous improvement. They are different formats, but they have the same general content. They are asking for the same proof. Self-study proves that we are capable of reflection. We can identify areas where things may not be integrated and make recommendations on what to do about it. You are on the Criterion Four committee. However, if you take the time to read Criterion One through Five, you will see that the same themes run throughout each one.

Dr. Payne stated that the self-study report has four themes. The HLC no longer wants to know what you did in the past, even though the past is important. They are concerned about how are you able to look at the information you have today and forecast the future? Are we a future-oriented organization? Dr. Payne said that is a tough thing to do. What trends do you look at? What kinds of analysis do you go through? How are you assessing programs and learning? Then, to be able to use that assessment to improve is a big challenge. To what extent are we future oriented in our planning processes? Do we plan for the future? Whether we call it strategic planning, operational planning, focus planning, departmental planning, what kind of planning goes on at your level or within the institution? Are we driven by a mission? Dr. Payne

said that last year there was a committee that revised the mission statement of the College. Terry Crain put it out on the net not too long ago. But overall, we feel that people probably are not really familiar with the mission and goals of the College yet. So, that is another key piece of information. As you look at these questions and are gathering your evidence, you need to have that mission statement right beside you. To what extent is the mission reflected in what we do? The College must understand social and economic change and focus on the future of its constituents. Dr. Payne stated that another big one was the integration of new technology. She thinks that the College does a really good job staying up to date with technology, but it goes deeper than that. So, how are we planning ahead? She knows we have a technology plan, but to what extent do we all understand it, she is not sure about that. The second learning theme is: Are we a learning focused organization? Do we assess our student learning? This does not mean just grades and GPA's. This can be sad for some people to hear. There are so many variables for assigning grades, such as you can get points for being there or for extra credit. They want to know if we have behavioral objectives in some departments and programs. Do we have learning outcomes? They want to know the learning outcomes and how we determine if our students are learning what we are teaching. Dr. Payne thinks that you are going to see assessment focused on during the coming visitation. Can we prove that our students are learning? To what degree do we support learning and support scholarship? Do we create capacity for life long learning? There are pockets of brilliance on campus right now. Do we encourage people for life long learning? We do have people coming back later in life to school. So, those people need to be talked about. How do we strengthen our ability as an organization? All of us, every person employed here including our students, how do we learn from what we are doing? The whole assessment concept takes on new meanings. The one concept is student learning. The second concept is the assessment of our practices, and what we are doing to make ourselves a better institution. The third theme is the connected organization. Do we serve the common good? The policy *Illinois Commitment* on the ICCB web site is available, so everyone can look at it. She said that it talks about access, diversity, workforce development, and it talks about key things in this region, so people can be successful. Are we creating a culture of service for our students to be included in our programs of study? Do we create opportunities for them to actually be of service to their community, to be connected, and to teach them the responsibilities of citizenship? How do we collaborate with each, and do we engage in helping with internal communication? Dr. Payne stated that we were cited for internal communication in the last accreditation. Do our communication processes, enable us to talk across divisions? To what extent do we use information from one division to help bring unanswered questions to another is what we have to look at? The distinctive organization is the fourth theme. Do we appreciate diversity? Are we accountable? Much as the College has a financial audit done every year, we should have an institutional audit. To what degree are we doing what we say we are doing? Are we self reflective? Are we looking to do better? When we examine our practices, you will ask if evidence is present or not. If it is not, you will identify the gap and recommend actions to remedy it. We need to communicate with other cultures and appreciate diversity. Right now, we don't really have anything. We have bits and pieces that we are trying to put together, and it is difficult. In answer to that last accreditation, we have to do more progress reports and give them a plan for assessment. Many of you have served on those committees and worked on our educational goals. Those goals are important, because they framed what we expect our students to do when they graduate. Dr. Payne stated that what they learned in Chicago was a great respect

for the accreditation process and the time it takes. If you can find the evidence of something, we want to recognize it in our self-study. But if you cannot find the evidence, we do not want to include this. We can identify if we are doing something right, or if we need to improve. This is all they are really asking for. Dr. Payne said that we will need to show three years of data analysis. Eric Pulley collects all that data, but having the time to analyze this information is difficult. We are talking about processing all of this. Dr. Payne then asked the committee what questions they had about any of this information.

Cheryl Thomas asked Dr. Payne how she sees the process working from the sub-chairs point of view, and how will this all funnel together into one report by Criterion Four?

Dr. Payne answered that within the next two weeks they are going to try to come up with some writing guidelines. She said that she came to this role late, ideally all of the designing phase would be done on the front end. You would know from the beginning what was expected of you. We are going to be working on trying to get some writing done and some information on formatting and documentation. As you access information, if it is with an interview with someone please note that. We will probably have documentation forms to write down who you talked to and what information you gathered. When you can acquire some evidence in the form of something printable, print it. All of that information from the core component groups then would be brought together to your whole Criterion Four and discussed. You need to have discussion together to discover if that evidence is there. Dr. Payne said that information will then come to Stacy or Rebecca. They will do a draft report to Mabel and Dr. Payne. At that point, we will be putting information out on a web site for comment. So, everyone has an opportunity to read and respond to it. We will give everyone a couple of chances for comments as we refine it. Dr. Payne expressed how important commitment to getting answers is needed.

Stacy Buckingham stated that they may have to utilize the Summer, because the time frame is getting short. Obviously, the entire faculty is not here in the Summer. It is not the best time to meet. But, to keep things moving that is something that Becky Borgsmiller and she will have to consider.

Dr. Payne informed the committee that they will have a place on the web site where we can post your information, and where we can put the documentation and reports. Then, they will be able to modify that. She is anticipating that what may or may not happen is one Criterion group will make a statement that something does exist, and another group will say it does not exist. Then, what do you do? You examine and revise. Once we get those preliminary reports, the Criterion co-chairs will need to reconvene and examine what we have. What she (Dr. Payne) is asking for is just a preliminary progress report, before we leave in the Spring. Any information and questions please get that to Stacy as soon as possible, so she and Becky can try to put something together for us.

Mabel Hayes stated that she thinks that Dr. Payne had already touched on it, but there were two things that she would possibly mention. If evidence is good, you want to flaunt it, but you also have to prove it. If it's bad, you have to acknowledge it, and you have to address how you are going to fix it. As an example, Mabel said that a group of NCA evaluators on an accreditation

site visit got to talking about how bad the toilets were, but they found nowhere in the College's self-study where the subject came up. No matter how good, bad or ugly the evidence is, put it in the self-study. The College realized how bad the plumbing was, and it was going to cost an exorbitant amount of money to fix it. The College did not know how they were going to get the money, or how they were going to address this issue. They did not put it in the self-study. It would have been far better for them to have put it in the self-study, talked about how they were going to address it, rather than have people show up, and discover it was not in the report.

Dr. Payne said we should be looking at the following: What can we do today to be better than we were yesterday? What we should be doing for tomorrow? Dr. Payne said that almost all of the Criteria ask for these things. Do statements exist on diversity, students learning and assessment? Can you find them in print somewhere? Do you have action on the part of the Board or senior administration that promotes these statements? Do you have written policies in place that would allow these statements to become reality? Are these policies integrated into your assessments, and do you use the information? As an example of using data for decision-making, Stacy Holloway gave a short report at the Board meeting the other night about the default rate. This was a great example to use. In her office, they implemented an actual plan, because the default rate was higher than they wanted. They educated students that they would have to pay the money back. The default rate went down. She was able to report that to the Board.

Kim Dixon said that one of the main things is that if you are willing to state a point, the evidence has to be there. You cannot just say something. You have to be able to back it up. If you know there is a weakness, do not cover it up. You have to come clean. Kim stated that we are kidding ourselves if we think that we are doing everything perfect as an institution. The whole purpose, if we are doing something well absolutely project that out there, but if we have areas for improvement this is our opportunity to improve. Where we have gaps, we can develop action plans. If we have not already developed plans, this is our opportunity to do so. We need to show in our self-study what we are doing to make needed improvements. When we look at some of the other self-studies of other institutions on line, it is somewhat overwhelming and staggering when you look at what they have out there. As said before, they have budgets a hundred times what we have and human resources that we will never be able to have. We have a tremendous resource in being able to view these self-studies to get an idea of how to get there. We are not trying to freak anybody out by saying this is what we are going to put into place. These are just tools to help everyone to have something concrete to look at. To be able to say, oh that is what they are talking about with this Criterion. It will give people ideas about what we have to do. Kim said not to be overwhelmed when you look at those, as she certainly was initially.

Dr. Payne said they are having a "Making a Difference in Student Learning Assessment" it is an assessment workshop to be held June 28th through the 30th in Lyle, IL. She has funds available if anyone in the Criterion groups would like to attend. It is put on by the Higher Learning Commission. She has been going to their consultant evaluator web site where you can see what they are looking for. Everyone can go into that web site and see what is there. Everything is transparent. Are our policies transparent? Could they walk up to anybody on campus and ask them: What do you do to help student learning?

Sue Trammell asked if those studies on line are not all the best, then how do we know what is wrong with them? She wanted to know if they are just there for us to look at. She asked if they included any evaluator comments about the particular studies. Were all of these Colleges accredited?

Dr. Payne stated that we do have to meet certain requirements and do some things. Most of the institutions have these same requirements. It is up to each CEO whether they will publish the feedback information and the final report.

Kim Dixon said that the major weakness of most of the self-studies is the lack of evidence. Also, being too general and repetitive were problem areas, because the Criteria do cross so much. Cross referencing is much better than repeating. After the writing is edited, there should be only one voice.

Mabel Hayes stated that more is not necessarily better. There was a time when self-studies might be 400 or 500 pages. The ones under the new Criteria are basically less than 200 pages.

Dr. Payne said that you will not have to worry about the problem of repetition, she and Mabel will address that.

Monique Galvin asked: Will there be surveys for the students?

Dr. Payne answered yes. There will also be other employee surveys. Student surveys will be in the Fall. Eric and Mike are working on surveys or focus groups for some of our constituents this summer.

Monique Galvin asked about surveys on line, and will surveys be available to the general public?

Dr. Payne answered that we need to identify these people, such as past alumni. We may have already captured that. Mike Bitting has said that we do not need to talk to everybody. You can take a sampling. We do plan to offer some surveys electronically.

Stacy Buckingham said that you can take that theme: "John A. Logan College . . . Learning for life" and review it. We are asking the College for feedback. We have the big billboard on Route 13 that says: "John A. Logan Your College for Life". The theme is based on that, but the emphasis is on the learning.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50.