15 November 2012

Academic Policy Committee Report to Congress

Submitted by Mitchell Anderson, Chair, APC

A. Recommendations for implementing the new Academic Program Review Document

The program review document has gone through a revision, keeping the new format while incorporating the best from the previous document, much of it included in appendices designed to assist programs in filling in their self study. The committee is recommending a three-prong approach to the implementation process.

1. Educate the faculty – vet the new document across all faculty lines, including CAS, CoBE, CAFRRN, CHL, PHARM, CCECS, Library, Kilohana, and Student Services. (Hopefully we did not miss any.) The committee intends to work with the Deans, Division Chairs, and Directors to meet with faculty to provide broad dissemination and allow for discussion and input. They will begin immediately scheduling meetings with the faculty, through the respective Deans.

One of the challenges for implementing the new format is the expected reluctance of faculty to embrace the new emphasis within Program Review on assessment, as well as the annual progress reports on the MOU throughout the 7-year cycle. The committee has identified two key factors that may assist this process. First, the only difference in the amount and content of material that is to be included in the new document is the section on Student Success. The new document obviously emphasizes the role of assessment, consistent with the new WASC requirements. Other than that, the new document is simply arranged slightly differently, which should cause no objection from faculty. Second, the 7-year cycle now allows programs to submit an annual 1 – 2 page report highlighting changes or trends not mentioned in the MOU, and progress or lack thereof made by the program and the administration in adhering to the MOU. Of course, this annual report is optional and programs that do not wish to take the opportunity can decline to do so. Programs will also have the opportunity to attach to the report their annual assessment reports on any efforts engaged in throughout the year. The committee noted that these two issues are connected. Programs that engage in assessment on a
regular basis will use these annual reports to gather their assessment information, which can then be simply compiled into the Student Success section of their Program Review document at the end of their cycle.

2. Create an Academic Program Review Advisory Committee (APRAC) of Congress.

The committee recommends that Congress create a new Committee, the Academic Program Review Advisory Committee under the following preliminary conditions.

a. Membership

i. APRAC Executive Committee (or Peer Group) of 3 – 4 faculty members, with one member from Congress designated as Chair and the remaining members appointed by Congress’ executive committee. Members will serve rotating 2 – year terms.

ii. Remaining APRAC members will consist of faculty who have recently gone through the PR process and faculty from programs scheduled for PR in the next 2 – 3 years who have been designated by their departments or programs to gather the requisite experience.

b. Charge

The Executive Committee charge within the committee as a whole charge is to:

i. Provide leadership and stability for APRAC

ii. Remain abreast of PR related WASC requirements

iii. Identify prospective APRAC members

iv. Work closely with the Assessment Peer Group on Assessment-related PR issues (Assessment and PR are tightly coupled.)

v. Provide expertise and training in the PR process, both for programs and for administration (e.g. work with administration to ensure that programs are prepared to satisfy all PR requirements, particularly those pertaining to assessment)

vi. Report to Congress

vii. Work with the Administration on PR budget-related issues

The full Committee charge is to:

i. Provide assistance and training to programs going through the PR process or scheduled to do so in the near future

ii. Review PR reports prior to submittal and provide recommendations to programs on improving their report and/or advice on the development of their MOU
iii. Review annual progress reports from programs as stipulated in the PR guidelines and provide recommendations to departments for making progress on their MOU  
iv. Provide recommendations to Congress for improving the PR process

3. Educate the administration – One of the primary goals of the Assessment, Program Review, and Accreditation Committees, is to institutionalize assessment across campus, which is consistent with WASC’s desire to create a “culture of assessment”. The APC feels that the faculty and administration need to work hand in hand to encourage such a transformation. This can be accomplished in part through the use of the annual reports, which encourage programs to include their annual assessment reports while further allowing programs to keep their MOUs current and relevant so they can be used for long term strategic planning and resource allocation. One of the charges of the APRAC Executive Committee is to serve as reviewer and liaison between programs and the administration with respect to the annual progress reports.

B. UHH Credit Hour Policy

The APC will be meeting in December to discuss its recommendations to Congress regarding the WASC mandated Credit Hour Policy. Initial discussion indicates that developing the policy should be straightforward. It is anticipated that the majority of the discussion will center on the WASC requirement for review, ensuring that courses are in compliance with the policy, including those that are delivered in a non-traditional manner such as online, hybrid, reverse lecture, etc. Such review generally occurs at the CRC and during program review. Hopefully the APC will be able to forward its recommendation to Congress by the end of the Fall semester.