ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
APPROVED MINUTES
February 8, 2006

Members Present
Mary K. Bolin  Jeffrey K. Keown  Nathan M. Walters
Barbara Couture  Richard M. Kettler  Megan E. Weil
M. Susan Hallbeck  John Owens
F. Edwin Harvey  Steven S. Waller

Members Absent
Nancy Mitchell  Giacomo M. Oliva  Ellen M. Weissinger
William J. Nunez  Prem Paul

Others Present
Doni M. Boyd, Programmer/Analyst, Institutional Research and Planning
Evelyn M. Jacobson, Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs; Professor, Modern Languages and Literatures
Walter H. Schacht, Professor, Agronomy and Horticulture
David J. Sellmyer, George Holmes Professor of Physics; Director, NRI Center for Materials Research and Analysis
David C. Gosselin, Associate Director and Professor, School of Natural Resources
Steven Comfort, Professor, School of Natural Resources

Harvey chaired the meeting in Mitchell’s absence. He called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. As approval of the minutes awaited a quorum, Harvey called for the second item on the agenda.

Institutional Research and Planning’s Information Resources
Doni Boyd demonstrated the links through UNL’s home page to the Institutional Research and Planning website. She showed how to access the “Fact Book,” “Trends” and “Profiles” on line and gave a brief overview of the information each document contained. Copies of the booklet “Just the Facts” were distributed. Harvey thanked Boyd for her presentation. [Kettler arrived. Boyd left.]

Minutes
Harvey asked if there were corrections to the Minutes for December 14. None were suggested. Approval of the Minutes was moved by Bolin and seconded by Keown. Minutes were approved without dissent.

Academic Program Review Guidelines
Keown referred the Committee to the copies of the Academic Program Review (APR) Guidelines and comments from the APR Subcommittee. He said the latest version of the APR Guidelines incorporated some of the changes that were suggested in the subcommittee comments. The subcommittee also recommended combining reviews of the four IANR Research and Extension (R&E) Centers.
Owens said the recommendation about the R&E reviews was being considered by the faculties of the Centers. While it was not ruled out, the feeling was that each R&E Center had its own constituency that would feel slighted if reviews took place somewhere else. Reviewing the R&E Centers at each site at the same time would cause transportation difficulties and problems in scheduling across two time zones. [Couture and Jacobson arrived.] Owens commended the subcommittee for its concern about duplication but doubted duplication was an issue in the Centers. Though all the R&E Centers provide similar services, they serve different parts of the state. Couture wondered whether CREES reviews of IANR needed specific mention in the Guidelines. Owens said the R&E Center reviews are issue-based, not academic. He said the faculty in the Centers should be given a chance to discuss the review process.

Keown said the subcommittee wanted an explanation in the Guidelines about the Delaware Study. Jacobson said it is a comparison of different universities. Nunez could explain it further if necessary.

Couture introduced Jacobson as the chair of the committee formed to revise the APR Guidelines. The committee’s goals were updating the Guidelines, relating them to other reviews (i.e., accreditations) to avoid duplication, and refocusing the reviews to improve the subject department. Input on the Guidelines was provided by the APR Subcommittee of APC, the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors, the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate, and the Deans.

Couture directed the Committee’s attention to the “Academic Program Review Guidelines” (January 17, 2006 w/markup, attached to the permanent record). In Section III A, the second paragraph, Couture said she added (as marked) to the sentence that reads, “The team is, therefore, encouraged 1) to focus their recommendation on what can and should be done within existing resources, and 2) make one or two suggestions for investment of new resources that would have the greatest impact on program quality.”

Couture said the comment about the use of existing resources is consistent with a new policy from the agency that reviews university accrediting agencies. Directives from accrediting agencies following program reviews are to be limited to what is necessary for accreditation, not program improvements that are peripheral to the academic mission of a program. The policy change was supported by the American Association of Universities and the Chancellors of the participating universities at a national meeting that she attended.

Jacobson said APC approval of the APR Guidelines is the last step for campus approval. They have been approved by the Vice Chancellor for IANR and the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. University of Nebraska Central Administration and the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education keep the campus guidelines for reference but do not review their content.

Kettler suggested that the paragraph about resources be shortened. Couture said it could be shortened as long as it mentioned new investment of resources. She agreed to omit the last sentence of the paragraph, beginning “Since there will always be competition for scarce resources….”

Jacobson said the instruction that APRs include an Appendix 5, giving a description of the governance structure and annual timeline for hiring, evaluation and promotion of faculty, was added at the request of the Academic Senate. Kettler and Keown said the confidentiality of tenure reviews
needed to be maintained. Couture said the information requested in Appendix 5 could include a description of these processes in a college or program without revealing personnel information.

Keown said general education objectives should be added to the APR Guidelines. Couture said not all colleges have approved the current general education objectives, so they are not official. A general statement that an APR should include an “evaluation of a department’s contribution to undergraduate education objectives” could be made without itemizing the objectives. [Sellmyer arrived.]

Keown said involvement of an APC representative in writing the report should be left to the discretion of the review team. The previous APR Guidelines specified that the APC representative “will participate fully in writing the report.” (See Section IV, Subsection H.5.) Jacobson said the Guidelines committee omitted the comment because it doesn’t reflect actual practice. Keown, Bolin and Harvey disagreed. They said they had participated in all the activities of the review teams they served on. Harvey said people on the team from outside the university should know that the APC representative is a full member of the team. Jacobson said the level of participation varies from one review to the next. A humanities professor assigned to an engineering review team, for example, might not feel competent to participate in the writing. Owens suggested restoring the phrase and changing “will” to “may.”

Jacobson said the second bulleted paragraph at the top of page 13 (Section V.B., seventh bullet) would be the place to insert a description of the unit’s contribution to undergraduate priorities. The rewritten paragraph would start with, “describe how the program contributes to…” and continue with “provide a plan detailing how it will or would like to address the challenges…”

Waller asked if APC would have another opportunity to discuss the Guidelines. Couture said she was expecting it to be approved soon so that it could be implemented for reviews that will occur in the fall semester. Waller said the guidelines should include mention of collaborative work. He said that IANR involves staff and students in developing a department’s self-study prior to the APR. He thought the procedure should be adopted for the rest of the university. He said also that self-studies should be reviewed prior to their submission to review teams. Jacobson pointed out footnote 2 on page 7 that states, “All affiliated, collaborating, or proposed collaborating programs will be provided a copy of the self-study.” On page 14, Section VII, Guidelines for Site Visit, Item 2 says, “will schedule appropriate meetings for the Review Team with…programmatically affiliated faculty…. Jacobson said the Dean gets a copy of the self-study and can determine whether anyone else should be involved in the APR.

Waller said there should be more direction in the Guidelines about pre-visit and post-visit activities. Couture said the Chancellor sent the Deans a memo detailing their responsibility for faculty engagement in the APR process. Hallbeck pointed out Section IV.E which states, “…the dean(s) should meet with faculty in the program to discuss the review process, Review Team recommendations, and strategies for implementing the recommendations…..” Couture said Section IV.G specifies the roles of the Vice Chancellors before and after Review Team visits and includes who they are to meet with before and after the review. The Vice Chancellor, the deans and the review team meet and their recommendations are discussed with the Chancellor. What isn’t stated, Couture said, are the pre-directions asking the department and dean to respond before the response goes to the Vice Chancellor. Jacobson said these matters are addressed in Section IV.E. It says the
Academic Planning Committee  
02-08-06 Minutes  
Page 4 of 7  

Dean should meet with program faculty before the self-study is written and should review and evaluate the program’s self-study before it is finalized. Couture said the second paragraph of IV.C. contains details about preparation of the department’s response to the Review Team report.

Jacobson said the time requirements for accomplishing the APR have been revised. The timeline needs to be corrected in the final version of the Guidelines. Hallbeck asked what would happen if the 30 days specified for the Review Team’s report and the department’s response runs into summer. Jacobson said the department and the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs negotiate an extension in those cases.

**Motion**
Keown moved to accept the new Guidelines. There was further discussion. Waller suggested a footnote in the Guidelines that says what the process is for amending the Guidelines. The previous Guidelines were written ten years ago, and there was no record of how it was done. Couture said that a final paragraph could be inserted telling how the Guidelines were established and how they are to be revised. Waller said they should be revised more often than every ten years.

Couture suggested saying, “The Academic Program Review Guidelines are approved by the Academic Planning Committee with guidance from the Vice Chancellor for IANR and the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. If circumstances seem to warrant a change in the Guidelines contact the Academic Affairs office.” Jacobson suggested a statement that the Guidelines were scheduled for review every ten years and that APC, the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Vice Chancellor for IANR could agree to revisions between cycles.

Couture said she would make the changes that APC recommended and would post the Guidelines for APC to review again. Harvey called for a vote on the motion. Hallbeck seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously. [Schacht arrived.]

**Academic Program Review Subcommittee**
Keown said the subcommittee looked at two APR reports, one for Philosophy and one for Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education. Keown requested that APC accept the Philosophy report although it did not follow the Guidelines’ deadline for submission. Craig Eckhardt submitted it more than a year after the review took place.

The TLTE report was submitted by Deborah Minter, a former APC member. Keown said she wrote her report before TLTE responded to the Review Team’s report. After Minter reviews the department’s response she will need to submit a revised report.

The next two agenda items were switched because of equipment difficulties.

**Rename the Bachelor of Science program in Rangeland Ecosystems**
Schacht said changing the name of the degree to “Bachelor of Science in Grassland Ecology and Management” was a final step in the evolution of the major. At first the Rangeland major was an option, then a stand-alone major. Within the academic community and the public, “rangeland” refers to production agriculture. There is a new Grazing Livestock Systems major that is focused on production, making the Rangeland Ecosystems major more natural-resources oriented. The “Grassland” title is a better fit for program. Schacht said there would be no change in courses required for the major.
Hallbeck asked if the new title would cause confusion with Turf Management. Schacht said “Grassland” is identified with ecology rather than livestock production, landscaping or sports turf.

Motion
Keown moved and Weil seconded to endorse the name change. The motion was approved unanimously.

Rename the Center for Materials Research and Analysis
Sellmyer had a slide presentation about the history and research work of the CMRA. The Center was established in 1988 with Nebraska Research Initiative funds. It has gone from 40 participating faculty to 70. There are presently six sub-centers under the CMRA umbrella. Research takes place in many different locations. Sellmyer said the Center’s goal is to combine the different facilities, funding and operations in one location. [Gosselin and Comfort arrived.]

Sellmyer explained the Center’s work in nanoscience and nanotechnology. He said the proposed name, “Nebraska Center for Materials and Nanoscience,” will indicate to funding agencies and people outside the University the special focus of the Center. He invited questions from the APC. There were no questions or comments.

Motion
Owens moved and Keown seconded to recommend approval of the name change. It was approved unanimously. [Sellmyer left.]

Rename the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Soil Science
Gosselin and Comfort presented a request to change the name of the “Bachelor of Science in Environmental Soil Science” to “Bachelor of Science in Environmental Restoration.” Hallbeck gave the APC members a memo [attached to the permanent record] from Bruce Dvorak, Associate Professor of Civil Engineering, opposing the proposed change.

Gosselin said environmental restoration deals with the interface between land, atmosphere and hydrosphere. He said that Comfort’s clean-up work at the former Hastings Ordnance Plant is typical of the many jobs available in the field. The Natural Resources Curriculum Committee endorsed the name change. They agreed with Comfort’s concern that it is difficult to recruit students into majors that have “soil” in the name. They said it was a logical evolution of the major, which changed from a B.S. in Agricultural Science (Soil Science) to a B.A. in Natural Resources (Environmental Soil Science) some five years ago. Soil scientists at UNL are becoming involved in interdisciplinary efforts in environmental science and management that are not directly tied to agriculture. Gosselin said environmental restoration is a label that implies work with the whole earth, not just soil. It has the advantage of being a term that students recognize. Gosselin said an internet search for “environmental restoration” education found programs with similar names at the graduate level (the University of Washington-Tacoma) and at some two-year colleges in Canada. He said there is a need for a four-year degree to meet the needs of employers.

Couture said the deans should be notified of proposed name changes before they go to the Vice Chancellors for approval. She noted that the Dean of Engineering and the Dean of Arts and Sciences endorsed the name change for the Center for Materials Research, but there was only one dean’s recommendation for the other two name changes. She said she saw no obvious barriers to
changing “Rangeland Ecosystems” to “Grassland Ecology and Management,” but the recommendation to change the name “Environmental Soil Science” to “Environmental Restoration” was more problematic. This proposed name could cause students and others to think this program covers the material expected in Environmental Studies or Environmental Engineering. She said the deans need to see the request before APC approves it. Gosselin said Bob Kuzelka was on the committee that approved the name change, and he is the Director of Environmental Studies.

Hallbeck said “environmental restoration” is a very broad term, connotating atomic waste cleanup, restoration of historic sites, and purification of atmosphere, soil and water. She asked if curriculum changes were being made along with the name. Comfort said high school students are interested in the environment. He said the kind of work he does would appeal to students, but they were put off by the label “soil.” He does different things than environmental engineers. Hallbeck said employers might not understand the scope of graduates’ education from the program’s name. Gosselin said the faculty discussed a wide range of names and this one was agreeable to most. The curriculum committee for the major might revisit learning objectives and consider course changes in the future.

Harvey said he objected to changing the name without changing the program’s requirements. He said courses in hydrology and other disciplines needed to be added. The package doesn’t match the name, he said. A note about curriculum changes should be put into the proposal. There are existing courses that could be added.

Owens moved to table the change due to the number of negative comments. Gosselin asked what had to be done before they could bring the proposal back to APC and who needed to review it. Couture said it should go to the deans to see if they have suggestions. She said it was important to distinguish this program from others, and the deans need to be included in the process. She said the new name and the curriculum changes need to be submitted at the same time. Owens said that IANR would send the revised proposal to the deans.

Kettler asked if APC was suggesting a new major, not just a name change. Gosselin said he wanted options within the major to address certain specialties. Kettler said if they have a long-range plan they could state that in their proposal. He asked why there was a problem with changing the name and the curriculum at the same time. Gosselin said recruiting is at stake. There is an urgent need for more students. Hallbeck asked whether the program or the name was the selling point. Harvey suggested modifying the name to “Environmental Soil Restoration.” Comfort said curriculum changes would be easier after the name is changed. Gosselin said faculty want to be involved in a “restoration” program. Harvey said degree requirements need to be changed before more faculty can participate. Keown said the proposed name was misleading. Harvey said most of the courses are in soils, so that remains the focus. Hallbeck asked if Gosselin was saying that the name has to change before the program can change. Kettler asked if recruiting high school students included saying, “Soil science isn’t really about dirt”? Comfort said soil programs don’t attract students, but once they get involved in the program they would find they are interested in the things that soil scientists do.

Weil told Gosselin and Comfort that the changes APC is asking for are not large ones. She said she could see the path they want to take, and they are not far from developing tracks. Gosselin said they are already looking at tracks. Getting the changes approved was more of a challenge than they expected, he said. Now they have to revamp the learning objectives and get letters from the deans. Harvey said he would help develop the groundwater track.
Motion
Harvey reminded the Committee that a motion was on the table. Keown seconded Owens’s motion to table the proposed name change. It was approved unanimously. [Gosselin and Comfort left.]

Issues from the Vice Chancellors
Couture said getting the APR Guidelines approved was her main issue. She said there is to be an academic visioning session with the deans about the University community’s definition of itself. The sessions are intended to help our university’s administrators speak with a common voice when articulating UNL’s distinctive qualities.

Keown commented on advertisements he had seen for the J.D. Edwards program. He asked why there were not ads for Arts and Sciences or for IANR. Couture said marketing comes through University Communications and through Central Administration. She felt there were too few ads about faculty interacting with students. Hallbeck said she thought the cards showing students’ faces were good. She said ads might include interviews with those students.

Owens said J.B. Milliken would go before the Appropriations Committee the next day. The University needs a permanent adjustment for utilities and assistance with the cost of the former Mead Ordnance Plant cleanup. LB 605 is a high priority. It will provide for the renovation of buildings that are in very poor condition.

Keown asked if Brace and Behlen Labs were going to be torn down. Weil said LB 605 funded renovation of Brace Lab but the Campus Master Plan calls for it to be demolished. Couture said she wasn’t sure whether it would be cost-effective to restore the building. Owens said the Regents have guidelines about the breaking point between renovation and demolition.

Other Business
Hallbeck said the plans for the Virology Center were to be updated in March. It is a Level 3 Biohazard facility. Windows should be eliminated from the final plan.

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lona Kramer
APC Coordinator