Academic Standards Committee
February 22, 2006 Meeting Minutes

The meeting began at 4:00 PM. Present were Tim Zauche, Steve Kleisath, David Kraemer, Shane Drefcinski, Deb Gillespie, Kevin Haertzen, David Krugler, Frank Steck, Dave Van Buren and Scott White.

Steve Kleisath moved, with Scott White as second, to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2006 and the February 8, 2006 meetings. The motion carried.

Tim Zuache asked for our reflections on the TSI discussion during our February 8 meeting. The consensus was that we need consistent information regarding the TSI changes to properly advise students. We are not getting the consistent information as changes in TSI program occur.

Shane Drefcinski distributed a document discussing his vision of the Academic Standards Committee role in assessing general education. Shane noted that Provost Butts is concerned that UW-P may not be adequately assessing general education. Shane’s proposal would ask our committee to assess each area of general education in a six year cycle. The Assessment Oversight Committee would also participate in the review so that each area of general education would be reviewed by one of the committees every three years.

Faculty will need to develop appropriate tools for assessing their courses and areas. English composition, mathematics, ethnic studies and history have some assessment tools developed or in the process of being developed at this time.

Steve Kleisath voiced his concern that we need to be able to enforce the assessment process when an area is found to be performing poorly. Several committee members echoed this concern. Shane shared his belief that the more faculty members who are involved with assessment, the more likely the inadequacies within an area will be corrected. However, the consensus was that the old approach of evaluating the inputs into general education was not effective in getting departments to change their courses.

David Van Buren stated that departments may wish to hold an annual meeting concerning their general education offerings. The department faculty could discuss methods to improve the outcomes of their offerings.

The committee had a wide-ranging discussion regarding assessment as a valid concept and valid assessment approaches. The discussion ultimately moved towards the issue of enforcement of our committee’s findings. The committee may need to advocate several approaches. These could include denying general education credit for courses that do not meet the general education goals. Another option may to provide incentives, such as grants, to encourage curricular revisions to better meet general education goals.
Frank Steck suggested the committee help assess general education by asking programs and departments to state their general education goals. The committee would then ask, “Are you meeting your goals?”

Tim Zauche asked each member of the committee to send him an email message containing two questions that we would like to ask in the general education survey.

The meeting adjourned at 5:03 PM.

Submitted by:

Scott A. White, secretary