INSTITUTIONAL REACREDITATION VISIT SCHEDULED

Joan Hawthorne, Director of Assessment and Regional Accreditation

More than 100 faculty, staff, administrators, and students have spent much of the last year collecting information for an institutional self-study in preparation for UND's visit from a Higher Learning Commission (HLC) reaccreditation team. Team members will arrive at UND on October 28, 2013, and leave on the 30th. Prior to their visit, the team of perhaps a dozen individuals will pour through the self-study itself and all the supporting documents, as well as reviewing everything they can find via the website and other sources. Once here, they will supplement that investigation with interviews. They’ll meet for pre-arranged conversations with, for example, key administrators, various Senate committees, department chairs, and the Student Senate. And they’ll offer open “listening sessions” to hear from anyone – student, staff, faculty, administrator, or community member – with additional information relevant to HLC accreditation criteria.

The HLC, like each of the six regional accreditors within the U.S., functions as a voluntary association of colleges and universities, and our review team will be made up of faculty and administrators from other HLC-accredited colleges and universities. Ken Ruit (Anatomy & Cell Biology) and Margy Healy (Educational Leadership) are UND faculty who use their own academic and institutional experiences, combined with HLC training, to review for the HLC; our team will be made up of people who bring similar levels of expertise.

Individuals assigned to UND’s team visit will focus on the five criteria for accreditation established by the HLC, each of which is defined in greater detail through core components and sub-components (see further information at http://und.edu/provost/higher-learning-commission/criteria.cfm). The five criteria are (1) Mission; (2) Ethical and Responsible Conduct; (3) Teaching & Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support; (4) Teaching & Learning: Evaluation and Improvement; and (5) Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness. Team members will also be responsible for ensuring that UND remains in compliance with federal policies in areas like student loan default rates, truth in advertising, and verification of student identity.

The UND Self-Study: Teaching & Learning as an Example

Each criterion area involves examining many different dimensions of the university. Criterion Three, studied by a team under the leadership of Lori Robison (English) and Jim Mochoruk (History), provides a case in point. Criterion Three focuses on teaching and learning broadly, but it includes five specific core components and 21 sub-components, each of which had to be thoroughly examined by members of the team.

Committee members collected information about a wide range of teaching and learning activities, outcomes, procedures, and policies. Specific topics included, for example, the learning goals of programs institution-wide, faculty evaluation processes, the Essential Studies program, pedagogical support provided to teachers, and the new first-year seminars. Efforts to broaden participation in activities like undergraduate research, experiential and service learning, and study abroad were examined. Group members studied campus efforts to enhance student success, increase diversity, and
encourage mutual understanding and fellowship. They discovered that UND is attempting to “meet the demands of higher education in the 21st century” but efforts are sometimes limited by resource constraints. They noted that “mission spread” necessitated by larger enrollments, distance education, and other new demands on the system has created challenges in managing the “smart and strategic growth” that is needed.

All of the information collected was examined with an eye to deepening the understanding of criterion group members themselves, so they could collectively determine the meaning of the evidence in terms of teaching and learning at UND. Rather than writing a chapter that describes the university’s programs and processes, they’ve analyzed findings regarding each program, each topic, each aspect of their criterion, and identified the larger meanings that can be constructed from the information and supported by the evidence.

Each criterion team used a parallel process for its own distinct focus. In the Criterion Four group, for comparison, committee members have sought to determine how well the university ensures the quality of educational programs through thoughtful and thorough assessment of student learning in both curricular and co-curricular programs. They’ve studied the degree to which information collected is used to make decisions that will create improvements in courses and curricula. They’ve looked at UND’s processes for program review, transcripting of credit, establishing appropriate course pre-requisites, and enhancing student retention. As with Criterion Three, team members have analyzed findings to determine the overall meaning, so they can draw (and support) conclusions about UND’s effectiveness in evaluating and improving teaching and learning.

**Accreditation: Some Background**

Self-study sounds like a lot of work—and it indeed is. So why would UND, or any institution, go through this process?

Accreditation is critical to a university like UND for at least three reasons. First, it’s a stamp of approval for UND as an institution that is in compliance with essential standards for quality higher education. Few students would willingly attend an unaccredited institution, and few faculty or administrators would want to be affiliated with such an institution.

Second, accreditation is a pre-condition for many kinds of funding which flow to the university. Students attending unaccredited institutions are not eligible for federal student aid. Federal agencies will not fund research projects at unaccredited institutions.

Third, departments at unaccredited institutions are not eligible for program-specific accreditation in fields like medicine, engineering, education, nursing, aviation, or other professional fields. Essentially, it becomes impossible to run an institution such as UND without institutional accreditation.

Compelling though those reasons are, there is a final reason to value institutional accreditation, and that is the opportunity it provides for an institution to engage in systematic self-examination. Inevitably, we take our own systems and successes for granted: we expect our administration to be structured as it is, our budgets to be allocated as they are, our departments to be organized as they’ve always been, our instruction to occur as we’ve done it before. Self-study invites us to take a hard look at our practices in order to determine where we measure up to standards set by the HLC, but also to standards we set for ourselves.

So although the HLC serves as our accreditor, the accreditation process also asks us to be responsible to ourselves and to live up to our own mission and values, and team visitors use that lens to evaluate our work.

**Looking Ahead**

The self-study process has already proven valuable as the various criterion groups have identified areas where action is needed. Members of the president’s Executive Council have read preliminary criterion group reports, and those individuals are planning actions in response to a number of the self-study findings. The full self-study, once completed, should pave the way for considerably more discussion, as will the eventual report to UND from the HLC team visitors.

Members of the UND community will have an opportunity to read, hear about, and provide response to conclusions reached by criterion groups during 2012-13. Your input will inform the final draft, but, more importantly, it will help inform the institution’s own actions. Watch the University Letter for opportunities to participate in the process and to learn more about the findings.

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**Writing Center offers class visits**

A visit from a Writing Center consultant is a great way to encourage your students to use the Writing Center. A consultant will come to your class to talk about Writing Center services, answer students’ questions, and distribute brochures. This visit takes 10-15 minutes.

To schedule a visit, contact Kathleen Vacek at kathleen.vacek@und.edu or 777-6381.
The Alice Clark Mentoring Program is celebrating 20 years as an orientation and collegial support program for faculty new to UND. The program has assisted more than 500 faculty alums in developing professional and personal networks, increasing their awareness of campus culture and resource, and supporting their professional development as teachers and scholars. This reception is open to all participants and supporters of the program, including alums, past and present mentors, faculty, staff, and administrators.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4 from 4:00–5:30 PM
THE NORTH DAKOTA MUSEUM OF ART
RSVP required via the OID webpage at www.oid.und.edu

THE FACULTY INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (FIDC)

The Faculty Instructional Development Committee (FIDC), elected by the University Senate, provides support for course and curriculum development that goes beyond the means of the individual faculty and academic units. The committee is responsible for all decisions having to do with FIDC Travel Grants, Materials/Software/Minor Equipment Grants, Developmental Leave Supplements, Summer Instructional Development Projects, and Summer Mini-Project Grants. The committee also advises the OID Director.

The members of the 2012-13 committee are: Lynda Kenney (Technology), Margaret Moore Jackson (Law), Kari Chiasson (Teaching and Learning), Brett Goodwin (Biology), Elizabeth Tyree (Nursing), Lana Rakow (Communication Sciences and Disorders), and Joan Hawthorne (Assessment and Regional Accreditation). If you have questions about FIDC funding, contact any of the members for more information.

FIDC proposals are due to OID by noon on the 1st business day of the month (the next deadline is Monday, Oct. 1). You’ll find complete information on the OID website (www.und.oid.edu).

OUTSTANDING FACULTY AWARD NOMINATIONS DUE OCTOBER 12

Each year at the Founders Day Banquet, individual faculty and departments are honored for their outstanding teaching, advising, research and service. The Outstanding Advisor Award is coordinated by the Academic Advising Committee and research awards are coordinated by RD&C.

The remaining seven awards come under the auspices of the Outstanding Faculty Awards Committee (OFAC), appointed by the Provost and coordinated by OID. Individual awards are given for undergraduate teaching, graduate or professional teaching, and service. Departmental awards honor teaching and faculty development or service. The prestigious Outstanding Faculty Scholar award honors a faculty member who has a demonstrated record of excellence in teaching, research/creative activity, and service to the university, profession, and/or community.

Please consider nominating a colleague or department for an award. As faculty we often witness their best work. We benefit from having their students in our classes and from candid talks in the hall. We have knowledge that is often less evident to others: they teach multiple independent studies without compensation and work intensely one-on-one with various students. We observe their work on graduate committees and on assessment reports. We perhaps have the best vantage point from which to fully understand and evaluate the full nature of their contribution. Nomination forms are on the OID webpage under the “Awards” link.
Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can’t Stop Talking (2012) by Susan Cain

Universities are embracing more student centered learning that often emphasizes student participation, like group discussions, brainstorming, debates and oral presentations. But is this the optimal learning environment for all students? Could we be ignoring the strengths of students who value listening and independent work? Susan Cain’s book Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking, examines the social constructs of “extrovertism,” presents studies on introverts and extroverts, and discusses the needs and values of each group in the context of the classroom, the career, and the community.

In this seminar we will evaluate Cain’s findings and arguments and will discuss how these findings might make us re-think our classroom pedagogies and practices. We will discuss why society seems to place so much emphasis on developing skills like speaking while de-emphasizing skills like listening, and how this may shape what we value in an educational setting.

If you are interested in taking a closer look at how being introverted or extroverted affects your educational choices and classroom practices as either a teacher or a learner, join the Integrated Studies Faculty who will be facilitating a series of discussions on this book by contacting Tami Carmichael, Humanities & Integrated Studies, at tami.carmichael@und.edu

The Handbook of Scholarly Writing and Publishing (2011) by Tonette S. Rocco and Tim Hatcher

This faculty study seminar offers an opportunity to discuss the ins and outs of scholarly publishing. It will be suitable for both early-career faculty and more experienced faculty who mentor colleagues and graduate students.

We will get the conversation started by discussing readings from The Handbook of Scholarly Writing and Publishing, a recent book described as "a groundbreaking resource that offers emerging and experienced scholars from all disciplines a comprehensive review of the essential elements needed to craft scholarly papers and other writing suitable for submission to academic journals. The authors discuss the components of different types of manuscripts, explain the submission process, and offer readers suggestions for working with editors and coauthors, dealing with rejection, and rewriting and resubmitting their work. They include advice for developing quality writing skills, outline the fundamentals of a good review, and offer guidance for becoming an excellent manuscript reviewer." We will also be sure to learn from the collective experience of the group.

If you are interested in participating in this FSS please contact Kathleen Vacek, University Writing Program coordinator, at kathleen.vacek@und.edu or 777-6381.
The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Reconsidered: Institutional Integration and Impact (2011) by Pat Hutchings, Mary Taylor Huber, and Anthony Ciccone

Examines four "critical areas where engagement with the scholarship of teaching and learning can have a significant effect." This book builds on premises articulated in Ernest Boyer's ground-breaking 1997 book, Scholarship Reconsidered, which offered "a new paradigm that recognize[d] the full range of scholarly activity by college and university faculty and question[ed] the existence of a reward system that pushed faculty toward research and publication and away from teaching." The conversation precipitated by the 1997 book focused on how and why institutions could value the scholarship of teaching and learning in tenure and promotion processes.

Inspired by Boyer's ideas, faculty began recognizing the ways in which they could bring their research skills to bear on the work in their own classrooms, making a difference in the learning of their students and discovering knowledge worth sharing through traditional scholarly venues. Now we have a new book by three highly regarded scholars, recognized for their SoTL experience as much as for their expertise in higher education, which picks up that conversation. In this book, we'll learn how these authors see the future of SoTL, which they predict will rapidly come to have an impact on areas of higher education often viewed as distinct from SoTL such as the evaluation of teaching and assessment of learning, as well as continuing to influence classroom teaching.

What do you need to know about SoTL? How can we ensure that UND, building on a rich history of scholarly teaching developed through our Bush Scholars program of a decade ago, will once again be at the forefront of a field that many view as critical to the future of higher education?

If you are interested in participating in this FSS please contact Joan Hawthorne, Director of Assessment and Regional Accreditation, at joan.hawthorne@und.edu or 777-4684.

JOIN A FACULTY WRITING GROUP

Join faculty from across the disciplines who meet for an hour once a week to respond to each other's academic and professional writing. To learn more contact Kathleen Vacek at 777-6381 or kathleen.vacek@und.edu

Get Midterm Student Feedback on Your Teaching

The SGID (Small Group Instructional Diagnosis) process, facilitated by a trained faculty colleague, is a method of soliciting student perceptions about the progress of their learning. Learn more about SGIDs at oid.und.edu

To request an SGID, contact Jana Lagro at jana.lagro@email.und.edu

Check out Teaching Thursdays

Snap this QR code with your smart phone to visit Teaching Thursdays, a blog that fosters campus wide discussion about teaching. We accept contributions about teaching of all kinds, at all levels, and from all parts of the University community.

Or visit teachingthursday.org
FIDC DEADLINES FOR 2012-2013

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Upcoming On Teaching Lunch Seminars

Creating Sound Multiple Choice Tests
Wednesday, September 26, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. (register by Monday, September 24 at noon)

Assessment vs. Grading
Tuesday, October 16, 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. (register by Friday, October 12 at noon)

Faculty Writing Groups
Wednesday, November 14, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. (register by Monday, November 12 at noon)

Academic Integrity and Take-Home Exams: An Open Conversation
Tuesday, December 4, 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. (register by Friday, November 30 at noon)

All sessions take place in the Badlands Room of the Union unless otherwise noted. Visit the Office of Instructional Development online (www.oid.und.edu) to register. For information contact Jana Lagro at jana.lagro@email.und.edu.

On Teaching is published six times a year as a service to UND faculty.
OID Director: Anne Kelsch. WAC Coordinator and newsletter editor: Kathleen Vacek. OID/WAC Staff: Jeanne Boppre & Jana Lagro.