

Meeting Notes

Accreditation Advisory Committee Meeting

September 6, 2012 President's Conference Room, Suite 1900 IIT Tower

Participants: George Schipporeit (Architecture), David Ulaszek (Finance), Jamshid Mohammadi (Graduate College), Ralph Brill (Law), Phil Troyk (Engineering), Anthony D'Amato (General Counsel), Kristin Standaert (Library), David Baker (External Affairs), Carol Emmons (Institutional Research), Alan Mead (Psychology), Siva Balasubramanian (Chair, Business).

Welcome and Introduction of New Members

Siva Balasubramanian welcomed everyone and introduced the four new members:

- Ralph Brill (Law, replacing Margaret Stewart)
- Alan Mead (Psychology, replacing Scott Morris)
- Jamshid Mohammadi (Graduate College, replacing Sudhakar Nair)
- Phil Troyk (Engineering, replacing John Kallend)

Siva noted that a number of committee members were unable to attend today's meeting because of the Dean's Retreat. For the benefit of the new members, Siva summarized the committee's goals and its progress over the last year. The NCA accreditation process primarily involves:

- Selecting and implementing one or more quality improvement initiatives
- establishing a university-wide culture of assessment, developing assurance arguments
- gathering digitized evidence to substantiate each argument or claim
- focusing on the recently promulgated NCA/Higher Learning Commission (HLC) academic and administrative criteria for accreditation

The NCA accreditation team visit will occur in 2016. To coordinate and accomplish the above tasks, our committee formed several sub-committees (more description of specific subcommittees appears later in this document).

Activities over the past year

Last year, we solicited inputs from the IIT community on quality improvement initiatives (QII) that the university could embrace as part of the process to reaffirm the University's accreditation. A large number of ideas were collected online from students, faculty and staff. Subsequently, a QII subcommittee condensed these ideas into a few common themes. Our full committee then established a process to facilitate the final identification of one or more themes as the quality improvement initiative(s). These themes will be selected by the end of 2012, and we expect the implementation process to begin thereafter.

With regard to assessment, the full Committee reviewed related documents archived from the previous re-accreditation cycle. We also reviewed assessment documents currently in use at a few academic units within IIT, as well as representative documents from other institutions that were obtained at the annual HLC conference. It was noted that the culture of assessment at IIT was somewhat uneven, with some schools/colleges operating at an advanced level (because of the requirements imposed by their

respective accreditation bodies like AACSB and ABET) while others have yet to embrace this culture. Further, the emphasis on assessment is not uniform within a given academic unit. For example, Psychology focuses on assessment of graduate students while Engineering emphasizes assessment only at the undergraduate level. Going forward, the committee's key goal is to advance a "grass-roots" level dialogue within academic units to establish or improve assessment practices. Committee members who represent a school/college will monitor and coordinate progress on assessment practices within their respective unit. A university-wide meeting of departmental representatives from various academic units was held in April 2012. To accomplish assessment related progress, similar events are planned over the next year.

Gathering the digitized evidence is a task that requires involvement from both technology and assessment perspectives, as well as attention to the five final accreditation criteria that were promulgated by HLC earlier this year. While recognizing the critical importance of the final HLC criteria to our accreditation effort, the committee also needs to be sensitive to the nuances/differences in accreditation requirements for specific schools/colleges. Two of the HLC criteria highlight academic aspects (i.e., criteria #3 and #4 that focus on teaching and learning). The remaining three criteria emphasize administrative aspects (i.e., criteria #1, #2, and #5 that address Mission, Integrity/Ethical Conduct, and Resources/Planning/Institutional Effectiveness), and represent the focus of the Administrative Criteria subcommittee.

Transition to Pathways Model for Re-affirmation of Accreditation

Carol Emmons noted that on September 1, 2012 institutions accredited by NLA/HLC began the transition to the new Pathways model for reaffirmation of accreditation. Schools that are in good standing are being offered the opportunity to select the Pathway model they want to follow. Because IIT's accreditation review will occur in 2016, IIT can choose either the Open Pathway or the Standard Pathway model. Provost Alan Cramb requested the Committee to discuss this issue and make a recommendation regarding which model IIT should choose. For the current accreditation cycle, the main difference between the two models involves the Quality Improvement Initiative. Schools that choose the Open Pathway model need to conduct a Quality Improvement Initiative; schools that choose the Standard Pathway model do not.

David Baker noted that the Committee developed a process last year for selecting a Quality Improvement Initiative for IIT, and is already a fair way into the process. Therefore, it makes sense to choose the Open Pathway model. George Schipporeit added that the Quality Improvement Initiative is a "wonderful opportunity" for the university. After additional discussion of the model options for accreditation process (a handout summarizing these options appears at the end of this document), David Baker motioned to choose the Open Pathway model; Jamshid Mohammadi seconded the motion. All Committee members present voted in favor of Open Pathway model. Siva Balasubramanian will communicate the Committee's recommendation to Provost Alan Cramb.

Subcommittee Reports

Quality Improvement Initiative (QII) Subcommittee

Carol Emmons reported that the next step in the process to select a quality improvement initiative is to identify a faculty or staff sponsor for each of the themes identified through the "My Perfect IIT" website last Spring. (A description of the themes appears at the end of this document.) Siva Balasubramanian noted that Mike Gosz and Ophir Trigalo (who were not present because of the Dean's retreat) had done

some work to identify a faculty champion for the Technology theme over the summer. George Schipporeit mentioned that the Teaching/Learning theme and the Technology Use theme could be combined since significant improvements in teaching and learning at IIT most likely requires enhanced technology use. There was general agreement with George's suggestion.

David Baker noted that Russell Betts (who was not present because of the Dean's retreat), is launching an initiative in the new College of Science to improve teaching and learning. Siva Balasubramanian and Carol Emmons will follow up with Russell about this.

Technology Subcommittee

This subcommittee has investigated software to support student learning assessment. One suggestion is to consider Blackboard software because IIT already uses Blackboard to support teaching. Matt Bauer had planned to test the functionality related to learning assessment in the new version of Blackboard over the summer. We expect to have a detailed report in the near future.

Assessment Subcommittee

Carol Emmons mentioned that this subcommittee conducted a survey of academic department chairs to determine what assessment activities each department is currently engaged in, and to identify an assessment contact individual in each department. The subcommittee then convened a meeting last April with the assessment contact persons. About half of the academic units were represented at the meeting. There was general interest among those who attended in sharing "best practices" via a site in Google Apps. Participants also expressed interest in assessment workshops if they were offered at IIT.

Carol also called the Committee's attention to a handout announcing an HLC Assessment Workshop on student learning assessment to be held on October 17-19. Provost Cramb has agreed to fund 2-3 faculty members to attend this workshop, and wanted the Committee to help identify candidates. David Baker suggested that Carol send this information, via email, to all Committee members (including those absent from today's meeting), as well as the academic chairs and deans. The email should invite nominations and give a deadline for responding.

Administrative Criteria Subcommittee

David Baker reported that once the new criteria were finalized by the HLC last Spring, he and the other subcommittee members (Anthony D'Amato and David Ulaszek) enlisted the cooperation and support of the relevant Vice Presidents to provide the necessary evidentiary documents.

David Baker also announced that the university will be embarking on an update of the Strategic Plan. A committee is being formed for this purpose, and David has been invited to be a member of this committee. David will make sure that the updated Strategic Plan meets the HLC's revised criteria for accreditation.

Subcommittee Configuration and Membership

Siva Balasubramanian noted that the current configuration of subcommittees may change in the next year to better accommodate the next phase of our accreditation-related activities. He sought greater participation of Committee members on subcommittees. The feedback that Siva obtained from pioneer schools (institutions currently going through accreditation process using the new criteria) at the recent HLC conference indicates that the bulk of the accreditation work is effectively accomplished through

subcommittees. Although the scope, number and composition of the subcommittees may change over time, it is important that each member of the Committee serves on one or more subcommittees. The proposed subcommittees for next year include:

1. Assessment and Technology: this subcommittee will focus on promoting best practices in student learning assessment across the university and continue to investigate software for supporting assessment.
2. Administrative Criteria: this subcommittee will focus on Criteria 1, 2 and 5, and ensure that the necessary evidentiary documents are being compiled.
3. Academic Criteria: this subcommittee will focus on Criteria 3 and 4, and ensure that the necessary evidentiary documents are being compiled.
4. Quality Improvement Initiative: this subcommittee will focus on identifying a Quality Improvement Initiative, following the process developed by the Committee last year, and getting it launched.

Siva encouraged those present to think about which subcommittee they would like to join. Siva will also follow up with members by email.

Action Items

1. Siva Balasubramanian will communicate the Committee's recommendation to select the Open Pathway model for re-accreditation to Provost Alan Cramb.
2. Carol Emmons will send an email about the upcoming HLC Assessment Workshop to Committee members, chairs and deans, and ask them to nominate faculty to participate.
3. Siva Balasubramanian will send an email to Committee members about the new subcommittees and invite members to volunteer for one or more subcommittees.
4. Carol Emmons and Siva Balasubramanian will follow up with Russell Betts about the teaching/learning initiative in the new College of Science.
5. New Committee members will read the new HLC criteria for accreditation, found on the Open Pathways Accreditation site in Google Apps.
6. All Committee members will:
 - a. Contact Siva to volunteer for a subcommittee.
 - b. Think about faculty nominees to attend the HLC Assessment Workshop and forward nominations to Carol Emmons.
 - c. Think about/recruit faculty or staff champions for a Quality Improvement Initiative.

Next meeting: Thursday, October 4, 2012, 10 am, President's Conference Room.

IIT's Pathways Transition

Prepared by Carol Emmons

September 6, 2012

On September 1, 2012 institutions accredited by the Higher Learning Commission began the transition to the new Pathways model for reaffirmation of accreditation. This document provides information about the transition process.

Those institutions with reaffirmation scheduled in 2015-16 or 2016-17 have been notified of their placement on the Standard Pathway or eligibility for the Open Pathway. In either case, transition will occur in September 2012.

In July 2012 those institutions that are eligible for the Open Pathway were asked to affirm their pathway selection—either Open or Standard. (*Due to the timing of the next reaffirmation, institutions in this group may not choose AQIP at this time.*) These institutions will remain on their chosen pathway until the reaffirmation of accreditation in 2015-16 or 2016-17. At that time, the Commission will determine whether the institution should be placed on the Standard Pathway or may choose its preferred pathway—Standard, Open, or AQIP.

IIT is eligible to choose between the Standard and Open Pathway models. Provost Alan Cramb has requested a recommendation from the IIT Accreditation Advisory Committee about which model to choose. The table on the next page presents the main differences between the two models.

Once the IIT Accreditation Advisory Committee makes a decision the chair of the committee, Siva Balasubramanian, will inform Provost Cramb of the Committee's recommendation. The Provost will communicate the decision to the President, John Anderson, who will communicate IIT's choice to the Higher Learning Commission, via the form on page 3 of this document.

Comparison of Standard and Open Pathways Models for Re-affirmation of Accreditation

	Standard Pathway	Open Pathway
Goals of the Model	<p>i. To reduce the reporting burden on institutions by utilizing as much information and data as possible from existing institutional processes and collecting them in electronic form as they naturally occur over time.</p> <p>ii. To enhance rigor by checking institutional data annually and conducting comprehensive evaluations twice in a 10-year cycle.</p> <p>iii. To integrate as much as possible all HLC processes and requests for data into the reaffirmation of accreditation cycle.</p>	<p>Same as the Standard Pathway, plus:</p> <p>iv. To enhance institutional value by opening the improvement aspect of accreditation so that institutions may choose Quality Initiatives to suit their current circumstances.</p>
Determining Factors	<p>Available to all accredited institutions at any time, unless institution is on Probation or under a Show-Cause order, when it follows a separate process.</p> <p>An institution may be limited to the Standard Pathway it meets one or more of the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been accredited for fewer than 10 years. • It has undergone a change of control, structure or organization within the last two years. • It has been under Commission sanction or related action within the last five years. • It has been undergoing dynamic change or requiring frequent substantive change approvals since the last comprehensive evaluation. • It has raised significant Commission concerns about circumstances or developments at the institution. • It has failed to make a serious effort to conduct its Quality Initiative in the Open Pathway. 	<p>An institution may participate in the Open Pathway if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been accredited for at least 10 years. • It has not undergone a change of control, structure, or organization within the last 2 years. • It has not been under Commission sanction or related action within the last 5 years. • It does not have a history of extensive Commission monitoring. • It has not been undergoing dynamic changes or requiring frequent substantive change approvals since the last comprehensive evaluation. • It has not raised significant Commission concerns about circumstances or developments at the institution.
Frequency of Comprehensive Evaluations	Two comprehensive evaluations take place in a 10-year cycle, one in Year 4 and one in Year 10.	One comprehensive evaluation takes place in a 10-year cycle.
Components of Comprehensive Evaluation	<p>i. An Assurance Review</p> <p>ii. A review of Federal Compliance</p> <p>iii. An on-site visit</p> <p>iv. If applicable, a multi-campus review</p>	Same as Standard Pathway
Other Requirements	None	Quality improvement initiative

PATHWAYS DECLARATION FORM

This document constitutes the institution's official Pathway selection for reaffirmation of accreditation. The form is due by October 1, 2012, for institutions with comprehensive evaluations (or reaffirmations for AQIP institutions) in 2015-16 and 2016-17. All others should return the form by December 1, 2012.

We have reviewed the materials provided by the Commission and have selected the following as our Pathway for reaffirmation of accreditation:

Open Pathway

AQIP Pathway

Standard Pathway

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

Date

John L. Anderson, President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Illinois Institute of Technology

Name of Institution

Chicago, Illinois

City and State

FAX THE COMPLETED FORM TO 312-263-7462

OR SAVE IT AS A PDF AND SEND IT BY EMAIL TO:

pathways@hlcommission.org

Selecting a Quality Improvement Initiative

Accreditation Advisory Committee Meeting

May 7, 2011

Themes from My Perfect IIT

1. Instruction/Advising/Faculty Development (843 votes)
 - a. Create a Teaching and Learning Center
 - b. Establish education partnerships with other Chicago universities
 - c. Offer incentives for excellent teaching
2. School Spirit (160 votes)
 - a. Offer varsity sports
 - b. Invite guest speakers/Visiting Dignitaries
 - c. Participate in/Host scholastic competitions
3. Technology Use (428 votes)
 - a. Utilize available technology; establish standards
 - b. Provide printing stations and computers in every major building
 - c. Improve the IIT website
4. Student Services & Housing (609 votes)
 - a. Cheaper/better Food
 - b. Nicer housing
 - c. Simpler and easier business processes
5. Campus Appearance & Sustainability (436 votes)
 - a. Campus appearance
 - b. Building upkeep ("Mies is not untouchable")
 - c. Policies and research to improve sustainability

Next steps for selecting a Quality Improvement Initiative

1. Identify a faculty champion for each major theme.
2. Faculty champion forms a team (which includes users who proposed similar ideas) to develop a proposal for the theme.
3. Deans review and prioritize proposals.
4. President and Provost select one proposal.

Next steps for ideas not developed into a proposal

1. Forward idea to the head of the relevant IIT Office
2. Publish a blurb in IIT Today thanking everyone who submitted an idea or voted, and describing next steps.