

(Draft) Meeting Notes

NCA Accreditation Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 11, 2015, 2 pm to 3:30 pm, Conference Room, 17th floor, IIT Tower

Participants:

Siva Balasubramanian (Chair, *Stuart School of Business*), Vince Battista (*OTS*), John Kallend (*Armour College*), J. Kemp Ellington (*Lewis College of Human Sciences*), Virginia Foster (*Federal Compliance*), Ed Harris (*Chicago-Kent College of Law*), Walter Hazlitt (*General Counsel's Office*), Xiaofan Li (*College of Science*), and Liad Wagman (*Stuart School of Business*).

Approval of Draft Meeting Notes for meeting on February 18, 2015:

Members unanimously approved the draft meeting notes for the last committee meeting (February 18, 2015) that was previously distributed.

Discussion

Siva noted that several members were unable to attend because of a conflict with discussions/presentations on campus involving BlackBoard personnel on assessment-related topics. He then presented a Gantt chart, used for scheduling projects, that highlights the time path of various steps needed to be in place for successful HLC reaccreditation visit to our campus in September 2016. HLC requires our Assurance System document 6 months before the visit date, or late March 2016. An internal review/approval process involving the draft version of that document has to occur prior to March 2016. This process entails three levels of review. First, the Dean's council will provide inputs on the draft document. Next, that document will be reviewed at the President and Provost levels. Finally, Sunil Ahuja who serves as the HLC Accreditation Committees' liaison for IIT will review the document. Sunil is the key HLC representative who will interact with members of the team that visits our campus in September 2016.

To allow for all review phases described above to be completed in a timely fashion, Siva requested the subcommittees working on various HLC accreditation criteria to target completion of the draft Assurance System document by the end of November 2015 (when it will be submitted for review by the Dean's Council). The Gantt chart provides a visual presentation of the different project and process phases that have to be completed in order to have the draft document ready by the end of November 2015.

Each of the five criterion subcommittees has 3-4 members (including a chair). The chair of each subcommittee manages the documentation, coordination, and uploading of content to the assurance system on behalf of the respective criterion subcommittee. After some discussion, Siva requested the chairs of the five HLC criterion subcommittees to meet separately as a group (this group will be called the Assurance Document Steering Committee) to manage the evolution of the assurance system document, and to closely monitor the process of integrating the evidences into that document. Overall, the preparation/review steps for the Assurance System Document will involve three layers: the full accreditation committee (that will continue to meet regularly as usual), the five criterion subcommittees, and the Assurance Document Steering Committee.

John Kallend mentioned that he was part of a 3 person group that prepared IIT's Accreditation Report in the year 2006. Most of that report was completed over the summer of 2006, and included the Head of Public Relations (this group is now called Marketing and Communications). John recommended that the Steering Committee should include a representative from Marketing and Communications. After some discussion, the members agreed that the Assurance Document Steering Committee should include the chairs of the five HLC criterion subcommittees and a representative from Marketing and Communications. As discussed later, Virginia Foster will share inputs on Federal Compliance requirements with the Assurance Document Steering Committee such that they are appropriately addressed within the Assurance Document.

Siva reiterated an item discussed at the last meeting. Julia Chase from Academic affairs has put together a website for our committee that includes all meeting notes and documents use by our committee since 2011 along with other HLC documents that are related to the accreditation process. He requested the members of the five criterion subcommittees to review and use this resource as appropriate. Similarly, Carol Emmons is coordinating a Google site that contains information about the assessment process relating to each academic program offered at IIT.

For the Assurance Document, HLC imposes a length constraint. HLC requires an upper limit of 32000 words, but there is no upper limit to the number of docs hyperlinked within the Assurance document (clearly, those hyperlinked docs have no limit in terms of size or number of words). The hyperlinked documents are updated as needed, so the HLC team will review the most recent version of the hyperlinked documents.

The current versions of the documents prepared by the criterion subcommittees (with the exception of Criterion Five subcommittee) reflect a skeleton structure (mostly in the form of headlines and/or sub-headlines with substantive content/discussion to be added later). Walter Hazlitt noted that the document prepared by the Criterion Five subcommittee appears to be comprehensive. Walter therefore suggested that the document from the Criterion Five subcommittee (prepared by David Ulazek before he left IIT) could be used as a model by other criterion subcommittees. Members enthusiastically agreed with Walter's suggestion. Siva requested a revised document from subcommittees for Criterion 1, Criterion 2, Criterion 3, Criterion 4 to be uploaded to the Assurance System before the next meeting on April 8 (the chairs of all the five criterion subcommittees have access to the Assurance System). He expressed the hope that the Assurance Document Steering Committee could meet sometime between April 8 and April 29. This process should result in a shared vision across all criterion subcommittees on the content/structure of the Assurance Document by the end of Spring semester. Siva requested the five criterion subcommittees to continue the revision work on the Assurance Document as needed over summer months (most of these meetings could be handled online via Skype to accommodate summer travel schedules).

Members then focused on the expected content to be addressed by each of the criterion subcommittees. Some of this discussion continues to evolve within the subcommittees. In summary format, Criterion 1 subcommittee (headed by David Baker) is addressing topics such as university's mission, IIT's strategic plan, the alignment of the mission with the programs offered, and the constituencies served. Criterion 2 subcommittee (headed by Walter Hazlitt) focuses on issues related to IIT Policies/Procedures/Manuals and to IIT's governing body. Its discussion will be oriented toward all aspects within IIT that are designed to promote ethical and responsible conduct of all constituents. The

subcommittees for Criterion 3 and Criterion 4 are, respectively, chaired by Lauren Woods and Carol Emmons. The content related to Criterion 3 (Quality, Resources and Support Needed for Teaching and Learning activities) and Criterion 4 (Evaluation and Improvement of Teaching and Learning activities) require considerable space in the Assurance Document. For example, Criterion 3 requires evidence that the university's academic programs are appropriate for higher education, and Criterion 4 includes assessment, a relatively new activity for IIT where the HLC's visit team may have a lot to weigh in. Finally, Criterion 5 subcommittee is headed by David Baker, and will address issues related to resources, planning and institutional effectiveness. As mentioned earlier, the draft document circulated earlier by this subcommittee shows that work completed by David Ulazek appears comprehensive, and only needs to be updated.

Kemp Ellington (member of Criterion 3 subcommittee) and Ed Harris (member of Criterion 4 subcommittee) stated that they will confer with their respective chairs with regard to further revisions to the assurance arguments/timelines. Given that HLC's accreditation criteria have changed since the last visit in 2006, members agreed that it is important to receive feedback from Sunil Ahuja on our draft Assurance Document before submission to HLC.

Walter Hazlitt said that the process of linking documents related to the legal aspects would be captured easily, and the updating of these links organically would also be handled seamlessly within the system. Liad Wagman commented on the non-trivial nature of finding the relevant documents to be hyperlinked, and felt that maintaining a centralized location for storing such documents, such as a Google drive folder, would be beneficial. John Kallend stated that his colleagues at Armour College relied on Google Drive to access and share materials frequently during their recent ABET accreditation process. John characterized this process as very effective. After some discussion, members agreed that setting up a Google drive for candidate documents to be reviewed is a good option as a centralized repository. Vince Battista suggested that Andre Schmidt from OTS group could help on this task. Liad agreed to follow up with Vince about this process.

Walter Hazlitt felt that having a draft of the Assurance Document in place by end of April might be ambitious. It is expected that any working draft version will be subject to continuous improvement over the summer months under the supervision of the Assurance Document Steering Committee. Siva stated that our ultimate goal is to have a final draft available for the full committee's consideration in our September 2015 meeting, so our online discussions/contributions over summer appear very important.

Vince Batista summarized progress related to the pilot project related to Blackboard Outcomes. Blackboard personnel visited the campus to go through (Demo) the Outcomes product. He mentioned that Andre Schmidt is working with Carol Emmons to get the 3 pilot programs to start and evaluate how the data looks from there. His team is working with Blackboard to identify the integration points between Blackboard Learn and Blackboard Outcomes that will be most helpful. Vince stated that he will request Andre to share pilot/milestone documents and related documents on the Google drive.

Virginia Foster, who is coordinating the work related to Federal Compliance, requested that the criterion subcommittees provide her access to the information collected so far. She is collecting information from various parts of our campus so it is important for her to know whether the same information is being collected by others, for example, regarding transfer credit policy. She also mentioned documents prepared by the Registrar (Peter Zachocki) needs to be appropriately cited/hyperlinked in the assurance system document. Siva thanked Virginia for her work, and suggested that she could assist the Assurance

Document Steering Committee to assure that key aspects related to Federal Compliance are appropriately embedded therein. This is important because the format of the Assurance Document has designated sections for each of the five criteria, but no dedicated section for Federal Compliance.

Siva reiterated two final points. First, during the NCA team's visit to IIT in 2006, they provided recommendations that need to be addressed in our Assurance Document. Sunil Ahuja pointed out that that would be one of the key items that the team would look for in September 2016. Siva mentioned that Carol Emmons had prepared a document summarizing the recommendations from the 2006 Team visit. Walter noted that the key aspects highlighted in that document related to diversity, and that the IIT campus had responded effectively since then by forming a highly-effective Diversity Committee to address diversity issues. Other aspects mentioned have been dealt with under IIT's new Strategic Plan.

Second, in almost every interaction with HLC, it is clear that HLC wants institutions to assure that tasks related to the reaccreditation process merit appropriate attention on a continuous, balanced, and consistent basis over time. That is, during previous accreditation cycles were characterized by a flurry of activity just prior to the accreditation team visit to our campus, followed by an extended period when nothing much happens until the time immediately prior to the next accreditation team visit. HLC wants greater campus engagement with the accreditation criteria, and with assessment and learning outcomes. Other accreditation bodies also now require reports on a much more frequent basis. For example, the accrediting body for Business schools (AACSB) now has a five year cycle with reports required on an annual basis.

Meeting adjourned