

Criterion 5 Committee Meeting Minutes

Criterion 5 – Fourth Meeting

April 26, 2022, 12:30pm-1:30pm

Tomlinson Library 331

Members Present: Robert Cackler, David Collins, Andrew Connolly, Lucy Graham, Deborah Kennard, Barry Laga, Justin Little, Heather McKim, Sean Phelps, Adam Rosenbaum, Kristin Santos, Tracie Seurer, John Stewart, Steve Werman

1. Committee Chair Rosenbaum called the meeting to order at 12:30pm.
2. Rosenbaum addressed the plan for Fall 2022, indicating that he would be following up with individual members in addition to meeting with smaller groups to focus on individual core components of Criterion 5.
3. Rosenbaum distributed a hand-out summarizing earlier discussions on the sub-components of 5.C.1 and 5.C.2 before initiating a brief round of (re)introductions.
4. The committee members brainstormed pieces of evidence for Criterion 5.C.3: “The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.”
 - The university has conducted a variety of surveys, including the 2018 Strategic Planning Survey, the 2021 Employee Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Survey, and the 2021 Campus Climate Surveys for students and faculty.
 - The development of the current Strategic Plan considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
 - Academic department heads regularly communicate with their faculty members about issues brought up by the Academic Council.
 - Processes exist to vet external parties’ interest in future programs. In the case of the Health Sciences Program, feasibility studies and state-wide surveys have been conducted to address the viability of potential offerings.
 - Broader conversations have also led the Kinesiology Department to consider the development of an Adaptive Activities Program in consultation with Athletics.
 - The Department of Physical and Environmental Science Program sponsors an Environmental Science Advisory Council that allows local constituents to identify what they would like to see in graduates. Similarly, the Department of Languages, Literature and Mass Communication has recently created a Spanish and Hispanic Studies Advisory Group that allows community members to shape offerings.
 - In creating the Outdoor Recreation Program, Kinesiology faculty solicited feedback from a variety of external constituents, ranging from manufacturers to the Bureau of Land Management.
 - Constant review of the POST curriculum also draws on conversations with students, the city, the police department, and other constituents.

- Planning related to COVID protocol considered the perspective of various internal and external constituents.
 - Ongoing changes to the Campus Master Plan rely on feedback from different stakeholders. Questions about architecture and the acquisition of land are also presented to community members.
 - The Board for Little Mavs contains president-appointed representatives from the Office of Finance and Administration and the Early Childhood Education Department, as well as one student parent and one staff/faculty parent.
 - The Innovation Center allows students from different disciplines to work with faculty members and community experts.
 - Conversations with representatives of District 51 impact decisions regarding semester calendars and the planning of concurrent classes.
 - Additional resources: assessment surveys for Criterion 1 could help to confirm compliance with 5.C.3. The National Survey of Student Engagement provides insight into how CMU students compare to students at other institutions.
5. The committee members brainstormed pieces of evidence for Criterion 5.C.4: “The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution’s sources of revenue and enrollment.”
- The Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Decision Support produces bi-weekly reports on student applications, admissions, enrollments, and applications for students housing and financial aid, which are used to project tuition and fee revenues
 - Academic department heads make decisions on departmental data, revenue, and enrollment that IR provides. Position requests must be framed in these terms.
 - Budget planning starts with an acknowledgment of state funding before considering how to fill the gap, which varies from year to year.
 - Budget planning processes are forward-thinking, and often conclude months in advance.
 - The Book Store, for example, has to consider internal and external factors, including potential 3-5% decreases in enrollment.
 - Budgets for Little Mavs contain multi-year projections and different variables, allowing for well-informed discussion of operation costs and optimal tuition rates.
 - A sound understanding of current capacity and potential fluctuations also informs decisions about tuition increases versus a flat tuition.
 - Planning for curricular additions like the Occupational Therapy or Physician Assistant Programs relies on an understanding of capacity and sources of revenue and enrollment.
 - The Registrar’s Office considers how classrooms are used throughout the day in order to maximize efficiency.
 - Additional resources: Holly Teal could help to explain how the Registrar’s Office utilizes data to reach decisions about student accommodations in both the dormitories and classrooms. The Vice President of Finance and Administration could provide additional insights into how institutional planning works.

6. The committee members brainstormed pieces of evidence for Criterion 5.C.5: “Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.”
 - Three-year budget projections consider different levels of state funding (best case, worst case, expected, etc.).
 - Groups like the Enrollment Management Group have talked about demographic shifts like the forthcoming “demographic cliff,” beginning to consider how the institution could offset decreases in traditional college students.
 - Efforts to target non-traditional students have already been discussed. This might possibly change the approach in student housing, which could shift towards larger family units.
 - The Hispanic Serving Institute (HSI) designation has been discussed as a partial solution to some of these issues. That designation would open up additional funding opportunities.
 - The Retention Committee is already paying attention to that student demographic and how to better support them.
 - The federal and state government have allocated millions of dollars of funds to CMU in response to COVID. IRIS is reaching out to students to inform that they will be losing those tuition funds next year, and consequently should plan accordingly. Communication events and workshops have also been organized to proactively address some of this.
 - There is flexibility in Financial Aid awarding philosophies, taking into account evolving external factors, like economic downturns.
 - IT upgrades and rotations consider what works best in light of rapidly evolving technologies.
 - The creation of new programs like the Certificate in Editing and Technical Communications involves several projections, for example, the anticipated number of jobs.
 - The president’s annual meetings with faculty members have historically addressed declining state support and how that can be offset.

7. The committee members brainstormed pieces of evidence for Criterion 5.C.6: “The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.”
 - Initial thoughts: the emphasis here is on process, indicating that plans to improve are systematic, not haphazard.
 - There have been various efforts to improve retention and graduation rates, like the Early Alert system.
 - TRIO represents a systematic attempt to improve retention among first-generation students.
 - Academic Program Reviews take stock of things with an eye on improving the program and student outcomes.
 - Any program that is accredited, like the Social Work program, would have clear evidence of graduation and program completion rates.
 - The assessment of Student Learning Outcomes exemplifies the systematic nature of trying to “close the loop” in order to improve student outcomes.

- In response to COVID, there have been changes in the onboarding process for freshmen. For instance, IRIS has switched to having staff members build schedules for incoming freshman.
 - The desire to improve this onboarding process is ongoing, and there is talk of getting students more involved by Fall 2023.
 - One of the sub-committees of the Retention Committee has also introduced the concept of the “Bucket List,” a list of cocurricular and extracurricular activities that is designed to get the students engaged.
8. Rosenbaum concluded the meeting by thanking the committee members for their work and emphasizing that the larger approach is working.
 9. The second meeting ended at 1:28pm.