JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE ON STANDARDS FOR LOW-PRODUCING PROGRAMS
Thursday, September 17, 2009 10:00 a.m.

Attending: Friedrike Wiedeman, Judith Bean, Philip Cohen, Robert Webb, Juan Carlos Reina, Austin Cunningham, Rissa Potter
CB Staff: MacGregor Stephenson, Kevin LeMoine, Anya Sebastian, Vanessa Davis, James Goeman, Catherine Parsoneault, Emma Rodriguez, Lucy Bloor

MEETING NOTES

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Catherine Parsoneault welcomed everyone and introduced Anya Sebastian & Emma Rodriguez. Each member then introduced themselves.

II. Review of work from previous meeting

James briefly referred to the meeting notes from 8/6/2009 making note of the thresholds for other states, especially Maryland.

III. Discussion

Catherine made note of the articles referring to the national concern about low-producing programs, especially Gov. Perry's executive order for a "comprehensive cost review." MacGregor noted that the current standards in Texas are as low as possible. The proposals of this committee are a step in the right direction. Both the Coordinating Board and institutions will be reviewing SCH, small classes, and faculty workload. Consequences for low-producing programs may include the reduction of adjuncts, faculty lines, and phasing out or consolidation of programs.

Three sets of data were developed by Emma. Each data set lists programs that do not meet the following thresholds over a 5 year period.

Set one - 5 associate, 5 bachelor, 3 master, and 2 doctorate graduates/year including zero producing programs.

Set two - 5 associate, 3 bachelor, 2 master, and 1 doctorate graduates/year

Set three - 5 associate, 5 bachelor, 3 master, and 2 doctorate graduates/year excluding zero producing programs.

[At the previous meeting, the subcommittee asked for data for 5 years. However, the thresholds are set on a 3-year rotation. Therefore, the low-producing programs listed are only based on the 3-year thresholds. A fourth set of data was presented at the end of the meeting with the 5-year data.]

Discussion entailed whether to include zero-producing programs, especially on the doctoral level. CB staff noted that CBM reports do not always match with the CIP list of programs. Note was also made about the changes and confusion with the federal and Texas CIP codes. All agreed that institutions must report graduates by CIP codes and should be given plenty of time to rectify this problem.

IV. Consideration of recommendations for thresholds for low-producing programs

James proposed the review of programs every three years with the number of graduates less than 5 associate, 5 bachelor, 3 master, and 2 doctorate graduates per year. Discussion continued at great length regarding when the review should occur, the number of graduates be an average over the length of review period or for each year, ties to mission or program review cycles, and exemptions. Rissa Potter suggested that institutions should send the report in every year. The CB staff would send a warning letter to institutions regarding programs that are low-producing at the end of years 3 and 4. The fifth year would initiate the review process. All agreed this is a good idea. Threshold numbers were discussed, especially in regards to associates degrees as these are reported differently than higher degrees.

Proposal: The Coordinating Board will issue a report degree programs that have less than 5 associate, 5 bachelor, 3 master, and 2 doctorate graduates per year to the Coordinating Board. If the average number of graduates over a 3-year period is less than the above numbers, the CB will send a warning letter to the institution. If the average number of graduates over a 4-year period has not risen above the thresholds, a second warning letter will be sent to the institution. If at the end of the fifth year review cycle the program still does not exceed the threshold, the degree program will be classified as low-producing.

With the question called and short discussion, all approved.

V. **Consideration of recommendations for permanent and temporary exemptions**

The committee reviewed the minutes from the 8-9-09 meeting for temporary and permanent exemptions. Philip Cohen moved to accept the permanent exemption

I.a. Master's degrees requiring courses taught in the corresponding doctoral program. These degrees are, in effect, terminal master's degrees available to students who are unable to meet doctoral requirements. No additional cost is associated with these degrees. With the question called and short discussion, all approved.

Second recommendation for exemption:

I.b. Any degree requiring exclusively courses required for other degrees as well. No additional cost is associated with these degrees.

Discussion: MacGregor suggested adding the phrase "that do not result in small class size." The committee agreed to move this exemption to temporary exemptions. Friederike Wiedeman recommended that a temporary exemption did not exempt the program from review only any sanctions.

The motion to change this exemption from I.b. Permanent exemption to II.c. Temporary exemption with the added phrase suggested by MacGregor was approved.

Third recommendation for exemption:
I.c. Other conditions, if any, are yet to be identified by the subcommittee. All approved.
For temporary exemptions, changes were made to terminology and phrasing for II a. & b.

a. *A new program is exempt from ~~review~~ consequence for five years. ~~The first review takes place at the time of the first review cycle following the five-year exemption period.~~*
b. *Programs ~~are~~ maybe exempted from consequence for a period of time to be negotiated between the institution and the THECB for relevant reasons ~~such as lacking facilities or laboratories, temporary weather related conditions, initiatives taken by the institutions that require some time to show effect, etc.~~*

With the question called and short discussion, all approved.
The motion to accept II. c. *Other conditions are yet to be identified by the subcommittee* was not seconded and, thus, not approved.

After a short lunch break, Catherine Parsoneault asked the members of UEAC and GEAC to be prepared to report to the appropriate committees at the next meeting. Friederike Wiedeman recommended changing the heading of the exemptions section to *There will be temporary and permanent ~~exemptions~~ consequences* for clarity.

VI. Consideration of recommendations for data collection for use in identifying low-producing programs

The committee reviewed the current procedures for review of low-producing degree programs as posted on the CB website with Tables of Programs and Mission Statements. There was much discussion about the definition and calculation of faculty loads and FTE inclusion, the inclusion of lower-level or support courses as supporting factors, and how institutions distribute funds from higher producing programs to support low-producing programs. Friederike Wiedeman expressed concern about the focus on quality rather than quantity. Kevin LeMoine reminded the committee that three points will be taken into consideration when reviewing a low-producing program: 1) justification for continuation – uniqueness or need of the program, 2) action plan – the recruitment and retention plan for the program, and 3) data supporting cost – small classes, faculty loads, etc. For part 3, the committee discussed the data needed by the CB as justification. MacGregor agreed that the CB only needs the number of declared majors and the number of students per class section to evaluate financial burden. The number of faculty members and the average faculty teaching loads are not needed. Juan Carlos Reina suggested reporting 5 years of data in line with the review cycle. MacGregor suggested that 2 years of data was enough.

Upon reporting the data, there may be negotiation with the institution in regards to the status of the low-producing program.
Upon recommendation from Friederike Wiedeman, MacGregor and Kevin agreed that the CB's procedures and consequences to the institutions (consolidation or phase-out) will be included in the posted procedures.
Slight changes were made to the second choice for low-producing program:

> *Request retaining the program. For consideration of retaining a program or for consideration of obtaining or regaining temporary exemptions, the institution must do one of the following:*

VII. Adjournment

Towards the end of the meeting, Emma ran set four of low-producing programs in response to the earlier request for data with 5-year totals. The question arose again about the inclusion of zero-producing programs and skewed data as a result. This data will be emailed to all committee members.
MacGregor thanked the committee for its time.
Meeting adjourned at 2:12 pm.

LB
9-18-09