

Tuesday Tidbits
Tuesday, January 26, 2010

Component Writers and Department Chairs

I'm a department chair and I keep getting asked for information – that I'm not even sure I have – and I'm told it is vital to the HLC Self Study. I have a full plate of things to do already! What do you want me to do?

Or

I'm a writer for one of the Core Components in the Self Study. I need information that I'm pretty sure the departments have. I am trying to get this done so we can make a presentation to the campus. What do you want me to do?

Who is right in the examples above? Obviously, they both are.

A Self Study has often been likened to a very large academic scavenger hunt and what we are all going through now is expected and normal.

Explain the “expected and normal” comment above.

When the HLC changed and rearranged the material found in the 2001 Self Study they also changed the focus. Instead of simply telling them that we did all the things they asked about, we now have to PROVE we've done them AND we need to show that we have evaluated / assessed / reviewed it. Then we have to show the results of such evaluations / assessments / reviews and how that has impacted everything from our strategic plan to our curricula to the campus resource allocation plans.

The biggest problem most of the department chairs and other offices are facing is that, as a campus, we have *never* had to collect information that we now need to produce. We have *never* been asked for this information before. We may have some of this information in some form or another but it may not be in the form the current situation calls for. So, when a request is made, the information may actually be available – in some form and in some cases – but not exactly as it is being requested.

The current hunt for data is “expected” because the Self Study is so different from the one in 2001. It is “normal” for the parties involved to be frustrated because everyone on this campus wants to do the best job possible.

So, now what do we do? Does this mean we won't be accredited?

1. If you are seeking information ...

Be as specific as possible in the request.

You really don't need all ten years of data -three to five is sufficient.

A friendly phone call can help resolve a lot of misunderstandings.

Remember: You know your Core Component and what you think you want.

The person you are asking probably doesn't.

2. If you are being asked for information ...

Acknowledge the request. At least then the writer knows you received it.

If the exact request is difficult, think around it to data that may do the job and is more readily available.

A friendly phone call can help resolve a lot of misunderstandings.

Remember: You know your information and data and what is possible.

The person who is asking you probably doesn't.

And, yes, we will still be accredited when all this is said and done.

For all those involved ... your work is deeply appreciated. The time spent on locating and presenting data is time well spent. The process of a Self Study is to locate things that need to be changed. Data collection – what and how - is currently at the top of the list! Thanks!

When is our visit?

446 days from today – Jan. 26, 2010. The HLC Team arrives on April 18, 2011.

Think of things we need to fix,

Before they come in four-four-six!

Tuesday Tidbits is a way to provide information about the upcoming accreditation visit by the Higher Learning Commission to the Purdue North Central Campus. Since the visiting team is interested in ALL aspects of the campus and its operation, this is being sent to all employees. If you have any questions about the accreditation process, or ideas for future Tidbits, please let me know. Thanks!

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