PRAC minutes 2/12/2015

Present: R. Zipoli, S. Clerc, M. Bay, M. Kiarie, K. Gorniak, K. Menders, C. Dellinger-Pate, L. Vitale, T. Radice, J. Webb
Guest: J. MacGregor

Meeting convened 9:40 a.m.

The Committee reviewed the self-study and external reviewer’s report from Recreation & Leisure. No revisions are required. The Committee will vote on its recommendation to UCF at its February 26th meeting.

Dr. James MacGregor, Chair of Recreation & Leisure, joined the meeting at 10:20.

The department offers 2 B.S. degrees:
B.S. in Sports Management, new this year.
In addition, the department offers minors in Leadership Development and Event Management.

The department has an extraordinarily thorough and well-organized assessment process. An annual assessment report of data gathered from direct measures is discussed among the faculty and shared with various constituencies. Annual action plans are formulated based on the discussions. The assessment process is conducted within the context of a multi-year strategic plan which is also reviewed annually.

The new B.S. in Sports Management, and course and program revisions, are results of the process. The department is considering pursuing accreditation for both B.S. programs as part of the next strategic plan.

The success of the process and the revisions made as a result may be evidenced by the growth in the number of degree majors from 126 in Spring of 2009 to 208 in Spring 2014.

In addition, the department instituted a new assessment process in the fall: gathering email addresses from graduates who were finishing internships and sending them a survey 2 months later. The Committee was impressed by the 50% return rate, as well as the 70% employment rate of recent department graduates.

Student learning outcomes used by the department are established by the Council of Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Related Fields, the national accrediting agency for the profession. The metric matrix and core program assessment tables hyperlinked from the report were well-done and clear. One suggestion for the next self-study would be to include a condensed version of the charts in the body of the report.

Students in the department follow a program consisting of traditional courses, junior and senior-level internships (the department has an impressive network of internship sites), and myriad experiential learning opportunities in the community that include a great deal of community service. The list of
initiatives in the report is informative but would benefit from additional narrative regarding of the students’ activities.

The external reviewer’s report supports the department’s need for additional resources to meet the growth in declared majors. Both the reviewer and department raise the issue of renaming the department: “leisure” is a problematic term for marketing the program and attracting students.

The external report is somewhat undermined by an inherent contradiction, however. Under strengths, the department is praised for its international programs and study abroad opportunities which are “in line with the growing focus on international education at higher education institutions in the U.S.” The programs involving Germany and Italy are mentioned: Dr. Lee Delisle is developing an experiential course that would take students to Rome. Dr. Jan Jones, the undergraduate coordinator, was unable to meet with PRAC because she was in Germany with a group of students for an international tourism competition. And yet, under threats, the report lists “SCSU Mandated Degree Requirements”, particularly the foreign language requirement. The discrepancy between saying international programming is a strength but basic skills to support that programming are a threat lessens the credibility of the external report.

The department has not had the opportunity to respond to the external reviewer’s report.

Discussion about the format of self-studies below does not reflect on the quality of the department’s report. Recreation & Leisure is the first department to use the revised PRAC guidelines and their report is the first time PRAC has seen a written outcome. We expect to be looking for necessary adjustments and tweaks as we go along.

Some ideas for departments who will be writing self-studies in the next few years:
Aligning the contents with the 3 question model in the guidelines makes it clearer to the reader which questions are being addressed.
The document should stand on its own. Linking to data in an appendix housed on the O drive, DropBox, or other storage is fine but readers shouldn’t have to follow the link to understand the report.
Use the page limits as an indicator of what the Committee considers most important: discussion of your assessment process.
Summarize and analyze data in the context of a reflective narrative.
The only chart or table that we’d definitely like to see is how courses align with learning outcomes and how the outcomes are introduced, reinforced, and measured.
We understand the difficulty of trying to use the self-study to address multiple audiences: PRAC, administration, potential external accreditors. Perhaps Question 1 and parts of question 3 could be used to address administration needs.
For PRAC, it might be necessary to urge external reviewers to retain objectivity.

Meeting adjourned 10:50 a.m.

Submitted by,

S. Clerc (Chair)