Present: M. Bay, C. Calin, C. Dellinger-Pate, M. Fede, K. Gorniak, T. Lin, L. Vitale (chair), J. Webb, R. Zipoli

Absent: J. Gleason, R. Silady

PRAC convened at 9:36am

PRAC discussed and unanimously agreed to hold PHI responsible for only two conditions for continual approval (a plan for direct assessment; objectives and assessment of Religious Studies minor). The third condition, assessment of LEP critical thinking courses, was withdrawn. This is reflected in the revised minutes if 12/11/15.

Discussion ensued about the Honors College. HON is undergoing a complete transformation, encouraged and supported by administration.

Dr. Terese Gemme, director of the Honors College, joined the meeting at 10:18am

One committee member remarked on the smooth transition in the narrative: the report speaks nicely about whence the program comes to where it is going. The committee would like to commend Dr. Gemme for her dedication and hard work in compiling the PRAC report concurrently with the new program.

Due to the current transition, some assessment of the old program is lacking; however, since HON will implement its new curriculum, no more assessment information about the old program is required by PRAC.

It was noted that the new Honors College wants to increase its acceptance rate (8-12% nation-wide; SCSU is 3%). HON students’ retention rate (76-96%) is much higher than the overall student population, so it makes sense to want to increase and encourage these types of students. A few observations: a resource conflict between growing the program and not having sufficient staff and resources to implement and the ambitious increase of students is apparent; and a question of whether the SCSU community will benefit at large from such an investment was posed. The new program includes an emphasis on leadership and community, so it is likely the campus will derive benefits from the growth of the new program. More resources in terms of support staff (assistant, secretary), as well as more release time for the director (if not a full-time position) is called for.

The new program’s learning outcomes are well articulated in the report (p. 22). The next step for the task force/advisory board, and one that PRAC strongly encourages, is to develop a form of direct assessment of these outcomes, and then implement it. This may take the form of rubrics, individual assignment grades, or even an “objective met: yes/no.” PRAC will look for this assessment in the next review, and how this data informs curricular changes.
PRAC joins the external reviewer in exhorting the administration to find a way to support the new revised Honors College Program by providing:

- a minimum of 9 credits release time to the director;
- a full-time secretary;
- as well as an assistant to the director.

The committee underscores that team teaching is valuable, and should be preserved in an interdisciplinary program such as HON.

PRAC will vote on continuing/conditional approval for HON at its next meeting on Thursday, February 4.

Meeting adjourned at 10:51am