

**METROPOLITAN STATE COLLEGE *of* DENVER
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Monday, September 24, 2007
1:45 pm.**

CN 315

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ACTION ITEM:

The following item is presented by the Office of Academic Affairs:

A. Handbook Deadline Revision

III. Information Item:

A. HLC Summary

III. ADJOURNMENT

AGENDA ITEM: Modification of Deadlines in MSCD's Handbook for Professional Personnel, to Allow Changes in Departmental Evaluation Guidelines During Fall 2007

BACKGROUND:

The Board of Trustees has proposed to set aside an annual budget line item equal to 8% of the total faculty compensation to be used to reward on a yearly basis those faculty who perform at a high level. The "Pay-for-Performance" plan proposal includes provisions to address several issues that, if not resolved, will undermine the intent and functioning of the new system. One of these issues concerns inequities in and among departmental evaluation guidelines that are used in the annual faculty performance evaluation process.

ISSUE:

The Board-approved Handbook for Professional Personnel includes several deadlines pertaining to the annual faculty performance evaluation process. The proposal below requires a temporary modification of these deadlines; Board approval of the change is therefore required.

The revision of departmental evaluation guidelines must be done carefully, as these guidelines form a crucial part of the contractual basis for annual evaluations, retention, promotion, tenure, and post-tenure review. Accordingly, the revision process will be carried out in two stages: (1) an individual departmental review and conversion from the existing grade-based to the proposed category-based performance areas (to be completed this Fall 2007), and (2) the development of a common, more comparable, college-wide set of guidelines that will be used as the "core" for individual departmental evaluation guidelines (to be completed during Fall 2008). A common set of guidelines, are needed to address the perception that some departments are less rigorous than others. Individual departments will still be able to add discipline-focused standards to tailor their departmental guidelines.

The first stage of the revision process is underway. Each department has been directed to review, revise, and convert their department evaluation guidelines from the current A-F grades in each in each of the four evaluation areas (teaching, advising, professional development, and service) to three categories: "needs improvement", "meets standards", and "exceeds standards". The interim provost has directed that the change from A-F grades to the three new categories must be completed by October 1, 2007, which grants the department chairs an extra three weeks to accomplish the guidelines review and conversion, set faculty performance goals and weights, and forward the required documentation to the Deans. This revised deadline causes a corresponding shift in subsequent steps in the faculty evaluation process during this Fall 2007 term.

The dates for the subsequent steps are not enumerated in a single location in the Handbook for Professional Personnel. Rather, they are referred to as follows [**pertinent emphases added in boldface**]:

V. ANNUAL EVALUATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

D. Explanations of Terms

1. Guidelines:

All departmental guidelines must be used for annual and comprehensive evaluations. The Chair of each department, with the input and advice of departmental faculty, is required to write guidelines specific to the needs of the department pertaining to the performance areas of teaching, advising, professional development and service. Departmental guidelines for these performance areas written by the department chair must be approved by the dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs before they take effect. In the event there is disagreement concerning departmental guideline content, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will make the final decision. All guidelines must clearly indicate the qualitative and, if appropriate, quantitative standards necessary for evaluating a faculty member's performance in accordance with the ratings scale set forth below, and provide examples of activities for each rating except for an "F" rating. All guidelines are to be consistent with the school's and College's mission statements, as applicable. Each year the guidelines must be reviewed and updated, as needed. **If departmental guidelines are changed, the chair must submit the current departmental guidelines and revised departmental guidelines, highlighting any changes, to the dean of the school and Vice President for Academic Affairs for approval at least 30 days prior to the faculty/chair goal-setting meeting in the fall semester. The Vice President for Academic Affairs may make revisions to such guidelines. The revised guidelines will be effective for the next evaluation period.**

H. Annual Performance Evaluation Procedures

1. Responsibilities:

b. Chair

- (1) The department chair is to hold two annual conferences with each faculty member. **At the annual fall conference, to be held before November 1, the faculty member will choose the weights for evaluation of advising, professional development and service and set goals for the next evaluation year** that are consistent with ...

ANALYSIS:

The following one-time shift in deadlines is proposed for the Fall 2007 term, to allow sufficient time to carry out the tasks at hand that are related to the new Pay-for-Performance proposal:

Activity	Current deadline	Proposed deadline
Eval guidelines to deans	Sep 10	Oct 1
Dean's approval of guidelines to VPAA	Sep 21	Oct 15
VPAA approval of guidelines	Oct 1	Oct 29
Faculty/Chairs Goals and Weights to Supervisor	Oct 1	Nov 1
Faculty/Chairs Goals and weights approved	Nov 1	Dec 1

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the revised schedule as shown above.

AGENDA ITEM: Summary of the 2007 HLC / NCA Findings for Metro State's Reaccreditation Site Team Visit

BACKGROUND:

In March 2007, a site team from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools visited Metro State for the purposes of a comprehensive evaluation for reaccreditation. The visit was deemed a success, in that there are no follow-up visits required and the HLC currently does not see a need to send another team for 10 years. There are two monitoring reports (described below) due in two years' time (March 2009) and a progress report on distance education that is due by June 30, 2008. A synopsis of the team's report follows.

SYNOPSIS of the 2007 HLC / NCA FINDINGS

A. Criterion One: Mission and Integrity

Meets Standards:

- ❖ Role and mission – clearly stated in all publications, and guides strategic planning.
- ❖ Diversity – reflected in the following actions: diversity is one of the College's Strategic Planning Goals; an Associate to the President for Diversity has been appointed; a Diversity Initiative was carried out in the Instructional Technology division; there is a Hispanic Serving Institution Diversity Plan and Diversity Committee; and there is a Faculty Recruitment Plan to increase the diversity among tenure-track hires.
- ❖ Strategic planning – an inclusive planning process exists.
- ❖ Visionary leadership – is evident in the implementation of a strategic planning process, and permanent appointments to replace interim positions in upper-level administration.

Needs Improvement:

- ❖ "Procedural and communication structures in governance and administration" – "Constituencies (including Faculty Senate, committees, mid-level administration, classified staff, and students) have not always been informed of progress in dealing with proposals and policies in a timely manner."
- ❖ "Policies are not always clear to constituents, and there is a perception that some policies are not implemented in a consistent and fair manner."
- ❖ "A number of middle management positions are filled by employees with "interim" titles."

B. Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future

Meets Standards:

- ❖ The campus community is aware of the President's vision; a large majority of groups interviewed expressed enthusiasm and support.
- ❖ Academic program review uses external program review consultants; external advisory boards are used in academic programs.
- ❖ "MSCD is beginning to develop effective systems for collecting, analyzing, and using organizational information for planning purposes."

- ❖ “The College has established a formal strategic planning process that encourages broad involvement by faculty and staff and provides for input ...”
- ❖ Funding – “The College continues to work through political avenues to increase state support.” Also noted: the support provided by the Office of Sponsored Programs, a Development Office, the division of Institutional Advancement, plus a dedicated Foundation Board.
- ❖ “There is substantial evidence that the College uses a variety of methods to evaluate the effectiveness of its performance as an institution and the performance of units within the institution. The method of evaluation varies by vice presidential area, but all units’ performance and effectiveness are evaluated annually.” Reference was also made to the following: “use of contracted outside experts to evaluate performance for areas such as the Academic Advising Center because of the identified need to improve academic advising”; “participation in the NSSE and FSSE surveys”; and “The College has implemented an effective, faculty-driven, comprehensive program review process.”

Needs Improvement:

- ❖ “The College is significantly underfunded when compared to its peers.”
- ❖ “There remains a significant physical resource (space) need.”
- ❖ “The institution has made improvements in developing a more open and involved strategic planning process. However, there were frustrations expressed by faculty and staff about not being adequately informed about decisions made as a result of the process, most specifically resource allocation.”

C. Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Meets Standards:

- ❖ “The College has a strong commitment to serving its diverse, urban student population. Board members, administrators, faculty, and staff all spoke articulately and genuinely about their focus on student learning and their contributions to student learning” and “Students described the environment as supportive, respectful, and caring, and their education as a transformative experience which prepared them for a career and afforded them a bright future. Students and alumni spoke with pride about the value of their education at MSCD.”
- ❖ “... progress was made in the fall of 2006 in developing an institution-wide system for collecting and reporting of assessment data. All 2005-06 academic program and student services assessment reports were reviewed by seven three-person teams of trained faculty and [staff]. Individualized feedback, recommendations, and encouragement were provided to each department and programs to improve the assessment process.”
- ❖ “progress has been made in campus-wide articulation of student learning objectives which make effective assessment possible. Program, course, and general education objectives are increasingly articulated in measurable terms. Annual academic assessment reports clearly indicate that faculty are involved in creating strategies to determine whether those objectives are achieved.”
- ❖ “Despite some limitations in staffing, strong technology support and training for students and faculty are available at Metro North and South as well as on the main Auraria campus.”

- ❖ “A wide array of student support services are provided ...” and “There is strong commitment to the assessment of student services and to the continuous improvement of student service programs.”

Needs Improvement:

- ❖ “Students consistently report that they do not have accurate, adequate, and timely advising” and “Staffing in the Advising Center is inadequate, and advising beyond general education is reported as weak ...”
- ❖ “Student Academic Success services are not staffed at the level needed to serve the open admissions population and are not well-integrated with academics.”
- ❖ “Support staff, especially in [IT], are stretched thin in staffing. There is not a clear plan in place to provide continuing services if a key support individual should become ill or indisposed.”

Follow-up needed:

- ❖ “The most recent program assessment reports reveal some continuing confusion about the nature of student learning outcomes as opposed to programmatic goals.”
- ❖ “... assessment activities ... include periodic program reviews, evaluation of curriculum and syllabi, and implementation of curricular changes. None of these activities, although important, constitutes direct measures for assessing student learning outcomes.”
- ❖ “... the College cannot yet document what changes in areas such as curriculum, methods of instruction, academic services, and academic resources have occurred as a result of the assessment of student learning.” ... “Feedback processes for departmental assessment reports are still in the formative stage.”
- ❖ “Administrative authority for assessment is not well-defined, and financial support for this function is limited. Coordination of all assessment efforts are assigned to a faculty member with 0.25 FTE release and an Associate VP with many additional responsibilities.”
- ❖ **Monitoring report on assessment of student learning is due on 4/1/2009.**

D. Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

Meets Standards:

- ❖ “Students and community members reaffirm the College’s emphasis on lifelong learning.”
- ❖ “The College has taken concrete steps to begin to address concerns expressed by the previous comprehensive visit team regarding the General Studies program.”
- ❖ The Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee meets regularly; the Chair of the FSCC is an *ex officio* member of the College Program Review Committee; and regular academic program review occurs, which is faculty-driven and comprehensive. Also, “Committee members testified that the President has personally taken account of needs and recommendations emerging from this process and has made needed allocation of resources as a result.”

Needs Improvement:

- ❖ **None.**

Follow-up needed:

- ❖ **Monitoring report on General Studies is due on 4/1/2009.**

E. Criterion Five: Engagement and Service**Meets Standards:**

- ❖ “There are numerous documented connections between academic programs and the community.”
- ❖ “The College has made a deliberate and long-standing attempt to engage with the community through advisory committees and internship advisors.”
- ❖ “The College’s role as a provider of qualified workers is undisputed.”
- ❖ “Documents cited numerous examples of effective communication and collaboration with the community.”

Needs Improvement:

- ❖ None.

F. Additional Findings

The report states:

The team reviewed the College’s change request to offer distance delivery [online] programs without prior Commission approval [of individual degree programs]. The evidence was not sufficient to approve the request at the time of the visit. The College currently has online programs in health Care management and Social Work, and a distance degree in Surveying and mapping that is being moved online. The team recommends that these distance degrees be allowed to continue at this time.

And:

If the College’s Online Task Force recommendations were implemented, these would provide the structure necessary for effective online degree program delivery. The team believes that if the College follows up on the recommendations of the Online Task Force and addresses the areas outlined above, the College should be ready to submit a change request to offer degree programs by distance delivery without prior Commission approval.

CONCLUSION:

A letter of response has been sent to the Higher Learning Commission which outlines plans to address each of the concerns identified in the report. The entire report of the comprehensive evaluation visit will be placed on the Metro State website within the next few weeks.