0. Core Committee Discussion of Language & Literacy Plans

The core committee met at 1:30 to review relevant documents for the two assessment plans. Ms. Connolly and Ms. Stewart provided an overview of recent changes to the assessment plans for these degrees based on the International Reading Association (IRA) and the SC Commission on Higher Education (CHE) requirements.

I. Call Meeting to Order & Approval of January 20, 2006 minutes

The minutes from the January 20, 2006, meeting were approved, as written. Dr. Dickey asked for the members to introduce themselves prior to discussion and outlined the origin of the committee and what its procedures are. He asked the language and literacy faculty to provide an overview of each program.

II. Review of Language & Literacy Assessment Plans

A. M.Ed. in Language & Literacy

Dr. Stephens explained an overview of the M.Ed. program and the revision of that a few years ago based on IRA expectations. These revisions included new courses, a capstone seminar, and new data. As of fall 2005, the expectations from IRA have changed again and these changes have caused the faculty to again revise the program and the assessments in the plan. Dr. DeFord added that IRAs revisions to fewer transition points allows the program to do a better job since there are fewer points to assess and assessments to collect. Dr. Van Scoy asked for clarification on IRA’s standards. Dr. Dickey asked how the IRA standards are that are being addressed in the plan. Dr. Stephens noted that while the assessments are matched to the PEU Conceptual Framework, but they have not included the IRA standards, but they will make that adjustment. She also noted that the transition assessments in the plan are related to the IRA standards, but this was simply left off. Dr. Huynh asked if the assessments are carried out sequentially and the faculty assured him that they are. Additionally, he asked who made up the faculty committee to which a candidate is referred to when he/she experiences trouble/difficulty in the program. Dr. Stephens explained that the committee is the three faculty members in attendance and they use data on the candidate to help him/her correct deficiencies or to counsel them out of the program. Dr. Huynh suggested that these actions be clarified within the plan and the program. Program faculty entertained questions and discussion on how they might clarify these points, but reported that counseling and data use are happening within the program, with the candidates, and in counseling situations.
Dr. Van Scoy suggested that faculty look closely at the plan and what IRA will require in a program report, as there is a little confusion with the data in the plan and how the data relate to IRAs standards. Dr. Stephens explained that the faculty have been more focused on IRAs changes and their implications on the programs, but will give extra attention to the data and how it will fit in the template for the program report.

Dr. Van Scoy complimented the faculty on their clear articulation of how candidates are being monitored the program. She suggested that as soon as they finish their focus on IRA revisions, that they try to use the Office of Accreditation and Quality Assurance more readily and in a useful way.

Dr. Stephens reported that they have approximately 140 candidates on which they maintain data for program progression.

Dr. Dickey asked for clarification on when program faculty meet to discuss data in the program and how those data might be applied to program changes/updates. Dr. Stephens reported that they usually meet each May and they will add this to their plan. Dr. Van Scoy asked that program faculty clarify and firm up the logistics section of the plan, so responsibility is clearer for data collection, management, and review. Dr. Stephens noted that this section can be made clearer and they will be more consistent about changes to this section.

Dr. Van Scoy asked faculty to describe the major developments of the program over the last several years. The M.Ed. development included adding more courses to encompass professional association new requirements.

B. Ph.D. in Language & Literacy

The Ph.D. has also seen very recent changes to reporting requirements. The program has aligned the assessment plan to the PEU’s conceptual framework and will be reworking assessments to align with new CHE self study requirements. Prior to this change, Dr. Stephens reported that the faculty had already outlined some assessments that would be matched to IRA standards but are afraid at this point that these may not be applicable. Drs. Dickey and Van Scoy assured the faculty that since the CHE requirements are so broad, that the assessments in place, may serve the program well still. Faculty should decide which assessments they want to keep and which they want to change. Dr. Dickey outlined some general areas in the self study that should be addressed (# faculty, technology, # candidates, experience teaching undergrads, etc.) but reminded faculty that they have a final say in what they use. Ms. Connolly reminded the faculty that some of the assessments they have in place should fit into the performance-based requirements that the CHE will probably ask for again.

Dr. Van Scoy asked faculty to describe the major developments of the program over the last several years. Dr. Stephens explained how the four required courses, an experience in teaching, and a required research project provide candidates the breadth and depth of knowledge in language and literacy. Dr. DeFord highlighted how their diverse backgrounds and experiences have allowed them to bring the program to national stature in terms of reputation and rigor. Dr. Van Scoy asked faculty if they have seen areas that need change as result of these major program modifications. Drs. DeFord and Stephens reported that changes include changing the point at which they take the qualifying exam, the content of the qualifying exam, the need for a research tool requirement, and the content of the comprehensive exam. Dr. Stephens reminded the group that because there are only three faculty, they meet often to discuss changes.

III. Committee Discussion of Recommendations & Procedures for Plans

Dr. Dickey explained the following procedures and time line that include the committee’s recommendations and what program faculty can consider for changes or updates. Dr. Stephens conveyed the importance of giving the Ph.D. at least a year to encompass the self study requirements within the assessment plan. Dr. Dickey assured them that the timeline will be outlined in the committee’s recommendation report.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.