

MINUTES
Liberal Arts Core Committee
January 18, 2008
Student Involvement and Activities Center Meeting Room,
Plaza level, Maucker Union

Present: Maria Basom, Ken Baughman, Adam Bentley, Jerry Caswell, Nadene Davidson, Donna Hoffman, Siobahn Morgan, Jean Neibauer, Ron O'Meara, Frank Thompson, Lori VanHooreweghe, Donna Vinton

I. Call to Order:

Morgan called the meeting to order at 8:15 A.M.

II. Approval of December 7, 2007 Minutes

Miraculously, no obvious errors were found in the minutes from the previous meeting. Baughman moved to approve the minutes, Hoffman seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

III. Announcements

A. The recent letter from Interim Provost Lubker outlined some actions that are going to take place, dependent upon funding, to help improve the LAC. This would be through the addition of new lines. This was also announced at the recent Faculty Senate meeting. Another item addressed at that Senate meeting was the resolution from CHFA which was discussed in the December 7, 2007 LACC meeting. The Faculty Senate referred the resolution to the LACC for action. The action that was desired most by those that proposed the resolution (Philosophy and Religion faculty), was that there should be a process developed that would clarify how large scale changes in the LAC are made. The process should address aspects such as what is required in the content of a proposal, who should be consulted, what is the order of consultations, what is the order of actions, and by which bodies. The process being asked for here would be for "structural" or "large scale" changes. Small changes happen continuously, usually with the addition of a course to a category. Typically these are not controversial and consultation with departments that might be impacted by small changes are typically done.

In the past there have been some structural changes, such as the change in the Humanities courses from 2-four credit courses to 3-three credit courses. There was also the rearrangement of the natural sciences courses from the "Sphere" model to the life and physical sciences and the removal of Capstone from that group. The re-numbering of categories has also occurred in the past, and since this does not actually change the content of the categories, it is typically not an issue. Morgan asked for volunteers to help develop a process to indicate how large scale changes/structural changes to the LAC should progress. Hoffman asked if there were by-laws for the LACC. Morgan responded that she would look for information on this in the library Special Collections, which has archived Faculty Senate

minutes. Thompson mentioned that this committee was created by the Faculty Senate and as such operates under Roberts Rules of Order. In this case, anything that we propose would have to be approved by the Faculty Senate. Morgan has looked at the documentation in her office, which is sporadic, and has not come across any previously outlined process for such a change. She will look further, but if one does exist, it may need revision, and if a process does not exist, then the Faculty Senate has charged the LACC with developing one. Morgan suggested that a subcommittee could work on a process in the mean time. Neibauer asked if for the 1988 revision there was a process used and if Morgan could investigate that. Baughman also mentioned at the Faculty Senate meeting there was a question about the Charge for the LACC, and also noted that there was a time limit for feedback to the Senate on the CHFA resolution, and the LACC needed to report back to the Senate in 4 weeks concerning the LACC actions on the CHFA resolution.

Morgan suggested that she would search for documentation and descriptions for previous processes, and that in the meantime a group would work on developing a process. Baughman mentioned that processes could be both formal (procedural) and informal (asking for opinions). Thompson noted that might cause confusion, and Morgan mentioned that faculty might not be able to distinguish between the formal and informal. Thompson noted that a previously proposed change in the LAC caused a great deal of controversy, in part because it was a “top-down” document (coming from the upper administration), and not from the faculty.

Baughman asked about the method of gathering information and what information would be needed in the proposals and the formal curricular process, such as the input from faculty. Thompson noted that the information gathering could be incorporated in the process for proposing changes. Faculty or departments could be sources of information for what are the best practices in a specific area of the LAC, and those experts could provide input and information through the entire process – from the development of proposals through the consultation or assessments of proposals.

Davidson asked about the overall vision of the LAC, in particular in what we want our students to gain from it and checking of any revisions to the LAC fit within the vision. Basom noted that we need to clarify that there are small changes that are normal to the curricular cycle, and these often occur after category reviews. She suggested that it might be a good idea to re-assess the entire structure of the LAC on a regular basis. Thompson noted that sometimes a group that has to re-assess a large system to meet a set of specific goals and objectives may not be able to achieve the changes that are needed. Davidson asked if there was an movement on the part of the faculty about the need to change the LAC to meet the needs of our students. Thompson noted that resource problems have hampered changes in the past.

Morgan asked for volunteers to work on developing a process to look at how proposals that seek to change the LAC on a “large scale” should be handled, and, also to see if the entire structure of the LAC should be examined on a regular basis to see if revisions are needed. The latter task is not part of the Faculty Senate request, but the discussion at the meeting has

brought up the topic and if the subcommittee would like to examine it as well, they are encouraged to do so. The volunteers are Baughman, Thompson and Hoffman.

B. Registration has gone fairly well – all of the Capstones have filled up.

IV. New Business

A. Morgan distributed a copy of submitted 3A review, which she received at the end of the fall 2007 semester. The review is missing input from the School of Music. Also missing are the executive summary, syllabi and student outcome assessments. Morgan asked for advice on the next steps. Thompson suggested that a letter should be sent to the review committee members outlining specifically what else needs to be done, and also send a copy of the letter to the various department heads. Baughman also suggested that the letter include mention of how the category reviews are distributed to the Faculty Senate and Deans.

B. Morgan noted that as part of the reaccreditation process the various mission statements and/or purposes and goals (P&G) statements are examined. Currently there is no approved P&G statement for the LAC. The statement currently on the LAC website has never gone past the status of a working document. Morgan asked that LACC members think about the P&G of the LAC, and examine what is at other universities. She has compiled a list of some at her regular website for LACC business, and suggested that those locations might be a good starting point. If LACC members have other suggested websites, please submit those to her. Morgan suggested that the LACC members look at 3 aspects – what skills should our students gain from the LAC, what knowledge should they gain, and what experiences should they have. LACC members were encouraged to submit their lists by January 25, and there would not be a meeting that day. Morgan will compile together the lists and they'll be discussed at a future meeting. Thompson asked if this was a mission statement. Vinton noted that the accreditation process looks at both mission statements and P&G statements. Davidson wondered if defining a P&G statement should precede and development of a process for changing the LAC. Morgan said the process could be developed first, but may require that any proposal does fit within an approved P&G statement. So logically, no proposals for large changes to the LAC should proceed until a P&G statement is approved. A process for assessing and evaluating a proposal can be developed and could include suggested language about how a proposal fits within the P&G of the LAC.

Baughman asked about the time line for getting a P&G approved. Morgan noted that the self-study for the accreditation will start in fall 2008, and a statement should be in place by then for inclusion in the self-study. However, if that does not happen, it will be necessary to have a statement in place by the time the site visit by the accreditation team occurs in early 2011. Thompson asked about input in the P&G from alumni. Vinton mentioned that there have been some surveys in the past of alumni possibly during the 1990's. She noted that the results of these surveys tended to bring up items that one would expect, such as communication skills, critical thinking skills, etc.

(NOTE: I've found a survey at http://www.uni.edu/assessment/UNI_Alumni-2002.pdf that has some information that addresses specific areas of the UNI education, there are also graduating senior surveys at <http://www.uni.edu/instrsch/surveys.shtml>).

There was a question about how well the Alumni Association has tracked or surveyed students.

Morgan will send out a list of links collected at her website www.uni.edu/morgans/lacc/

VI. Old Business

A. The group looked at the Capstone Management document again. Morgan suggested that once the document is ready that it be sent to the current Capstone instructors and various departments for feedback. Various grammatical suggestions were made to the current document.

B. The 2006-2007 Annual Report for the LAC was discussed next and various grammatical errors were noted. A revised copy will be sent out again.

VII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the session was made by Davidson, and seconded by O'Meara . Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Next Meeting – 8:15 AM, February 1, 2008 – in the SIAC meeting room.

Respectfully submitted,

Siobahn Morgan

LAC website: <http://www.uni.edu/vpaa/lac/index.shtml>