

MINUTES
Liberal Arts Core Committee
February 1, 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, Frank Thompson, Lori VanHooreweghe, Donna Vinton

I. Call to Order:

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

II. Approval of January 18, 2008 Minutes

Only one minor typo was found in the minutes, though the status of “mean time” was debated. Basom moved to approve the minutes, Caswell seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

III. Announcements

A. Registration has finished for the spring semester. Numbers are pretty good for most sections, and the Capstone numbers are also strong. Summer schedules are currently being worked on and several of the new Capstone courses are scheduled, and the number of sections of 820:140 has been reduced from the previous summer, due to low numbers during summer 2007.

B. The LAC Revision Subcommittee provided an update on their work. The Faculty Senate asked for an update from the LACC on a process for LAC reform at the next Senate meeting, February 11. Baughman mentioned that so far they have come up with a multi-step process. A preliminary proposal would be submitted to the LACC which would include not only the proposal but also supporting information (studies, other institutions using this model/method, etc). This would be a “consultative session” with the LACC. The next step would be to obtain feedback/information from interested parties - faculty who teach in the core, departments/units impacted by the change, student groups, student support services, etc. The current curriculum revision guidelines are ambiguous concerning how the LACC fits into the cycle – who does it report to first, should proposals come to it before the UCC, and so on. As it is currently diagrammed this is ambiguous. It is entirely possible to incorporate this reform process into the current curriculum reform process.

Thompson noted that there hasn't been a well defined process in place for changing the LAC, and this might prevent people from coming forward with good ideas. Another aspect that needs to be considered when changing the LAC would be the allocation of resources that would help to inspire and support changes. One aspect of the LAC that should also be considered is how malleable is the LAC? Can it change on the short term, such as Capstone

has in recent history, or does it only change on a longer time line? Davidson mentioned that majors in the COE depend upon the LAC for content, and those students needs must be considered when any change is made. A similar situation exists for COBA majors.

The subcommittee will come up with a preliminary proposal for the LAC reform process for the Faculty Senate meeting, and will provide copies to the LACC before the Senate meeting. They will also be able to attend the Senate meeting and present their current ideas and obtain feedback.

C. Since February 8 is the first “Up-Close” we will not meet next week, but will meet again on the 15th of February.

D. Morgan distributed an information sheet about the Foundations of Excellence® program. UNI will make use of this program to enhance the first year experience (FYE) for students. Since the LAC is a large part of a student’s first year, it is possible that this program may impact the LAC, or the LACC may be needed to provide assistance to help improve the FYE. There was some discussions as to how well this covers all aspects of a student’s life and how it works. Jon Buse and April Chatham-Carpenter are the co-Chairs for the program.

E. Morgan and Baughman met with the 3A Review team to provide them with information concerning the preliminary report that was sent to the LACC. It is hoped that they will submit a revised report by April 1. The 2A report is still delinquent.

IV. New Business

A. The LAS – Liberal Arts and Sciences draft proposal was discussed. The concept was apparently proposed by former CSBS Dean Jill Wallace and other Deans thought it was a good idea. This was also mentioned by Provost Lubker in a meeting with the LACC during fall 2007. The idea is to provide some type of recognition for students who go through our LAC program when they graduate. Thompson noted that it may be advantageous for students to have a chance to get an “LAC Major” since that shows a strong background in diverse areas, and would help them with graduate school applications, or applications to other professional programs. The other aspect is the currently the LAC has only 5 hours of upper level courses (Non-Western and Capstone), much less than in a typical major. There already is a “General Studies” program that has students taking the LAC plus 15 hours in 100-level courses in 3 of the 5 colleges, and electives to get a total of 120 credits. According to the 06-08 UNI Catalog (page 154), a General Studies major may not have another major – so those students would not be eligible for an LAC “major”.

Another possibility might be to make general LAC majors that have emphasis in the 3 colleges, similar to the “Humanities” major, like a “Natural Science Major”, and “Social Science Major” could be devised around the LAC. The group generally didn’t think that a “Certificate” designation would be appropriate for this. There was concern that the entire idea behind this proposal was to get students to take the majority of their LAC here at UNI and the awarding of an “LAS” degree/emphasis/whatever seemed a bit disingenuous. Also

the current climate in the state is to encourage more and more high school students to take LAC courses before they finish high school, and this program may award only a very few. Basom suggested that if we want to inspire students to start their college experience here and not at a community college, then perhaps we should look at the titles that we give our courses – they are not always inspiring. Apart from the course titles, the curriculum should also be exciting to encourage students to come here first, rather than a community college. A better way to bring in students would be to provide them with a unique opportunity or course here, such as a “Cornerstone” course. The LAS major/certificate just doesn’t seem to add enough value to solve the problem of promoting the LAC. Davidson noted that the importance of the LAC isn’t always made clear to students – rather than try to use a “major” to get our students excited about our LAC, inform them of the importance of the courses to their overall development. Does the LAC program provide the outcomes that we want our students to have? If we can instead emphasize the positive results of an LAC education at UNI, that would be much more useful.

Another issue is the transfer credit – if a student does this for any other major, the department will evaluate the credit and generally accept the credits. If there is any LAC transfer credit, then could not the community college LAC credits also count for the LAC major? Admissions may need to be consulted to determine if there would be any real advantage to such a program. Morgan will also find out how the proposal was viewed by the UCC. Baughman noted that if this were to go forward, then perhaps a higher GPA criteria could be used to designate students as “Honors LAS/C” students.

V. Old Business

A. The Purposes and Goals Statement for the LAC was discussed. Various members of the committee provided excellent input concerning what could be included in the document and it appears that most people were able to examine similar statements at other institutions. A required task this semester for the LACC will be to come up with a P&G statement for the LAC for accreditation. A group will need to come together and start working on the document. Morgan suggests that once a document is put together that it would be sent to the entire faculty for feedback and consultation before the LACC acts upon it. Volunteers were asked to work on this, and Basom, Vinton and VanHooreweghe will join Morgan in working on it. A document from Baughman about the linkage of the P&G with SOA objectives was also distributed. All other members of the LACC were encouraged to provide any information that they come across to Morgan so she can add it to her LAC website.

B. Morgan talked about the feedback that she has gotten concerning the Capstone Management document from the current new Capstone instructors. One interesting item that was suggested was to make the MAPP tests compulsory for Capstone students. Currently it is now done on a voluntary basis. Vinton discussed the LAC assessment plan that was proposed in response to the previous HLC accreditation visit. This included the use of NSSE, MAPP and embedded assessment. Other assessments such as GRE, graduate placement, etc were discussed, but the collection of that data is not complete or thorough. Currently it is difficult to get students to take the test voluntarily or for faculty to include it as a required part of their courses.

C. The Annual Report was again revised. Please provide Morgan with any corrections.

D. At the next meeting, the Capstone Management document, the Annual Report and the LAS Major/emphasis program will be examined.

VI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the session was made by Hoffman, and seconded by Davidson. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Siobahn Morgan

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