

MINUTES
Liberal Arts Core Committee
March 28, 2008
Student Involvement and Activities Center Meeting Room,
Plaza level, Maucker Union

Present: Maria Basom, Ken Baughman, Adam Bentley, Nadene Davidson, Donna Hoffman, Susan Moore, Siobahn Morgan, Jean Neibauer, Jake Rudy, Lori VanHooreweghe, Donna Vinton

Guests: Paul Gray, Eugene Wallingford, Computer Science

I. Call to Order:

Morgan called the meeting to order at 8:20 A.M.

II. *Computational Modeling and Simulation* Proposal for Category 1C

Paul Gray and Eugene Wallingford were on hand to discuss the course proposed for inclusion into category 1C of the LAC. The category is currently described as “Quantitative Reasoning”, which can be considered more than “Math”, and the Computer Science department has developed a course about using computational models and simulations to explore math. Currently the course is geared towards science applications, since those are the models that have been developed thus far. They hope to expand the scope of the modeling applications in the future to appeal to other populations, such as students in the social sciences, fine arts, etc. At present they plan to offer one section this fall, and would be able to offer more sections per semester in the future. At other institutions computer science courses are often options for this part of those institutions’ Gen Ed programs. However some of those courses are general programming courses, which isn’t what this particular course is about.

Vinton asked about the expected math background that would be required for students in the course, and Gray mentioned that algebra is only needed, which is the currently required math level for incoming UNI students. Neibauer noted that many majors will have to take other LAC category 1C courses to fulfill their major requirements, especially COBA and CNS majors, and would not likely have the chance to take the course (which is presently geared towards science majors). Davidson noted that COE majors are required to obtain math content in the LAC similar to other content areas, and was wondering about how COE majors would be served by the course. Gray noted that many of the software components of the course were developed under a grant program that provides curriculum support for K-12 educators by providing visualizations of mathematical/physical phenomena.

Baughman asked about consultations with the Mathematics Department, and a comparison to the current course 800:092 (Mathematical Modeling). Gray noted that he had taught that course previously, and that course was more abstract rather than applied. The Mathematics Department did not respond to the consultation requests that were sent out when the course went through the curriculum process, and Morgan mentioned that she asked for feedback

from the department and had not yet heard back from them. Gray described several computational models that could be used and demonstrated what could be done and what sort of quantitative concepts a student would be exposed to. There was discussion concerning rabbits and wolfs/foxes in Central Park, and how we would all be overrun by vorpal bunnies in no time. Baughman noted that the original designation for categories 1A, B and C were “Communication Essentials” and that this course seems to clearly be about communicating mathematical representations. The course has already gone through the curriculum cycle and is not intended for Computer Science Majors, but for the LAC. Various questions about methods of assessment and student support were also covered.

Bentley moved that the course be included in category 1C of the LAC. Baughman seconded. Discussion followed. There was concern that no feedback from the Mathematics Department has been obtained and the committee was interested in getting that before moving forward. Hoffman moved to table the motion, Davidson seconded. Discussion followed. It is possible for this course, if it isn’t included in 1C, to be altered for Capstone credit, or possibly incorporated into a “Cornerstone” type course (if one is ever developed). Motion passed unanimously.

III. Approval of March 7, 2008 Minutes

Baughman moved for approval of the March 7, 2008 minutes. Bentley seconded. Discussion followed. Miraculously, no glaring errors were found in the minutes (for the second meeting in a row). The minutes were approved unanimously.

IV. Announcements

A. The Faculty Senate meeting was discussed. Only part of the Capstone Management document was approved, specifically the section concerning the numbering of the Capstone courses. The Faculty Senate approved using CAP as the prefix for the courses and courses with department numbers will be cross listed with the CAP number, ie, CAP:140/820:140 could be how ETS will be listed in the future. The Faculty Senate tabled the rest of the document and will bring it up again at the next Senate meeting. They did act on removing the language that was intended for the currently defunct Dietetics majors from Category 4B. And the Annual Report (2006-2007) of the LAC was also docketed.

B. Susan Moore will be sitting in for Jerry Caswell for the next few weeks, and Jake Rudy is the new student representative.

V. New Business

A. Morgan distributed a copy of the NISG resolution concerning Personal Wellness. She had only gotten a copy of the resolution recently, and in the mean time, there have been meetings with HPELS/COE faculty and NISG senators discussing the content of Personal Wellness. The students are interested in having a course on PW, but are concerned about the content of the course and the view that the course isn’t doing as much as it could. There is also concern about the size of the course, which has only recently been increased to large section sizes. Previously class sizes were typically 125 per section but currently the sizes are

250-300. Current complaints about the course also include scheduling difficulties. Davidson is a member of the group from COE who is serving on the committee looking at the student concerns about PW. At this point it appears prudent to see how those discussions play out before having the LACC steps in.

VI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the session was made by Hoffman, and seconded by Davidson. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Next Meeting – 8:15 AM, April 4, 2008 – in the SIAC meeting room.

Respectfully submitted,
Siobahn Morgan

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