

MINUTES  
Liberal Arts Core Committee  
November 3, 2006  
SIAC Meeting Room, Maucker Union

Present: Maria Basom, Ken Baughman, Jerry Caswell, Cyndi Dunn, Brian Larkin, Siobahn Morgan, Ron O'Meara, Jean Neibauer, Jerry Smith, Lori VanHooreweghe, Donna Vinton

I. Call to Order:

Morgan called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes:

Baughman provided a correction and Neibauer provided a clarification to the minutes from last week. Smith moved and Basom seconded the approval of the corrected/clarified minutes for October 27, 2006. Motion passed.

III Announcements

- A. Morgan distributed a response from the mathematics department concerning the LAC committees concerns about the Mathematics Reasoning for Teaching I, which has been approved by the LAC.
- B. Morgan also distributed a slightly flawed document showing the results of exit interviews of graduating seniors, including data from previous years. While the results show generally good regard for the LAC, the numbers seem to show a slight decrease in "approval" over the past few years.
- C. The restart of the Category 3 Program Review was mentioned. Baughman and Morgan met with the team and came back with some questions from the review team. One of the important questions is "what is the point of doing these reviews" since there were several items in the previous Category 3 Program Review that have not been acted upon. Smith mentioned that the purpose of the Category Coordinating Committees would be to make sure that changes were implemented.
- D. For the November 10 meeting, Morgan will be out of town and Baughman will be in charge, and he'll have explicit instructions to take down the names of anyone who misbehaves.

IV New Business

- A. Morgan distributed a Capstone proposal from Jay Lees for a course entitled "Sacred Spaces". Lees will meet with the LAC Committee on November 10.
- B. Morgan distributed a draft copy of the Humanities Program Review for the committee to review. Feedback should be provided to Morgan to pass on to the Humanities review committee to help them tidy-up their report.

- C. On November 17, the Non-Western Cultures Review team will be visiting to discuss their report.
- D. Morgan talked about the university wide taskforce that is being put together concerning the curriculum. The LAC Committee should get a subcommittee together to look specifically at our area (the LAC) before we are asked to look at it as part of the entire curriculum structure at UNI. Volunteers were sought, and the following brave souls stepped forward – Morgan, Smith, Lori V., Neibauer, and Vinton. This subcommittee will take an initial look at the material and will consult with the LAC Committee frequently.
- E. Morgan will be meeting with NISG on November 15, though that will depend upon the weather. Vinton mentioned that in a previous Capstone course she taught she had asked students for feedback on their views of the LAC. She will bring that information to a later meeting to share.

## V Discussion of proposals

### *Capstone Proposal – Renewable Energy in Iowa and Beyond.*

Dunn moved that the course be approved, and Baughman seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Various issues were raised about the course including the rigor of the course, the required readings, the expectations of the students, etc. One vote yes; five votes no; one abstention. Motion fails.

### *Capstone Proposal – Local Issues: Advocacy and Civil Engagement.*

Smith moved that the course be approved, and Larkin seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Seven votes yes, zero votes no, no abstention. Motion passes.

## VII Discussion of Reports

### Capstone Report

Morgan talked about the number of various majors in certain sections of the new Capstone model. There was a concern that some of these courses would be populated with specific majors rather than a broad spectrum of UNI students. The list below is a summary of the courses that have relatively large populations of students with a single major.

Courses that have been offered only once or for which we have only one semester of data:

*Ethics in Communication* – 22% Public Relations

*Theatre in Education* – 19% Elementary Education, 31% Theatre

*Medicine, Morality, and Society: The Social Construction of Health and Illness* – 20% Elementary Education, 15% Psychology

*Communication Disorders and Society* – 31% Elementary Education  
*The Holocaust in Literature and Film* – 25% German

Courses that have been offered more than once:

*Seminar in Literature: Blues & Jazz in African American Literature and Film* – 25%  
English

*Biomedical Ethics* – 18% Gerontology

*Building Communities: Developing Intentional Family Spaces* – 19% Interior Design

*Minority-Majority Group Relations in the US* – 25% Social Work

The 820:140 *Environment, Technology and Society* sections are also skewed in that CNS students tend to avoid the new capstone courses and take 820:140 instead.

Smith had some additions to the “advantages” section – but rather than having me mutilate them, here’s his suggested wording “Since Capstone courses can be offered at the discretion of the faculty across the University, the new model provides a means by which temporary surpluses of faculty teaching capacity can be productively employed.” In other words, faculty can have the opportunity to offer their Capstone course(s) at times when there are enough faculty available to cover the courses within their department.

Smith also suggested that the rationale/definition for Capstone should be “adjusted”. When the new model was proposed it did not entirely cover the range of courses or their contents that have since been approved. This is a possible wording - “In addition to promoting learning goals associated with an end-of-program Capstone course, courses may be approved for inclusion in this category because they serve goals of the Liberal Arts Core that aren’t adequately addressed by other Categories. They may for instance promote civic engagement and understanding, develop student thinking skills, or increase student awareness of the experiences and perspectives of minorities in America.” This is the only course that every single undergraduate must take here – so we should define it.

Vinton also mentioned that another advantage would be the opportunities for team teaching and collaboration amongst faculty in the new Capstone model. It would help faculty development, and to improve their portfolios.

#### VIII. Adjournment:

Baughman moved to adjourn; Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Next Meeting – November 10, 2006

Respectfully submitted,  
Siobahn Morgan