

MINUTES
Liberal Arts Core Committee
February 24, 2006
Old Gold Room, Maucker Union

Present: Baughman, Brown, Davidson, Heston, Morgan, Murphy, Neibauer, Smith, VanHooreweghe, Vinton.

Guests: Stephen Taft, Acting Provost Lubker.

I. Call to Order:

Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes:

For lack of time, action on the minutes of the February 10th meeting were deferred until the next meeting.

III. Announcements:

Smith reminded the Committee that the UNI Faculty Senate will be discussing the Personal Wellness Category Review at its meeting on Monday, 2/27, at 3:15, in the Great Reading Room of Seerley Hall.

IV. New Business:

A. Capstone Course Proposal: Politics, War, Words and Music: A Reflection of our Time, by Dr. Stephen Taft.

Dr. Taft described his proposed Capstone course, emphasizing that its intent is to get students engaged in discussions of current events, especially relating to war, using art and music as vehicles for this purpose. Considerable discussion followed, with a focus on: the value of providing context through historically significant pieces of art and music that will enrich students' understanding; the content knowledge that would be taught in the course and how it would be tested; the nature of student projects; and how students from different disciplinary backgrounds would be engaged in the course.

Rather than voting the proposal up-or-down, Heston made a motion to ask Dr. Taft to resubmit a revised proposal that would address concerns raised by LACC members. Baughman seconded this motion. Motion passed.

B. Visit by Acting Provost Lubker.

Acting Provost Lubker met with the Committee to talk about an impending budget problem being faced by the University. Though related legislation hasn't yet been finalized, it appears that UNI will

face a budget shortfall of between \$3 and \$6 million during the 06-07 academic year. President Koob has stated, and Provost Lubker agrees, that this is not likely to be a temporary shortfall. Rather, we can expect that, during the foreseeable future, the Iowa state legislature will not fund Regent's universities at levels experienced in the past, owing to competing needs for state funds and firm resistance to raising taxes. Consequently, Koob and Lubker feel that, rather than continuing to make short-term cuts in various places as a way of getting through each year's "budget crisis," the University has to adopt a different strategy, one that requires more permanent and fundamental changes in the organization's programs and operations.

As part of this, the University will be re-evaluating all its activities, academic and otherwise, with the intent of identifying non-essential programs and expenditures that could be eliminated to create permanent reductions in UNI's funding needs. As one of the major academic programs on campus, the Liberal Arts Core will need to be evaluated from this perspective, hence the purpose of Provost Lubker's visit. Lubker asked the LACC to begin to think of ways in which the costs of delivering the Liberal Arts Core to UNI students could be reduced. One approach is to increase "double-dipping," whereby students satisfy multiple requirements with a single course; using writing-intensive courses to substitute for "College Reading and Writing" is an example. It may also be possible to reduce the actual or effective size of the Liberal Arts Core so as to reduce the number of credits students take at UNI before they graduate. Related issues were discussed, with the Provost asking LACC members to let him know their thoughts on this matter.

V. Old Business:

No old business.

VI. Other Business:

No other business

VII. Adjournment:

Davidson moved to adjourn. Brown seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

The next meeting will be March 3, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. in the Old Gold Room in Maucker Union.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Smith,
Chair, LACC