

MINUTES
Liberal Arts Core Committee
September 1, 2006
ITTC 125/126

Present: Baughman, Caswell, Marchesani (for Neibauer), Morgan, Smith, VanHooreweghe, Vinton

I. Call to Order:

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

II. Approval of Minutes:

A small correction to the April 21 2006 minutes were made.

Smith moved and Baughman seconded the approval of the minutes for April 21, 2006. Motion passed.

III. Announcements:

A. The status of the committee was discussed. Siobahn Morgan has been appointed as the LAC coordinator. With certain changes in staffing on campus and faculty PDAs, there are 4 vacancies in the LAC committee – all of voting members. These include representatives from the following colleges – CNS, CSBS, and COE.

In addition, a representative from the Faculty Senate needs to be appointed.

Jerry Caswell was welcomed as the new representative from the Library.

With the absence of many voting members of the committee, it was decided that any committee business that would directly effect the LAC be delayed until more voting members are appointed.

The Provosts office's staffing has been re-arranged a bit, resulting in the committee's loss of the services of Cheryl Nedrow during meetings. She will still be able to provide clerical support from the Provost's office.

B. A proposal for the course "Elementary Probabilities and Statistics in Bioinformatics" to be included in Category 1C was distributed. Mathematics faculty have been contacted and will attend a future meeting to discuss the proposal.

C. The report on the Category 2B review was distributed. The committee had met with the 2B personnel on March 24, 2006, and the report was updated. The status of the Category 2A review was discussed. Morgan had met with Jerry Soneson to discuss the

status of the review. At the present time, it is likely the review will be finished in October.

D. Morgan mentioned that the annual report of the LAC will also have to be written, and she will no doubt tap some people to help jog her memory on some points.

E. It was also determined that the room that was originally booked for meetings would be too small, especially if guests were invited. The acoustics were also difficult to deal with at times. A new room will be sought for future meetings.

IV. New Business:

A. Jerry Smith was willing to serve as co-chair. No further action on this item though, due to committee vacancies.

B. The agenda for the upcoming year was discussed. Various items include:

a. Program Reviews – finish up the Category 2 reviews, and provide assistance to the committee doing the Category 3 review. Baughman is the liaison to this committee. Dean Bubser was contacted for information on the status of the committee.

b. Interim Provost Lubker will be invited to a future meeting, but again, not until we have a few more hands on board.

c. The new model of Capstone is to be reviewed this year. The results from the Spring 2006 course surveys have been collated and will be distributed in a future meeting. It was thought that it would be best to put forward the assessment of the new Capstone model before the Faculty Senate this semester, in order for there to be enough time to incorporate any changes in the Capstone structure into the schedule of courses for Fall 2007. Regardless of when the item comes before the Faculty Senate, it was thought that the student and faculty Capstone surveys might take place again this semester, likely later in the semester.

d. One aspect related to Capstone is that of the “place” of Capstone within the LAC. In particular some wondered how informed students and faculty are of the goals of Capstone, and the LAC in general. At the LAC website there is a working document concerning the LAC goals. These goals should be re-examined, and possibly revised, and a ratified set of goals may be ultimately needed. This will help to define the “purpose” of each part of the LAC, and hopefully help students and faculty see the overall value and intent of the LAC.

One aspect of the LAC goals that should be addressed is “what is the *core* knowledge that we want our students to gain from the LAC”? In particular, what are the specific skills we would like them to have, or that should be enhanced by the LAC? Can *specific* skills be defined? Another issue is the diversity of the

types of experience. Students can have a range of experiences within the LAC within the same category, which would make defining “goals” in a category rather difficult. Or “goals” could be defined so vaguely to indicate that nearly any course could fulfill the requirements of a category.

One way that we can test the skills of students from the LAC is by working with student outcomes assessments. Unfortunately with the variety of courses, specific skills assessment might be difficult. Vinton’s office could help in this endeavor, and also a definition of the “goals” in the LAC categories can also provide the committee with guidance in determining what we need to measure/assess.

In summary, the goals for the various parts of the LAC need to be examined, and input from various parties, including the faculty, various coordinating committees and others would be helpful – please check the LAC website for the currently stated goals.

e. General budget concerns of the LAC were discussed, in particular the current trend for students to fulfill their LAC requirements at community colleges. We should look at ways of making the UNI LAC more attractive to students, so they will look to us rather than community colleges for these courses. Things such as scheduling, providing enough sections, possibly expanding the course options were discussed.

f. On a similar topic, the current status of the LAC in terms of credit hours and the variety of courses offered should also be reviewed this year. Currently there are 45 hours in the LAC. Can this number be reduced? Can the number of category options be increased? It would again be important to have specific goals in the LAC categories to maintain the quality of the LAC, rather than just letting in all possible courses.

g. Coordinating committees will need to be established for the various parts of the LAC. Morgan will be contacting the various college Deans and senates for that.

h. Vinton mentioned the Academic Profiles, something that arose from the NCA evaluation of the LAC. This will help to assess the college experience by testing freshmen and seniors. This will be done through MAPP – Measure of Academic Proficiencies and Performance, an on-line assessment that will be available soon. The MAPP program is only voluntary, and it hoped that the results from the assessment can help the LAC committee in its job, whether it is in our definition of the goals or the structure of the LAC, or some other aspect that has yet to be determined.

V. Old Business

A. None

VII. Adjournment:

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Next Meeting – To Be Determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Siobahn Morgan
Acting Secretary