

MINUTES
Liberal Arts Core Committee
January 26, 2007
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

Guests: Tony Smothers, Patrick Pease

I. Call to Order:

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

II. New/Transfer Student Handbooks

Tony Smothers (Academic Advising and Career Services) talked about the first year and transfer student handbooks and the LAC content in the books. The LAC is a large part of the handbook and Tony is seeking input from the committee on ways to improve the information about the LAC. There was also a bit of discussion about making sure that the students at summer orientation are made aware of the importance of the LAC and to not view it as "something to get out of the way". The comedic skills of the LAC coordinator were also discussed and how various speakers can provide some good information about the LAC at summer orientation – not just the nuts and bolts but the philosophy and rationale. There is quite a bit of training for the staff involved with summer orientation so that they are aware of the importance of the LAC.

A couple of changes that were suggested include:

- Possibly listing the various Capstone courses that are available (more important for the transfer student book than the new student book).
- Provide more of the philosophy/rationale of the various categories in the LAC including the rationale for Capstone and its place as a culminating experience for the LAC.
- Move the descriptions of the courses closer to the list of the courses.
- Include the recommended first year LAC courses (Category 1)
- Include something about the LAC with the "pie" diagram.
- Providing a You-Tube like video to talk about the LAC and its interconnectedness – could be included on the LAC website. Facebook was also mentioned, but that is *so* last week.

If you do have other changes to the handbook that you'd like to recommend, make sure that you send those to Tony as soon as possible (Anthony.smothers@uni.edu). The transfer student book is being put together now, but there is still time to work on the new student book.

III. New Capstone Course Proposal

Patrick Pease (Geography) provided information on the Capstone course he is proposing “The Water Planet”. The assignments and tests were discussed. Since the course is a combination of social and physical science, short answer essays may be the most appropriate method of assessment. Students will also be required to work on projects. The group provided some interesting ideas for the course, including the use of WebCT for students to post their own views, and the projects that students may work on. There was also quite a bit of discussion about how to incorporate a variety of disciplines into the course and Pease was very open to the suggestions – except for reading “Moby Dick” perhaps.

Smith moved to approve the course. Caswell seconded the motion. Discussion was centered on the relevance of the topic to modern life. There was some question about the rubrics that will be used, particularly in assessing the final project. This concern will be passed on to Pease. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes

O’Meara moved to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2007 meeting, Larkin seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Announcements

- A. Morgan reminded the committee that the next meeting will be in the Presidential Room in the Union – let’s see how many get lost finding that location.
- B. Morgan reported about her meeting with the CSBS department Heads. A copy of the letter from Howard Barnes (DTGFS) to the Admissions staff was distributed.
- C. The Capstone report is docketed for the February 12 meeting. The senate wanted information on the grades associated with the new and “old” Capstone courses, and that was also provided to the LAC committee members.
- D. The group was reminded that Cherin Lee (Science education) will be at the meeting next time to talk about the new 4B course proposal – “Inquiry into Earth Sciences”

VI. Transfer Courses

Morgan distributed a list of courses that transfer in from Hawkeye Community College. The courses that are given LAC credit upon transfer as well as non-UNI equivalent courses (the XXX courses) were noted. Baughman questioned some of the details of the Barnes letter. Lori Van asked about who is supposed to “police” this problem – departments must submit their own courses for approval in the UNI LAC, but who determines if a course should/shouldn’t be able to transfer in as LAC? Should the individual departments decide this or should the LAC committee control it? When can a policy change be implemented?

The LAC committee is interested in putting together a clear, explicit policy that should deal with the whole transfer course issue. It was suggested that someone from Admissions come to talk to the group about the process.

V Capstone Course Numbers

The nature of Capstone is to be interdisciplinary, and therefore these courses should be in 010 in the catalog and schedule of courses. A couple of options are – list them in 010, put them in their own number system, use a letter system (“CAP”), etc. Currently 010 has several other different courses in it, and the number of different Capstone courses may overwhelm these other courses. This is an issue that we should investigate before the Senate meeting. This is something that the Registrar will have to be consulted about.

VI. Adjournment:

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Next Meeting – February 2, 2007

Respectfully submitted,
Siobahn Morgan