

MINUTES
Liberal Arts Core Committee
April 20, 2007
~~Student Involvement and Activities Center Meeting Room,
Plaza level, Maucker Union~~
Provost's Office Meeting Room, Seerley Hall

Present: Maria Basom, Ken Baughman, Jerry Caswell, Nadene Davidson, Cyndi Dunn, Siobahn Morgan, Ron O'Meara, Jerry Smith, Lori VanHooreweghe, Donna Vinton

I. Call to Order:

Once the group found the meeting location, Morgan called the meeting to order at 8:35 A.M.

II. Other Business

The group acknowledged the dedicated work of soon to be former LACC member Jerry Smith with an official letter, a (purple) gift, as well as some artery clogging goodies.

III. Approval of the minutes

The minutes from the April 13, 2007 were reviewed. Smith moved to approve the minutes, Basom seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Announcement

- A. Category review updates: The Category 4 review process has kicked off with the review committee getting their charge. Assessments were stressed with the group. Nothing yet from 2A.
- B. Waiting lists for Capstone were next discussed. Only a few courses have waiting lists, specifically those with pre-existing course numbers (the non-010:159, or 820:140 courses). Some courses have rather long waiting lists. The next item examined were the lists of students who have been added to the courses AFTER the course was closed. These students should have required permission to add the course, and may have been on the waiting list, may have by-passed the waiting list, or may have been given preferential treatment based upon their major. For example the Holocaust in Literature and Film course has a waiting list with 40 students, however two German majors were added to the course (given permission) after most of the students on the waiting list tried to get into the course. The courses that are currently located within departments can also count for some specific majors, such as those under the 640, 650, 740, 410, 48C and 490 designations, and also count for the general studies majors. Currently waiting lists are managed by departments for these courses.
- C. The work of the Curriculum Taskforce was discussed.

V. New Business

- A. Morgan distributed the Category 3B preliminary report. This will be discussed next week.
- B. There will be no further meetings of the LACC after the April 27 meeting until this fall.
- C. A flier for the CHAFA Fellows Symposium was distributed. There may be some discussions of LAC related topics at this event. Baughman provided some further information concerning the event.
- D. Morgan brought up an aspect of the Category Review process that should be addressed. Specifically, the course review questionnaire has a question concerning the writing requirements/skills in the course. There are no questions about quantitative or analytical skills, or oral communication, critical thinking, etc skills. There could also be questions about diversity/international perspectives content in the courses. This document will be reviewed in the fall, and possibly revised. There was also discussion about the mechanical nature of the review – in general it is not a very “creative” document, and comes off as rather “stiff”. Review teams should be encouraged to be more pro-active in their task, particularly in producing a more readable report. The instructions for the review process in general should be re-examined to determine if there is a way to encourage reports that aren’t just providing responses that are narrowly defined, but to provide more insight into the category and its relation to the rest of the LAC.

VI. Capstone Management

The question of how qualified instructors for the new Capstone courses was discussed. Morgan looked at the collective bargaining agreement to determine if this is an issue that is part of that document. It seems that it is rather an administrative issue – a department head is the one that assigns instructors for the courses. There should be a method of determining if an instructor from a different department or college wants to teach a section of Capstone, how is that person “approved” to teach the course – what procedure should be used.

One way to do this is to have a person submit a syllabus to the LACC, and get approval from the LACC to teach the course. This would also require the person to meet with the LACC before being approved to teach the course. Previously there was a Capstone committee for 820:140 which tried to manage the courses in that area to ensure that they were meeting the course’s purpose. However that committee did not have any “power” to prevent instructors from teaching 820:140 in a manner that wasn’t in line with the original course guidelines. This is problem that doesn’t just influence Capstone, but all areas of the LAC – how can we ensure that the courses in any area of the LAC are being taught in a manner appropriate for that category, particularly in terms of content. It would seem logical that the Provost’s office could be called upon to provide the leverage needed to ensure that qualified instructors are assigned to the courses.

There should also be an effort to make faculty (both old and new) aware of the purpose of the LAC and the courses within it, beyond the immediate topics or content.

There was a general discussion about building a culture around the LAC, in particular in providing information to faculty about the courses, what is expected in those categories or the courses within the various categories. This could also help in the assessment of faculty who teach in the LAC – are they doing what should be done in these courses. This will no doubt involve educating faculty concerning the LAC and the “purpose” of a course in the LAC.

The Capstone courses will have to be included in the discussion, in particular making faculty aware that the course that they originally proposed could be taught by others. This should be made clear to the individuals that are proposing the courses in the current curriculum cycle. It is very important that everyone is made aware that these courses are university wide, not just for individuals or for single departments.

So what it basically comes down to is communication – making everyone aware what the LAC is about, what Capstone is about, what the whole meaning for life is about – though that isn’t necessarily the case. We’ll have to work on this some more.

VII. Adjournment:

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

Next Meeting – April 27, 2007

Respectfully submitted,
Siobahn Morgan