

MINUTES
Liberal Arts Core Committee
September 7, 2007
Student Involvement and Activities Center Meeting Room,
Plaza level, Maucker Union

Present: Maria Basom, Ken Baughman, Jerry Caswell, Nadene Davidson, Donna Hoffman, Siobahn Morgan, Ron O'Meara, Frank Thompson, Lori VanHooreweghe, Donna Vinton

I. Call to Order:

Morgan called the meeting to order at 8:30 A.M.

II. Approval of the minutes

The minutes from the August 24, 2007 were reviewed. A few minor corrections were pointed out and clarifying statements were pointed out. Thompson moved to approve the minutes, O'Meara seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Announcements

- A. The Study Abroad group was contacted and asked to provide information about courses that they want to offer in the future before they send out the advertisements. In the past some courses were advertised as LAC credit courses, but were not yet approved for LAC credit. Morgan contacted Tim O'Connor and has been assured that she will be provided information on such courses before they are advertised to the students.
- B. Morgan showed the group the ramifications of the increase in the enrollment for this fall – an increase in the backlog. Backlog, for those not yet initiated in the lingo of administrative babble, is a count of the number of students who have yet to take courses in the LAC. Thompson asked about data on the number of faculty and sizes of section offered during this, and Morgan will gladly dive into the data and bring those numbers to a future meeting, along with colorful graph. There was discussion about the number of students that go to community colleges over the past few years when they are unable to get the courses (LAC) that they need.

Morgan also checked on the number of students that have been served over the past few years and the numbers show that fewer seats are available for students enrolled in our already packed courses in the LAC. Basic upshot – more students, fewer spaces (in the LAC). The end result – increase in backlog, increase in student frustration. Possible solutions – more sections by hiring more faculty (costs money), more students per section (not a good idea and in some cases not physically possible), increase the teaching load for current faculty (not a popular option).

Several suggestions were made about how to address the needs of the LAC, such as greater funding for more instructors, the establishment of an LAC College/Unit, bonuses for faculty that teach larger loads, etc.

- C. There has been some advertisements in UNI Online to rally the troops and create more Capstone courses.
- D. The SOA committee – Donna Vinton’s University committee – has an LAC representative (Baughman) and he’s willing to continue in that role, even without extra pay – though rumor has it that Donna does provide treats on occasion.

IV. New Business

- A. Morgan distributed the working document for Capstone management. This will be worked on and finalized sometime this semester. The Faculty Senate has appointed us this task after the new model for Capstone was approved by the Senate in the spring 2007. Morgan clarified the current status of the “new” Capstone courses, which are currently in the curriculum cycle for approval by the UCC, the LAC and ultimately the Faculty Senate.

There was discussion about the management of the new Capstone courses and how they’ll be assessed in the future. There was also discussion about the lack of support for faculty that would like to teach Capstone course or develop the courses. In particular, departments are not able to usually provide any release time for faculty to offer the courses.

V. Old Business

- A. The Category 3B – Literature, Philosophy and Religion – Review was discussed. Morgan noted that the review team was very critical of the review mechanism. This indicates that we (the LACC) should examine and update the review process. We also should make the LAC Purposes and Goals clearer and how they are linked to the courses.

There was discussion of ways to make the LAC better and more appealing to students, such as a “Cornerstone” course. It would be hoped that the quality of our courses would help to keep students here and dissuade them from going to community colleges to pick up these courses. We can’t really control what is done at community colleges, but we can only really address what we do in our own house.

The 3B review points out that we don’t make the outcomes of the LAC clearly defined, nor do we clearly define the skills that we want our students to come away with from the courses in the LAC. Students currently do not clearly understand of or are aware of the benefits of the LAC, and that is something that needs to be addressed, possibly through the faculty. Of course if the Purposes and Goals of the LAC were more clearly defined and promoted to the faculty, and ultimately to the

students, it would probably enhance the view that the LAC is valuable for all students.

It would be valuable, as pointed out in the Category 3B review, that it would be worthwhile for faculty to discuss the courses that they teach in a particular category to determine if they are doing what needs to be done. It would also be important for the faculty, in such discussions, to also look at how their courses connect to the entire LAC – how do their courses fit into it, what skills are being enhanced, etc.

After further discussions, in particular how the typographical errors had an inherent charm, the Category 3B Review was moved for acceptance by the LACC by Baughman, seconded by Hoffman. The motion passed unanimously.

Morgan will write up a summary report about the 3B review that will be a topic for future LACC meeting.

VI. Adjournment

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

Next Meeting – 8:00 AM, September 14, 2007 – in the SIAC meeting room.

Respectfully submitted,
Siobahn Morgan
LAC website: <http://www.uni.edu/vpaa/lac/index.shtml>