

**Approved October 16, 2012**

**College of Arts and Sciences  
COMMITTEE ON THE CURRICULUM**

**Meeting Minutes  
October 09, 2012**

Present: Andy Bernstein, Jerusha Detweiler-Bedell, Jeff Feld-Gore, Judy Finch, Jim Grant, Tuajuanda Jordan, Dan Kelley, Peter Kennedy, Joel Martinez, Bethe Scalettar, Freddy Vilches, Sara Rangel, Julia Yeckes, Tamara Ko, recorder.

The meeting was convened at 3:33pm.

The minutes from September 11, 2012 were approved.

Professor Bethe Scalettar was introduced as the new faculty representative from the mathematical and natural sciences division.

Ms. Julia Yeckes will be taking the place of Mr. James Mire as student representative.

**I. Course Proposal Subcommittee Update**

The subcommittee membership now officially consists of Registrar Finch, Professors Vilches and Scalettar, and Ms. Rangel. Professor Vilches informed the Committee that there are several proposals waiting for review and some that are time-sensitive because they are for spring semester.

Registrar Finch quickly updated the Committee that the subcommittee reviews all course proposals prior to the main Committee meetings and then provide a recommendation. The subcommittee will intermittently request a wider discussion to occur on the more questionable proposals. Registrar Finch will be providing directions to the Committee on how to access course proposals via CourseLeaf.

**II. Last Year's Business**

***General Education Implementation***

Registrar Finch informed the Committee that the implementation date for the new general education requirements is Fall 2014; however, a significant amount of time is required for the pre-planning and programming of the new requirements. In order for the new requirements to be aptly planned for Fall 2014, the Committee will need to finalize applicable courses and the general education structure by the end of this academic year.

Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell has been in contact with former Chair Bruce Suttmeier, who recommended contacting individual departments to solicit list of applicable courses for the new requirements.<sup>1</sup> She added that the Committee will need to review these course lists in order to determine whether there is too much (or not enough) representation in certain departments and divisions – it may even become necessary to calculate the number of required seats in a typical year. Associate Dean Grant suggested that the Committee familiarize itself with the new general education requirements, as departments may also need to be reminded of what was passed.

### ***Exploration & Discovery Review***

Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell informed the Committee that due to the faculty's decision to split discussion of general education from Exploration & Discovery, some uncomfortable consequences have now resulted. There are now two issues facing the Committee. One is the external review of E&D and subsequent action by the Committee, and the response from the steering committee itself. The second issue is looking at how E&D relates to general education; it would make the most sense to discuss the E&D review prior to the general education implementation. Co-Chair Martinez added that Director Paul Powers is willing to come in and speak to the Committee about the E&D review.

Dean Jordan spoke to how she was initially confused at the decision to split E&D from general education; the core is part of general education and the two cannot be teased apart because they both have integral roles to play. What is the expectation and purpose of general education? How do students receive a “general education” from the broader curriculum? Dean Jordan informed the Committee that her strategic planning group is currently looking at understanding the purpose of core in general education, and the relationship between general education and the overall curriculum. It is difficult to implement that which people do not understand the purpose. A quality education needs to have an explicit purpose and cannot be simply about taking two required classes here and two required classes there. Dean Jordan hope that the Committee will ask these questions and understand how the new general education requirements will fit that purpose. If this means needing to delay the implementation for another year then that will need to happen. It would be worse to implement a new program that would need to be changed again just a few years later.

Professor Bernstein suggested reviewing the previous supporting documents that were submitted prior to the official voting process on general education to get an idea of the fundamental arguments.

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<sup>1</sup> Last year's Committee had reached out to department chairs for such a list, and it will be circulated to the Committee for discussion at next week's meeting.

Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell said the faculty as a whole have been very focused on the concrete “how” of implementing general education, but it appears that the more abstract “why” of general education (that is, its purpose) has to be brought back into the discussion.

Further discussion was postponed until next week to give the Committee a chance to review supporting materials, which will be circulated prior to the next meeting.

### ***Classics Major Proposal***

Last year’s Committee had discussed this proposal, and Professor Rob Kugler had believed it to be close to passing. Registrar Finch informed the Committee that last year’s Committee had been worried about whether or not the creation of a new major would be resource-neutral. Dean Jordan said that the true question is whether the proposal will be resource-neutral in the long-term. She is concerned about these small majors and wonder whether the College could offer a classics major but not necessarily create new courses. Reed College currently offers a classics major, and this would be a perfect opportunity to have an in-city collaboration.

Professor Bernstein is worried that a new classics major would create more competition for a similar pool of students. Dean Jordan is more focused on making sure that students stay at the College. Small majors are fine as long as there continue to be students passing through; however, to build a small major is a different issue. It would actually be neat to see a student go between two majors because it shows that the student is being intuitive and a critical thinker. Professor Kennedy added that having the three similarly themed majors (philosophy, religious studies, and classics) must work at other institutions if they are able to offer them at the same time (e.g., Reed College). Co-Chair Martinez said that the three are relatively complementary to each other.

Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell said that it appears Dean Jordan still needs some clarification from Professor Kugler in terms of resource neutrality. Dean Jordan requested at least two weeks to give her a chance to have a conversation with Professor Kugler.

Registrar Finch did add that one previous concern she had from this proposal was the fact that GRK 201/202 is currently offered as an independent study. If classics studies was to become a major, then this course would need to be offered on a regular and more permanent basis. If students are to be expected to take some courses at Reed College, then that expectation needs to be built into the policy. Dean Jordan said the reassignment of Professor Gordon Kelly would help to address that concern.

Further discussion was postponed for Dean Jordan to speak with Professor Kugler.

### **III. Chemistry Department Schedule Request**

The chemistry department is requesting that it be granted an exception to scheduling lab sections during the Tuesday afternoon timeslot that is currently reserved for free time. Lab sections have been held during the reserved time in the past for reasons involving safety and room availability.

Professor Kennedy said that this request would not affect the biology department schedule and does appear to be a reasonable one for spring semester. Professor Scalettar added that the physics department also runs some lab sections during faculty meetings. Given that there are currently more than 100 first-year students enrolled in physics, there is a lot more overlap with the chemistry and biology labs. In this particular case, she does see the chemistry department's request as being compelling.

Associate Dean Grant informed the Committee that he has been working with Chair Nikolaus Loening in terms of scheduling, and has offered some alternatives. Lab spaces are currently available during the 8:00 A.M. timeslot everyday and during Fridays. Even simply moving the Tuesday afternoon sections earlier (and thus shortening the time between them) would create an hour and a half window. However, there has been resistance to any of those alternatives.

Professor Scalettar said that requesting the physics department to do back-to-back lab sections is not necessarily unreasonable but she could see it being more problematic with chemistry because of chemical usage and safety. However, she also does not know how much effort and difficulty goes into a chemistry lab setup.

Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell pointed out that it seemed like people were focused on the concrete arguments again – what is the reason for keeping the Tuesday afternoon free? Is it strictly for faculty meeting times? Associate Dean Grant said that this is a time when other activities are happening on campus and it was the hope of the past Committee to keep this time available so that other community events could occur without having to compete with class times.

Professor Scalettar said that Mr. Kyle Thompson is not a faculty member and was hired primarily to oversee the lab sections. While it is important to allow the opportunity for other campus events, one could also argue that a chemistry lab is another choice of engagement for students. The numbers of majors in the sciences are escalating and it is becoming more problematic in terms of keeping available lab sections.

Dean Jordan requested the Committee to table this decision until more information has been reviewed (and even requesting that Chair Loening come in and speak to the Committee). In terms of hazardous materials, the labs are becoming more green and so the old risks are no longer even present. Additionally, it is not unreasonable or impossible to teach back-to-back lab sections in chemistry; Dean Jordan herself was only given a 15-minute turnaround time while

she was in charge of her own lab sections with no additional staff help. Having the luxury of being able to take one's own time is a separate issue from safety reasons.

Professor Kennedy would like to see both sides of the issue, as he was unaware that there had been other time alternatives presented to the chemistry department. Associate Dean Grant said he would pass that information onto the Committee.

Registrar Finch reminded the Committee that a decision would need to be made relatively soon as advising starts next Monday.

#### **IV. Other Business**

Due to lack of time, the remaining two agenda items will be moved to next week.

Psychology Internship/Practicum/Independent Study Regulations  
Inside-Out Proposal

The meeting was adjourned at 4:48pm.