

Approved December 11, 2012

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

**Meeting Minutes
November 20, 2012**

Present: Andy Bernstein, Jerusha Detweiler-Bedell, Judy Finch, Tuajuanda Jordan, Dan Kelley, Peter Kennedy, Joel Martinez, Bethe Scalettar, Freddy Vilches, Tamara Ko, recorder.

Absent: Jeff Feld-Gore, Jim Grant, Sara Rangel, Julia Yeckes

Guest: Paul Powers, Director of Exploration & Discovery

The meeting was convened at 3:33pm.

Minutes from November 13, 2012 were approved.

The room was abuzz with excitement as Thanksgiving was only a mere day away. Members were ready and eager to get down to business as the semester is now quickly winding down to a close.

I. Course Proposal Subcommittee

ART 304 History of American Art

This proposal is changing the course description.

CLAS 254 Greek Myth/Religion

This proposal is changing the course description and restrictions.

HIST 298 African American History

This proposal changes the semester course offering and will be a one-time offering.

MATH 499 Independent Study

This proposal adds a letter grading option.

RELS 224 Jewish Origins

This proposal makes the course applicable for the international studies general education requirement.

RELS 299 Independent Study

This proposal adds a letter grading option.

RELS 499 Independent Study

This proposal adds a letter grading option.

Professor Kennedy queried the fact that both a 200 and 400 level independent study would offer letter grading option. He noted that the biology department itself makes a distinction between the two levels. However, Registrar Finch said that many departments do offer both grading options for their classes, and that it is the biology department that has the more unique situation.

SOAN 274 Contemporary Chinese Society

This proposal is changing the title and course description.

All of the above course proposals were unanimously approved.

II. General Education Discussion

Director Powers informed the Committee that he is trying to be more prescriptive and proactive in offering tentative recommendations on what to do next in terms of Exploration & Discovery. He feels that the most relevant Committee issue at the moment is revising E&D to better fit into general education and to also maintain its own general health. It may take some time to gather data and formulate an appropriate response with a better understanding of possible implications though. Director Powers' recommendation is to proceed with reviewing E&D on all of its merits; is there a point in which the Committee and/or the dean should consider recommending to the faculty the delaying of implementing the new general education revisions? What would it take in order to make that recommendation?¹ Should the Committee consider recommending E&D for another external review? Finally, how does the core fit into the proposed general education revisions? It will take a few more months in order to compile the necessary data and will be a push to have it sorted by the end of the semester (Director Powers will also be away during spring semester).

Director Powers does not personally believe an additional external review of E&D is necessary but did take it as an implication from some conversations at the last faculty meeting. An external review is more or less a set of recommendations that need to be scrutinized on its own merits, and Director Powers does not see a particular problem with people knowing about it. The areas that do need addressing should be kept as important caveats of the review.

Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell stated that a poor review process can sometimes lead to poor recommendations but is unaware of the review state for E&D. Does Director Powers and the

¹ It was noted that only the Committee needed to authorize the original delay in the implementation of the new general education requirements.

steering committee believe that the recommendations are valuable despite any flaws in the review process? The original review did not come with a robust explanation of implications and it is unclear whether an additional review would provide that or not.

Dean Jordan said the process may have been flawed but not through any fault of the reviewers. The review was a review and not a consultation; reviewers generally make observations and recommendations. The involved faculty members know what area may have been less than ideal, and the response from the steering committee provided some needed context. If information is given to the greater community, the members should be allowed to discuss it and see what is related.

Professor Bernstein pointed out that there are some recommendations worth considering (e.g., the one semester option for E&D). Professor Kennedy also added that it seems like the review might need a response from the Committee. Director Powers agreed that it would be a good idea to release a fair amount of the review out to the general public; perhaps a strong summary response. He also envisioned this happening alongside some combination of people having thought through implications of recommendations. The status quo of E&D is healthy enough that care needs to be taken with possibly changing it; it is not a crisis situation in which any immediate should be rushed. Director Powers added that it is manageable enough to be controlled in the foreseen future although it could be harder to move forward if discussion is opened too soon. He asked the Committee how much authority he had to determine the timing and order of the process.

Professor Scalettar noted that there has always been a level of dissatisfaction every time a change has been made (e.g., Inventing America, E&D), which may be inevitable but the Committee should endeavor to make sure that the process is done right. Professor Bernstein added that while the review should be released as soon as possible, resource implications should also be clearly laid out along with any next steps. Although implementation of general education has been delayed once, it should be done correctly and Dean Jordan emphasized that this cannot happen until the Committee understands what is happening with E&D.

Director Powers said that it is becoming clearer that he is not the only one who does not understand the implications of implementing general education. While he estimates an improvement within two to three months, he had hoped that there would be a better understanding by this time. It has occurred to Registrar Finch that separating E&D from the general education requirements allowed Orion Prime to pass, which did not take into account the core program. She also agrees that implementation should be done correctly and has no hesitation about delaying it if need be; however, does incorporating core back into general education change the entire situation? Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell believes that the above

scenario is only possible if there is a perfect vision of E&D that exists for everyone, but she does not see that happening in the near future.

Professor Kennedy asked whether data was being collected per semester; one aspect that stuck out for him from the review was the fact that the second semester seemed lacking for students in comparison to the first one. Director Powers responded that the second semester is more difficult for students. In terms of data, students are asked to fill out regular and E&D teaching evaluations, and so he has a few years' of data available. However, it is noted that the data are all self-reported from the students' perspectives. While the Dean of Students office is responsible for conducting exit interviews, it does not appear to be at a consistent rate. Director Powers will be working with Dean Lisa Meyer and Assistant Dean Angélica Garcia on retention rates.

In regards to the next concrete steps, Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell asked if there would be particular costs associated with circulating the external review (minus whatever pieces that need to be redacted) in advance of the next faculty meeting but not opening discussion yet. Director Powers believes that sharing the work would be more efficient and help with the legitimacy of the process. He will be bringing a draft presentation for the December faculty meeting to the Committee by next Tuesday.

III. Major Declaration Discussion Cont'd

Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell suggested that the Committee recommend and bring to the faculty a vote that major declaration should happen midway of sophomore year (approximately an earned 29 credits). It was noted that transfer students are in a somewhat different situation and while it makes logistical sense that they be granted an exception in the timeline, Registrar Finch is worried about the possibility of other students requesting the same rule. Additionally, it does not help departments to have inflated majors simply because transfer students were required to declare one by a certain deadline, and it certainly does not make the students happier. It was pointed out that a vast majority of transfer students do know what they want though.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:48pm.