Approved February 12, 2013

College of Arts and Sciences
COMMITTEE ON THE CURRICULUM

Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2013

Present: Andrew Bernstein, Jerusha Detweiler-Bedell, Jeffrey Feld-Gore, James Grant, Tuajuanda Jordan, Daniel Kelley, Peter Kennedy, Joel Martinez, Sara Rangel, Bethe Scalettar, Freddy Vilches, Julia Yeckes, Sharon Barnes, recorder.

Absent: Judy Finch.

The meeting was convened at 3:32 p.m.

There were no course proposals to consider.

**Exploration & Discovery and General Education**
Co-Chair Jerusha Detweiler-Bedell convened the meeting by informing the committee of discussions she had separately with Professor Paul Powers and with Co-Chair Joel Martinez on the core class "Exploration and Discovery" (E&D) and General Education (GenEd) requirements and their relationship.

Professor Powers shared data on E&D with Professor Detweiler-Bedell. The assumption that E&D courses were received better for fall than spring was disproved by analysis of the data. Course evaluations for years 2007-2008, 2009-2010 and 2011-2012 were analyzed. Data for other years was incomplete. For the three years, overall student course evaluation means showed fall was 5.51 and spring 5.57. The instructor evaluation means showed fall 6.04 and spring 5.95. Neither fall nor spring showed any meaningful significant difference. Then she looked at the range variable, which showed a slightly higher standard deviation in spring over fall. Course evaluation standard deviation for fall was .69 and instructor evaluation for fall was .67. Course evaluation for spring was .80 and instructor was .76. (Spring E&D courses are planned by the instructor and can be very different from one another.) Removing the two highest and two lowest scores still did not make much difference.

These average ratings of course and instructor should not be used in order to make a case that one semester's E&D courses are better than the other. Spring ratings appear to be steadily climbing, showing improvement over time. Fall, having a united and cohesive curriculum, started higher and remains steady.

The question is how to go forward. Exploration & Discovery and General Education are both part of the larger curriculum. The committee discussed the idea of looking beyond only student evaluations and also acquiring input from faculty members

outside of the curriculum committee. On the question of General Education, look at a listing of courses, numbers, and differences in the Arts & Humanities, Social Sciences and Mathematics and Natural Sciences.

Professor Detweiler-Bedell appointed two groups to work on the Gen Ed and E&D issues: Gen Ed is comprised of herself, Professors Kennedy and Vilches; E&D is comprised of Professors Martinez, Bernstein and Scalettar and Librarian Dan Kelley. E&D Director Professor Powers supports these efforts. The Steering Committee will move forward with the General Education support group. If it were to be changed and implemented from where it is now, catalog copy would need to be revised.

What would the E&D subgroup look like if E&D were a one semester required course? Are there problems in keeping E&D as it is and keeping GenEd systematic? If the faculty supports E&D as it is currently, then GenEd may need to change.

Co-Chair Martinez would like faculty support and understanding of the position the Curriculum Committee is in, then come up with a solution.

Professor Scalettar would like to know what the faculty's opinion would be of the current E&D two-semester course versus a one-semester course. Perhaps a survey should be conducted to ensure the process is accepted by the faculty. Professor Jerusha Detweiler-Bedell pointed out that a survey asking faculty what they think students are learning from E&D should be carefully thought out, and designed in collaboration with the Steering Committee and Director. Professor Scalettar would like to know whether or not faculty think the course is successful in comparing the goals of the course with outcomes.

Dean Jordan advised the Curriculum Committee that General Education is currently undergoing its own strategic planning. In order to discover the success rate of E&D, she suggested surveying students who previously went been through the course and have had time to reflect upon it.

Professor Detweiler-Bedell said an exit survey could be done for the course including desired outcomes of research skills, speaking skills, etc. Dean Jordan advised to include writing skills and to remember E&D is working with freshmen. Librarian Kelly asked what level students should be surveyed -- Senior, Junior?

Student Co-Chair Julia Yeckes would like to keep E&D at two semesters, one humanities focused and one focused on the sciences. She would like it to be clear to students why and how they stand apart from one another. Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell responded that often the sciences have large core classes with several lab classes, which has limited the ability of science professors to participate in the Core.

Student Co-Chair Sara Rangel observed that it is difficult for Freshmen to accept E&D because it is mandatory. Reflecting back, she supports E&D being a full year. A

year-long course for Freshmen that is solely theirs is important. Having ownership of such a course has good results.

Associate Dean of Students Jeffrey Feld-Gore said in considering E&D and GenEd, look at what E&D would be like as a one-semester course in relation to GenEd. Dean Jordan said the sets of requirements need to be compared for E&D and for GenEd. Look at what is trying to be achieved. The faculty needs to look at the big picture in the context of General Education. Professor Detweiler-Bedell described these issues as two branches of tree. Faculty will not be as successful or effective unless they know what GenEd has to offer. Professor Bernstein observed that spring semester puts people in a better position to assess research skills over period of time.

Dean Jordan instructed that the liberal arts are not only compiled of research skills. By the junior year, students are able to utilize analytical skills as well. It seems like it may be better to wait until the senior year for a survey, although it may interfere with their exit interview, research projects, and not get the attention it needs. It is important that the E&D director is connected and informed of any discussion of E&D.

Professor Detweiler-Bedell said that seniors are not distinguishing fall semester from spring semester in their evaluation of E&D in the HEDS survey. A comparison of fall and spring would be helpful. Writing and speaking are two areas where data would be useful. Ms. Yeckes noted that the questions need to be revised; that there is a gray area in how they are formulated.

Librarian Dan Kelly would like to get everybody on same plane; to make sure they all have the same understanding of the questions and issues. Associate Dean Grant said to tell students: Here's a list of skills. In what classes did you first encounter these skills? That way E&D is not specifically targeted. Ms. Rangel said it may be very difficult to get the specific data.

Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell instructed the two groups for Ged Ed and for E&D to do some work between meetings, today and two weeks from today. The March faculty meeting was set as a goal to present the Curriculum Committee's findings. She said to get moving fast on the project, and be accountable as a whole group. Co-Chair Martinez wants to come up with something reasonable so the faculty will consider it.

Professor Detweiler-Bedell asked the members to reflect on what it means to keep E&D as a two-semester course versus what it means to have E&D a one semester course.

Dean Jordan is adamant about what the Steering Committee expectations are. She would be more comfortable with a neutral body looking at this. Librarian Kelley said a different approach would be good. Professor Bernstein stated this is a two-step process to work through. The Curriculum Committee has to compare GenEd

and E&D, and then make the information clear. Professor Detweiler-Bedell said the Curriculum Committee needs to work with the steering committee to articulate the pros and cons of a one semester versus a two semester course.

**CS 102 Quantitative Reasoning**

Co-Chair Martinez said that for CS 102, there is general agreement among faculty that the quantitative reasoning exam and CS 102 should be assessed. Suanne Benowicz retired and Math 055 ended, and as a result, CS 102 became what it now is.

Currently CS 102 is a two credit hour course with a four credit hour course load. Should this course be revised to a four credit hour course? The course covers remedial math required as college level work. Is a task force necessary? A discussion is needed and Director Black could lead it. Currently the course contains more math than computer science.

Professor Grant reiterated that the course could be moved from a two-credit to four-credit course. If CS 102 is changed, it needs more special attention by the department and its resources. Ms. Rangel thought this was a remedial course. Assistant Dean Grant advised to go through the course proposal process; that would be a good starting place.

Professor Detweiler-Bedell pointed out that a student required four-credit CS 102 course could count toward graduation. A different math class may also be needed. Ms. Yeckes said the Independent Study model is convenient to do online. Professor Vilches agreed that it would be an expedited process to have a proposal for the course.

Professor Kennedy said that Director Margot Black envisioned a skill set course, not math class; to get her vision for the committee. Co-Chairs Detweiler-Bedell and Martinez said they did not get much feedback. Director Black would like to broaden quantitative reasoning, and one way is to make changes through a course proposal.

Associate Dean Grant asked if CS 102 is properly part of the Core, and should it be folded into the discussion? CS 102 doesn't have a home. The two semesters make spring the quantitative reasoning component.

Professor Scaletter said that many students do not know calculator basics, fractions, how to use the ruler; that some students don't have the fundamental basics to build upon in the science courses. Professor Detweiler-Bedell asked what the assessment of quantitative reasoning should be, that students should be able to use specific skillsets. There are fundamental basics in math everyone should know. Professor Bernstein noted that there are placement tests for Foreign Languages, and students can get college credit for it. There could be the same sort of test for math. Is accreditation a consideration? Ms. Rangel pointed out, that with high SAT scores, the placement test is not necessary; however, the passing student still may not know

the basics. Building upon this, Ms. Yeckes gave an example of one person who passed by two, so did not have to take the class; and a friend failed the test by two and had to take the remedial class. The friend and now knows more than the student who passed.

Associate Dean Grant answered Ms. Yeckes' question about "The Journey Forward". It is a strategic plan for all three colleges together; a vision and plan for the future.

The meeting on "The Journey Forward" is at 3:30 in Stamm Dining Room on Tuesday, January 29. There will be no Curriculum Committee meeting that day in order for members to go to the "Journey Forward" meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m.