Approved February 19, 2013

College of Arts and Sciences
COMMITTEE ON THE CURRICULUM

Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2013

Present: Andrew Bernstein, Jerusha Detweiler-Bedell, Judy Finch, Jeffrey Feld-Gore, Tuajuanda Jordan, Daniel Kelley, Joel Martinez, Sara Rangel, Bethe Scalettar, Freddy Vilches, Julia Yeckes, Kim Ulrich, recorder.

Absent: Jim Grant, Peter Kennedy

The meeting was convened at 3:35 p.m.

Minutes from December 11 were unanimously approved.

I. Course Proposal Subcommittee
ENG 298 The Brontes: Legends and Legacies
This is a new course and will be taught as a one-time offering.

HIST 134 United States: Revolution to Empire
This is a new course replacing 234A.

HIST 135 United States: Empire to Superpower
This is a new course replacing 234B.

HIST 234A United States: Revolution to Empire
Course being deactivated and replaced by HIST 134

This U.S. history survey course is being moved to the 100 level to increase enrollment by attracting more first year students as this course is intended to be taught at a 100 level. Deactivation of this 200 level course will not affect History majors due to the way the major is structured.

HIST 234B United States: Empire to Super Power
Course being deactivated and replaced by HIST 135.

This U.S. history survey course is being moved to the100 level to increase enrollment by attracting more first year students as this course is intended to be taught at a 100 level. Deactivation of this 200 level course will not affect History majors due to the way the major is structured.

HIST 298 Latin American Environmental History
This is a new course.

HIST 298 The Literature and History of Modern Ireland
This is a new course that goes with ENGL 298, which has already been approved.

POLS 103 Introduction to American Politics
This proposal is changing the course title.

All courses were unanimously approved

II. Update on Credit Requirement for Major Declaration
This was presented as new business in December; the requirement for major declaration would change to 45 credits with a possible exception for first semester transfer students. Concern has been raised for first year students with a lot of AP credits. Registrar Finch stated this change will result in only some impact on students. Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell said the Faculty Committee will now recommend that they add a similar exemption first year students with 25 AP credits.

Ms. Yekes asked why this rule is being based on credits rather than number of semesters? From a student's perspective, students do not really begin counting credits until they are closer to graduation. Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell stated that implementation based on units makes more sense for the systems involved and Dr. Bernstein said a general guideline that can be communicated to students is declaration should happen during their sophomore year. Registrar Finch also stated that emails are sent out to remind students to declare.

Registrar Finch reminded the group that policies follow each catalog year. Therefore, new policy would apply to the next catalog year, but not previous catalog years. This policy may be included in next year's catalog if everything is wrapped up by the April meeting; May would be pushing it.

Dean Jordan reminded the group that there is also the option to discuss and vote on this issue online if the timeline requires. Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell shared that the Committee may also change the order in order to vote on old business when faced with a time crunch.

III. General Education Working Group Report
Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell stated the objective of this working group is to take Gen Ed to the next step. The group worked on multiple levels and has been talking with multiple departments to get a sense of what the descriptions should look like. Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell emphasized that the Division-Specific Descriptions being presented were the group's best first efforts. The group wanted to vet the descriptions with the Committee to get feedback before taking it to the department chairs.

Dr. Scalettar stated that the Math and Natural Sciences description should more explicitly talk about experimental technique in order to address the lab or hands on

components. Librarian Kelley also stated that the description given for Math and Natural Sciences sounds a little too methods heavy.

Co-Chair Martinez suggested omitting the language of "skills" given that there is no current consensus among the humanities on a specific set of skills. Dean Jordan stated that the CAS Strategic Planning Group talked a lot about characteristics (certain ways of being, doing, and understanding in preparation for success), so there needs to be a connection between any skills listed and these characteristics. If possible, members of either committee should sit in on each other's meetings and be a part of both conversations.

Associate Dean Feld-Gore asked if students have been asked what type of language would inspire them? They would not have a final say, but it could be beneficial to get an idea of what they think.

Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell expressed concern about a practical timeline and stated that the Committee should shape language in some way to begin with, and then seek outside input. She also stated that the total number of courses listed might look inflated because even if they are only offered once a year, they are still included in the count.

Overarching discussion and adjustments have already been made to numbers for the idea that 400 level classes should not count as Gen Ed; some300 should count if their range of topics is broad enough. Dr. Vilches confirmed this approach with Bruce Suttmeier (Foreign Languages). The working group discussed that Gen Ed should cover breadth of topics, not depth; major courses provide the depth experience. The idea of Gen Ed classes is about exploration; don't have to be a specialist before engaging in it. Co-Chair Martinez stated that the "exploring" language does not fully encapsulate the depth of what students will actually learn in lower division classes. Dr. Scalettar agrees and believes more pragmatic component should be included in the descriptions.

Dr. Bernstein argued that all types of majors take both their upper and lower division Social Sciences courses and believes that some 400 level courses should be able to count for Gen Ed. Dean Jordan pointed out that if course numbers are determined by work load, it should not be a part of Gen Ed as first year students are still transitioning in and working to balance things. She also argued that if a level of expertise is required to be successful in a higher-level class, it should not be a part of Gen Ed. Dr. Bernstein stated that most students will not choose to take these courses, but the option should be available to them.

Honors Students Representative Julia does not like the idea of cutting all 300 level classes because not all students complete their Gen Ed requirements in their first two years. She stated that students do not necessarily want less work, especially given the cost of school so flexibility would be ideal.

Registrar Finch stated that a higher number of upper division courses being included in Gen Ed increases the chance of students getting into a bind. This issue can impact various majors differently depending on the structure of the major.

Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell has asked everyone to take time to further review the descriptions, especially those relevant to their area, and send her their ideas.

IV. E&D Working Group Report

Co-Chair Martinez said the working group needed to meet with the Exploration & Discovery Steering Committee. Before meeting, the group came up with three questions: What are the objectives of E&D, are they being met, and can they be met better by a 1 or a 2 semester E&D course? The Steering Committee suggested the group focus on determining what types of problems they are trying to solve. The group came up with three problems: a heavy reliance on adjuncts, how E&D is related to Gen Ed, and the financial cost of E&D. As a result, the group has three options; they can either stay with status quo, slightly tweak the status quo, or move to one semester courses.

As a result of the meeting, the Steering Committee asked for two things; more empirical data about what the faculty and students think about E&D and good rationale for moving to a one semester courses. The Steering Committee did not seem to think that an increased Gen Ed course load is sufficient enough to make the change to a one semester E&D course. To collect the needed empirical data, the E&D working group would lead the charge on administering surveys and will work to tweak their objectives rather than changing them. The group asked the Committee what other groups they should talk to and do they have enough time to complete the survey process with the presentation happening in March?

Dr. Bernstein shared data from Bruce Suttmeier; numbers were run about what courses previous students took throughout their programs and compared it to Orion Prime. Results showed that almost all students would have completed the program on time.

Dr. Scalettar asked if E&D is currently more biased towards Arts and Humanities, should it become more balanced to give students opportunity to take other disciplines? Co-Chair Detweiler Bedell said that the Steering Committee will probably make the argument that E&D is actually balanced twelve and twelve.

Dr. Bernstein expressed concern that research is uneven in E&D as some professors take it more seriously than others. Librarian Kelley stated that wherever the research component ends up, it will need to be examined and strengthened, especially in disciplines where it is uneven.

V. Next Meeting

To prepare for the next meeting, the Committee will formulate and circulate E&D survey questions.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 18th and held in Albany 220.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:46 p.m.