College of Arts & Science COMMITTEE ON THE CURRICULUM

Meeting Minutes September 30, 2009

Present: Linda Angst, Julio de Paula, Tatiana Osipovich, Stephen Tufte, Rishona Zimring, Jayson Estassi, Alex Rihm, Tamara Ko, recorder

Absent: Franya Berkman, Jim Bunnelle, Diane Crabtree, Jeff Feld-Gore, Stuart Kaplan

Chair Bierzychudek convened the meeting at 3:20pm.

The minutes from September 23, 2009 were approved.

I. General Education Task Force Update

Chair Bierzychudek emailed last year's GETF to update them on the Committee's plan for general education and received responses from Professors Peter Drake and Bob Mandel. Professor Mandel expressed hesitation at separating the MNS requirement from the general education proposal but was assured that this separation would not end further discussion of the MNS proponent. He suggested the possibility of the International Studies requirement being another non-controversial piece of the proposal although Chair Bierzychudek recalled that piece being the focus of some discussion amongst faculty members.

Chair Bierzychudek did not receive responses from other GETF members and is under the assumption that they are all right with the Committee proceeding ahead.

II. Mathematical and Natural Sciences Requirement

Chair Bierzychudek met with department chairs of the MNS division to confirm that they supported the proposed structure of the new GE requirements in scientific experimentation, assessing quantitative data, and using symbolic reasoning. While the department chairs do support with the new changes, Chair Bierzychudek reported to the Committee that reconfiguration of the requirement would result in more than just a simple cosmetic change. The proposed reconfiguration would require the reassessment of current course offerings able to fulfill each requirement in order to ensure that the College is able to offer enough spots to students in order to meet the new demand. Chair Bierzychudek had begun researching course offerings but has not yet compiled all the data.

The data currently gathered show that 361 places in courses per year satisfy the Assessing Quantitative Data requirement, 416 for the Scientific Experimentation requirement, and 155 per year for the Symbolic Reasoning requirement.

If the new requirements were to be officially adopted, then it is very likely that the College will need to change how some of its courses are offered. Enrollment patterns will change given that some of the spots in these courses will be taken by students majoring in science, which may

mean that there will not be enough spaces for students who are trying to fulfill general education requirements. Although there may be enough courses to meet the "assessing quantitative data" requirement, it is predicted that pressure on the math department, nearly the only department to offer courses in Symbolic Reasoning, will increase.

III. Call for Ideas on General Education

Committee members were charged last week to draft a short proposal inviting faculty members to share their ideas and visions of general education at the College. Professor Tufte commented on the absence from these drafts of asking individual departments to weigh in on their respective roles within the general education program, which had been included in the previous "Faculty Council Document" and he had personally perceived this idea as being advantageous. He also mentioned turning the focus of general education back onto objectives and goals.

Chair Bierzychudek referenced Associate Dean Hunter's statement about going back to the College's statement about the elements of a liberal arts education. The current 2009-2010 Catalog has a list of such goals on page eleven, which last year's GETF did reference as the core of their proposal. Professor Osipovich agreed with Professor Tufte's suggestion of keeping the emphasis on general skills and knowledge as opposed to individual department contributions.

Professor Zimring said it would be most fair to offer both the option of meeting in departments and meeting in separate factions/groups. Professor Angst suggested presenting the catalog list to the faculty and then asking departments how they view their current actions as resonating with those goals. In terms of being able to gather faculty input, Professor Zimring liked how Mr. Estassi had framed the core of his proposal into four main questions.

- 1. What, if anything, is problematic about the current GE requirements? Would there be large changes to the current requirements in your proposal?
- 2. How would your proposed changes allow for greater fulfillment of Lewis & Clark's mission as a liberal arts college (as detailed on page 11 of the College catalog)?
- 3. How would you organize or group courses part of your proposed requirements?
- 4. What specific courses would constitute what you feel to be the most effective GE program?

As clarification, Mr. Estassi explained that the third question was geared towards how departments would classify general education in its current form while the fourth question asks how specific courses should fall underneath each group. Some concerns were brought up about the amount of work this would require of departments but it was mentioned that many departments are ready and eager for such a discussion.

Chair Bierzychudek shared her excitement for Mr. Estassi's questions. It also seems apparent that the Committee hopes to share this call for ideas not only with departments but also with other groups and individuals. She suggested using the first three stated questions as the starting point with a maintained focus on the liberal arts elements from the course catalog. Professor Zimring's proposal had a suggested deadline of November 10, a date which met with the Committee's approval. If Chair Bierzychudek presented the faculty with the call for ideas at the

October 7 Faculty Meeting, this would give members approximately five weeks to meet and draft something onto paper.

It was brought up that the invitation might encourage departments to make concrete suggestions too soon. Professor Tufte had liked the idea of asking departments how they envisioned themselves fulfilling the current general education goals as it seemed a more positive way to begin. Chair Bierzychudek suggested bridging the two ideas together by adding a segment before the questions; given the current elements of a liberal arts education, how do individual departments carry out specific objectives? The additional questions by Mr. Estassi would then be left as an option for departments to answer. Based on previous discussion, the Committee is relatively certain that the majority of the departments will try to answer a few of Mr. Estassi's questions.

In terms of a resource issue, it had been previously mentioned that any proposals needing additional resources should be avoided. However, Professor Osipovich said that it is a little early to be thinking about resources right now as the Committee does not want to limit the generating of ideas. Although the actual implementation of ideas will need to be kept realistic, the Committee does want to encourage faculty members to envision the best possible scenarios. If this entails expansion of resources then hopefully the College will be able to do so one day. Professor Tufte favors not mentioning the resource issue yet so as to not limit thinking and faculty members are aware of the College's financial situation. It is the hope that the newly convened GETF will sift through all the received possibilities and suggestions, and then be able to prioritize what the College can do now and later on in the future.

Dean de Paula reported to the Committee that almost all faculty representatives on this year's GETF have been selected: Professors Lyell Asher, Matthew Johnston, Bob Mandel and Stuart Kaplan (a representative from the MNS division is still waiting to be selected).

IV. Faculty Meeting Business

At next week's Faculty Meeting, Chair Bierzychudek will remind the faculty that all old motions die at the end of that academic year (in regards to the General Education Proposal) and that the Committee is not motioning for the whole proposal to be adopted. Due to the fact that there is not enough time to gather the necessary data on course offerings for a reconfigured MNS requirement, Chair Bierzychudek will inform the faculty of the possibility of such a motion for the November Faculty Meeting. In the meantime though, the Committee is submitting a "Call for Ideas on General Education" with a deadline of November 10, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:26pm.