

# **CAS Faculty Meeting**

## **Minutes**

**March 31, 1999**

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Call to order, 3:30 PM.

The minutes from the previous meeting were not available.

### **Dean's Report**

Admissions faculty phonathon needs volunteers.

April 10th is admitted students day.

Congratulations to Anna Burkhalter who has been admitted to Indiana University.

Financial award letters were sent out in a timely fashion; thanks to the staff.

Jim Kopp has accepted the position as Director of Aubrey R. Watzek Library.

### **Old Business**

Dean Atkinson recapped the end of the previous meeting. The Rottschaefer Amendment was on the floor.

Evan Williams moved to reconsider the motion to close debate. The motion was seconded and passed by a voice vote.

Debate on the Rottschaefer Amendment proceeded.

Three people spoke against the Rottschaefer amendment, arguing, that it would remove the central focus of the course on American thought and culture; this in turn, it was argued, would destroy the balance with the international studies requirement.

Bill Rottschaefer replied that a series of later amendments would insure balance in the curriculum, and that the course could retain America as a significant source of material.

Dick Rohrbaugh moved to refer amendments 1, 2 and 5 in the Rottschaefer document, below, to the IA planning committee as they engage in ongoing course development. The committee should give the issues thoughtful consideration, and report back to the faculty in a timely fashion.

Amendment #1

For 1, page 8, substitute:

1. The Curriculum Committee recommends the continuation of a foundational experience in general education that set up an interplay of varying perspectives, all focusing on such problems as the tension

between liberty and equality, the benefits and limits of democracy, the dynamics of exclusion and inclusion by race, class, gender, and ethnicity, the problems of integration and cultural identity, or the role of the United States within the world economy. (The list of problems is not intended to be exhaustive.) These perspectives on the focal issues can take the form of the study of these issues within and across groups, societies, cultures and nations, both historical and contemporary. Their proximate aim is to discern the commonalities and differences in the origin, maintenance, evaluation and solution of the above mentioned sorts of problems. Their ultimate aim is to offer students the foundation for the informed and complex perspectives they need to describe, analyze, and critique those forces that are shaping our world in hopes of understanding, appreciating and improving all life on this earth.

#### Amendment #2

#### 2. On page 9, Section IV, B 2, (e)

Drop "retain a focus on American thought and culture in accord with the design articulated in recommendation #1"

Add "focus on such questions as the tension between liberty and equality, the benefits and limits of democracy, the dynamics of exclusion by race, class, gender, and ethnicity, the problems of integration and cultural identity, or the role of the United States within the world economy (This list of problems is not intended to be exhaustive.)".

#### Amendment #5

For 4, page 9, substitute:

#### 4. The first year course should be renamed to reflect the thematic and textual focus of the course.

Four people supported the motion, arguing that the planning committee was indeed the appropriate forum; the planning committee had already been asked by the curriculum committee to address the name change issue. One person opposed the motion maintaining that because the planning committee is too small a group, the issue will not really be addressed. The planning committee was burned out. The faculty as a whole should debate the big issues raised by the Rottschaefer amendment.

It was pointed out in discussion that there are important areas of agreement. The course should be a year long; it should be "intellectually weighty", and students must understand that this is a different class than any they took in high school.

The question, called and seconded, carried by a voice vote. The motion carried by a voice vote.

Discussion turned to page 9, Recommendation #3.

Bill Rottschaefer Made a substitute motion:

"The Curriculum Committee recommends that the principles articulated in recommendations #1 and #2 above be implemented by a Planning Committee organized as follows: (1) Each department elects a representative to the Planning Committee, if possible a junior member of the department. (2) The

Planning Committee selects from its members a Director of the first-year sequence. (3) Representatives of the department should as much as possible have experience in teaching in general education programs and should be interested in the intellectual and practical tasks of shaping an interdisciplinary approach to the solution to common intellectual problems."

Seconded.

Bill Randall determined that the amendment was not friendly.

In response to a question, Bill Rottschaefer confirmed that the intent of the motion was to create a committee composed of representatives from every department.

One person spoke in favor of the amendment, given the centrality of the planning committee in considering the issues referred to it in the previous motion.

Five people spoke against arguing that the proposed committee was too large, especially given that it meets weekly throughout the summer; that the requirement would be burdensome for small departments; and that representation was best achieved by paying attention to divisional and junior/senior distinctions, and via rotating terms.

The question, called and seconded, passed by a voice vote. The motion was defeated by a voice vote.

Elliott Young argued that representation on the planning committee was a key issue. He offered the following amendment: "The Planning Committee is to be elected by the faculty divisions, and is to include 2 members each from each of the divisions. If no one chooses to run, divisional representatives can be appointed."

Two people spoke in favor, arguing that elections would encourage debate and discussion, and help faculty take ownership over the course.

Six people spoke against the motion, maintaining: 1) Law and Grad Faculty have served in the past; quotas provide too little flexibility. 2) The Curriculum Committee's proposal #3 does not specify a number for planning committee; this flexibility is good. 3) Representation has not been raised in the past as a problem. No need to tie committee's hands. 4) Voting may lead to less diversity in representation. 5) The amendment unfairly suggests the director has not been doing a good job. The list of 17 folks who have served seems quite diverse.

In the course of the discussion, the question was raised "Why are natural sciences missing from Curriculum Committee's #3?"

David Savage replied that this portion of the general education is primarily a humanities-social sciences part of the Curriculum. Math and natural sciences are strongly represented elsewhere. The statement is not intended to be exclusionary.

The question, called and seconded, passed by a voice vote. The motion failed 31-13.

Tom Olsen moves to delete language "who are teaching or who have taught the course" on page 9.

Given the need to increase flexibility, why exclude 1/3 of faculty?

Two people spoke in favor of the motion.

Two people opposed the motion, arguing that the committee is administering a course already in existence, and should be responsible to needs of faculty. Experience is needed. To be on the planning committee, one can just teach in the course. No area is excluded.

Bill Randall accepted the Olsen amendment as friendly.

Discussion moved to IV-4.

The Bill Rottschaefer Amendment regarding part 4 has been referred to the planning committee. Discussion revolved around whether there was a need for a name change: some argued that students and faculty don't like the name, others worried about a change for the worse, and one person declared that he loved the name.

Discussion turned to Section 5 V. Page 9 and 10 , resource issues.

Bill Rottschaefer's offered a critique of the course, which is inserted as an appendix below.

The wording in 4b "otherwise qualified" refers to folks in American studies and history. The reasons listed in 4b are intended to refer to all tenured faculty who do not teach the course. The curriculum committee did consider the issue of tenured faculty refusing to teach the course; the issue is ultimately in the hands of the Academic Council.

Foreign language faculty should be included in B1 as bearing general education responsibilities.

Bob Owens presented several housecleaning amendments which Bill Randall accepted as friendly.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10.

Respectfully submitted, Eban Goodstein

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## APPENDIX

Re: Critique of Current General Education Program & Current Proposal for GE Program

Bill Rottshaefer

I understand that it has been agreed by the Faculty that a place will be found to report more accurately and fully the critiques of the Inventing American part of the general education program.

I have found not only the IA portion of the Current GE Program and the Proposed GE Program, but the entire proposals problematic. I have presented these critiques on various occasions. In my view report of the Curriculum Committee did not adequately present either the critiques of IA or of the entire current program.

In what follows, I review my critiques of the entire current program under the headings of Substantive, Methodological and Procedural Failings. I plan to submit a summary of these critiques to be placed in the current reports.

### Substantive Failings

1) The current General Education Program, as I understand it, makes thoughtful and effective citizenship the goal of a liberal arts college education. This is not an unworthy goal, even if somewhat traditional. However, it seems to me that it is lacking because it does not propose learning as an end in itself. Intellectual endeavors are worthwhile in themselves without some extrinsic sort of motivation. Moreover, it is still more seriously lacking because of its anthropocentric character. It makes humans and the human community the center of liberal education. This, it seems to me, is clearly inadequate both intellectually and ethically. Even historically, liberal arts education has recognized that there is more to reality than

humankind. The understanding of the transcendent, material and abstract reality, and nature all have been recognized as worthy of pursuit in their own right and not as mere means to the satisfaction of human aims. It is difficult to understand how an education for the twenty-first century can continue to foster the anthropocentrism that, in the estimate of many, is destructive of nature and humankind itself.

2) On the other hand, one might understand global citizenship in a more expansive sense that attempts to take into account these concerns. Part of being a thoughtful and effective global citizen is to recognize the intrinsic worthwhileness of the study of non-human phenomena and to recognize the place that non human realities have and ought to have. Although this is a possible interpretation of the purpose of the current education program, I do not find much support for it, when I examine the details of how the ends of effective and thoughtful citizenship are to be pursued. The focus is primarily on historical and cultural understandings. Knowledge of the natural world seems to be merely tacked on as is the idea of developing an inquiring and critical mind.

3) This impression is confirmed by the nature and distribution of the current general education requirements. At most three of the possible eleven total required courses are devoted to other than anthropocentric concerns. Moreover, these three requirements seem to be added on in a circular kind of way, that is, one is told that a liberally educated humanist needs to have knowledge of the natural sciences and mathematics as well as skills in quantitative reasoning just as a liberally educated scientist needs humanistic understanding. It is not clear though why this is so. Humanistic and scientific concerns seemed to be pasted together. The current program seems to have no rationale for their integration other than that a liberally educated person integrates the humanities and the sciences because he or she is a liberally educated person. I think that the failure to address this issue is a reflection of the inadequacy of the conception of liberal education in the current general education program. Unfortunately, I believe it reflects the terrible dichotomies between the sciences and humanities that beset our culture generally, and indeed, our faculty. It seems that instead of addressing these issues and attempting to seek a way to begin to resolve them, the current program lets the humanities, fine arts, and the humanistic portions of the social sciences, on the one hand, and the scientific portions of the social sciences along with the natural and mathematical sciences, on the other, each go their own way. The past two general education programs at Lewis and Clark at least attempted to address these issues.

4) But even if we look at the individual parts of program we find, it seems to me, an unaccountably narrow vision of the liberal arts. The focus of the first year course and the international studies requirement seems to be historical and experiential. Some mention of analytic approaches is made with regard to a second course for those not participating in the semester abroad program. Understanding foreign languages and "experiencing" are given pride of place in terms of methodology for understanding of a culture. No one can doubt that both of these are important. However, it is one thing to argue for their importance, and quite another thing to argue that they are either necessary or sufficient for understanding another culture. I find no case made for either necessity nor sufficiency. Only a small case is even made for their importance. Even if one accepts the centrality of understanding another culture for being an effective and thoughtful global citizenship in the twenty-first century -- a premise that has not been established -- it surely has not been established that an understanding of another culture is best achieved by means of three semesters of foreign language study and a semester abroad. To my mind the assumption that this is so, reflects the failure to reflect on the relative role of experiential and "humanistic" means of understanding versus those of systematic, analytic and scientific modes of understanding. As far as I can see the program has made no case for the relative balance that it has come up with on this score.

5) But let's grant the importance of such an approach and examine the nature of the program's understanding of this approach both in the international studies requirement and the first year course, Inventing America. History and experience seem to have pride of place. The only argument that I can find for focusing on the United States is that is where Lewis and Clark is located. I realize that one should not take this argument literally. So is there any other reason for doing so? We cannot, of course, use the reason that this is part of being a liberally educated person. That leads us to circularity: A liberally educated person should find out about the place where she is living because that is what it means to be a

liberally educated person. Another argument is "A people with no sense of its past will be in no position to imagine its future." There are all kinds of problems with this claim. It assumes that the citizenship of the United States constitutes "a people" and that it has some kind of discernible past. On the other hand, it seems to be trivially true. Who wants to disagree with the claim that an individual or a group of people can think about the future without thinking about the past? Once we reject all those proposals for a general education program based on historical amnesia, they are still quite a few alternatives left to be explored!

6) Moreover, the emphasis in both the first year course and the International Studies requirement seems to be on individual cultures and societies with some attention in some phases or parts of both to cross cultural comparison. Although such an emphasis may be a necessary part of understanding the human problems that these requirements seem implicitly to want to address such as racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, nationalism and economic injustice, it is clearly not sufficient. Both parts of the program neglect cross cultural commonalities of both the historical and contemporary sort. More importantly, they do not address in a systematic fashion, if at all, theoretical accounts of the origin, maintenance or solution of these problems. The history of the development of both the natural and social sciences demonstrates, I believe, that attention to such theories is indispensable for explanation, understanding and evaluation.

Thus I find that the current and proposed GE program fails to meet in part or whole the following substantive criteria for a good GE program.

7). The Principle of Educational Significance: Any general education program will reflect significant abiding and current important questions about all of reality, human and non-human.

The reason for this principle is that any GE program is a function of both abiding and varying central questions that face humans. No program is adequate that does not consider what these questions are and which need immediate attention. Thus the formulation of any program requires a major intellectual exercise to determine what its content ought to be.

An implication of this principle is that the significance of the current program is to be evaluated comparatively with other possible general themes for a general education program, and accepted and rejected on that basis. Thus, the current program would have to be subjected a serious review rather than the managed review with which we have been presented. Such a review would require serious discussion by all the faculty on central questions about the nature of a GE program.

8). The Principle of Substantive Representation: Any general education program must include the substantive issues of all the respective disciplines of the college.

The obvious reason for this principle is that it also is a necessary condition for a genuine GE program.

This principle implies that culture include all the humanities and Social science disciplines and not just the select few that are represented in the current program.

It would also mean that the International Studies requirement be expanded to include substantive issues in all the disciplines and/or that a third list be added which includes courses that are "cross-cultural" whether historically or thematically oriented and/or theoretical in orientation.

9) I conclude that there are fundamental substantive flaws with the current general education program and the proposed general education program.

#### Methodological Failings

The current and proposed GE programs fail in part or entirely to meet the following methodological criteria for a good GE program.

1) The Principle of Methodological Representation: Any general education program must include the methodologies of all the respective disciplines of the college.

The obvious reason is that a program that is not representative of all the disciplinary methods is not a general education program.

An implication of this principle is that each of the sections of the GE program in which it is applicable the methodologies of all the relevant discipline are employed equally. This would mean that in Inventing America would include an equal emphasis on all the methodologies of the social sciences and humanities, not just historical and interpretive methodologies.

It would imply that the methodologies of all the humanities and social sciences be represented in the International Studies component of the program.

The principle also implies that the structure of the program represent in a balanced fashion the different methodologies of all the disciplines. The current program is entirely unbalanced giving most of its attention to interpretive methodologies and literature. The disciplines represented in Inventing America, most of the International Studies requirement, and the foreign language requirement certainly do not represent all of the humanities and the social sciences, yet they get most of the program. See, for instance, the listing of courses under the International Studies program.

2) The Principle of Disciplinary Representation: A necessary condition for the acceptability of any general education program is that it be formulated by representatives of every department at the college.

The obvious reason for this principle is that honest intellectual inquiry ought not to exclude any of the disciplines from its investigations. No one outside of a discipline can speak for that discipline.

An implication of this principle is that the current program does not meet the requirement of disciplinary representation. To that extent it is unsatisfactory and needs to fulfill this principle, if it can, before it is acceptable.

### Procedural Failings

The current and proposed GE programs fail to meet in whole or part the following criteria for the construction of a good GE program:

1) The Principle of Cosmic Rawlsianism: All participants in the formulation of a general education program must set aside their own individual research and disciplinary interests in the following fashion: They should put themselves behind a veil of ignorance about who they are and make choices about what the general education program ought to be like in terms of what is the best for the intellectual life of the students and the college.

The obvious reason for this is that we are all self-interested with respect to what we would like to have taught and the way it is taught. But individual interests do not always coincide with the common good.

An implication of this principle is that the current revision of the GE program and its predecessor, the current program, were not formulated properly. The clear result is that people are forced to do what they are not qualified to do. In addition, they must spend much time learning enough so that they can do the intellectual grunt work of the elite who have decided what the program is to be. In the mean time the elite have all kinds of time to do their research. As a result they get the chances for pay advances and the intellectual grunt workers struggle. In addition, the students do not get what they deserve.

2) The Principle of Qualification: No one should teach in a course for which he or she is not professionally qualified, unless that person wishes to do so.

The obvious reason for this is that students deserve qualified faculty. They pay for that and it is a matter of justice that they get it.

An implication of this principle is that no one, whether junior or senior faculty, would teach in Inventing America unless he or she judges himself qualified to do so or is willing to do so, even without such qualification. Since Inventing America, even in the newest proposal, is essentially a course in American history it should be taught by American historians and American studies experts.

3. The Principle of Fair Acquisition of Resources: The acquisition of faculty resources should be governed by departmental and legitimate GE needs.

The obvious reason for this is that the curriculum has this two-fold focus.

A consequence of this principle is that any additions of faculty for the GE program should only be made once it is determined that the GE program is a legitimate one. (This condition is, of course, only a necessary one, not a sufficient one.) Thus, since the current program fails the test of legitimacy no additions should be made to support it.

#### Conclusion

Thus, I conclude that the current GE Program, and the newly proposed one, substantively fail to meet major criteria of adequacy for a GE Program. I welcome discussion of these claims, especially from those who have argued and continue to argue that the current program is a good and improving one and thus should be maintained as proposed in the recommendations now before the faculty.