

Educational Policy Committee
March 10, 2011

Present: Professors Easter, Koepp, Olson, and Stiadle; Provost Miller-Bernal; and Associate Provost Speaker

The meeting began at 9:35 a.m.

As the scheduled minute taker was not in attendance, Associate Provost Speaker agreed to take minutes today rather than next week. The draft descriptions for the second-year theme were distributed.

1. Review of Minutes

Motion made and seconded to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2011 meeting.
Approved unanimously.

2. Search Committee for next Provost and Dean

The President has decided that the composition of the search committee for the next Provost and Dean will be four faculty members (representatives from Advisory and EPC, a President-appointed junior faculty member, and an at-large elected faculty member) and two senior staff members (one being the Assistant to the President). The committee will be co-chaired by Meredith VanDuyne and Professor O'Leary, the Advisory rep. Professors Koepp and Stiadle volunteered to serve. After discussion, the Committee agreed to Professor Koepp being its representative on the search committee.

3. Subcommittees' Progress Reports

Professor Easter reported that the LLT (Living and Learning Together, January week) group is having difficulty finding a meeting time. It was suggested that they try a phone conference if scheduling obligations prevent everyone from being in the same room at the same time. Professor Easter also shared that she presented the general idea of the week at an Arts Division meeting and that the response was one of "We don't have the time" to do this type of activity in January. The Provost noted that there may not be four divisions next year as the divisional configuration is up for discussion. She also responded that people are not being asked to make an extensive time commitment.

Professor Stiadle reported that the Scientific Literacy subcommittee has not met yet. It is now fully formed as Professor Chen from Humanities has volunteered. A subgroup of the subcommittee will be meeting on Friday. Wednesdays will be the regularly scheduled meeting day for the group. Professor Stiadle indicated that he will report more next week.

4. Themed Seminars

The Committee discussed the revised statement that was circulated for the first-year seminar theme. With minor edits, the Committee agreed to it. The Committee then reviewed the draft descriptions for the second year distributed at the beginning of the meeting. Again with minor

edits, the Committee was able to come to agreement to use the fourth description. There was some consideration during this discussion as to whether the second year should include service learning. Committee members then read their prepared descriptions of the third-year seminar. Everyone is to send their description to Rhonda for distribution. As the fourth year does not include a themed seminar, members do not have homework to write a description. The Committee does however need to determine how many big ideas multidisciplinary courses are needed and what criteria will be used to evaluate if courses qualify.

5. Capstone Survey (Questions 6-10)

The Committee discussed the responses from the 13 surveys received for questions 6-10.

Observations included:

- There is variability across majors as to whether all students do the same work.
- While many majors have students begin their work in the junior year (with preparation, proposals, etc.), most do not have any formal coursework that year. The fall and spring of the senior year are seen to include elements for many majors. Very few programs have a spring only experience for their majors.
- Some majors have many components as part of the capstone experience (e.g., PART and PSY).
- A written component involving feedback and revision was a common element and one that the Committee believes should be included as the thesis is to fulfill the writing attentive element for the fourth year. The Committee asked the Provost to convey this to the Curriculum Committee as the proposal for a change to the BCS thesis removing the written requirement is being considered there today. It was acknowledged that writing skills of students can present certain challenges for the major. The College needs to provide sufficient resources to facilitate students' development as writers.
- Length of written products varies from a minimum of 3-5 to 30-60; 20-30 pages seem to be the most common expected length.
- The type of research students are required to undertake varies across programs. For some it depends on the student project. Few majors require original research.
- Most majors require a presentation of some sort. Some have a multi-stage process with different audiences that allows revision to take place. Length of time varies from 15 to 45 minutes with 20 minutes being common. The Committee revisited previous feedback from a student representative regarding when students receive direct instruction for how to do presentations. If presentations are important as a means of students developing their oral communication skill as part of general education, then it is reasonable to expect to grade them and provide feedback. The Committee recognized that it did not include on the survey if feedback is provided for presentations.
- It appears that many responders read the technology part of question 10 as only including PowerPoint. There appears to be a split as to whether majors require technology or not. It would have been helpful to have included a use of technology question not specifically tied to the oral presentation.

6. Next Meeting

For next week, everyone is to review the responses to questions 11-15 of the capstone survey and to be prepared to discuss the practical issues for the fourth year course.

The meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Speaker, Associate Provost for Academic and Student Life