

TO: Dr. Andrew Wright, President, Faculty Senate

After careful review and extensive discussion, I have disapproved Faculty Senate Motion FS_2016_9 . Implementation of Skills in the Major Legislation.

My primary objection, in an era when there are increasing demands on faculty time from both outside and inside the university, is that the legislation is a disproportionate response to the task. It calls for a major and cumbersome addition to an already cumbersome governance system and would require large investments of faculty time. If one looks carefully at each piece of the agenda which the legislation would assign to the new committee, it would involve a rather large agenda for faculty members on the committee as well as for faculty in the responding departments.

I would be willing to approve less complex and less far-reaching legislation that established a smaller committee—perhaps a subcommittee of the Core Council or a smaller ad hoc committee—with the aim of monitoring the progress of those departments with curricula not subject to external accreditation in assessing skills in oral and written communication, research methods, ethics, critical thinking, and technology. The relevant departments do need to have meaningful assessment data for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) visit in 2019-2010.

It should remain to departments to establish the criteria and evaluate the results that they determine to be appropriate to their respective disciplines. This was the intention of the SKIM legislation. Although it is primarily the responsibility of chairs and deans to see that departments are held accountable for accomplishing their missions and responsibilities, minimal monitoring by the Faculty Senate to assure that departments are following through on a campuswide curricular policy is reasonable. This could include developing a schedule of progress reports keyed to the HLC visit. However, such monitoring should be designed to minimize the time demands on faculty serving on a monitoring committee and faculty in responding departments.

Joel E. Anderson, Chancellor