



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK
Friday, October 21, 2011, 1:00 p.m.
Faculty Senate Meeting

Ledbetter B & C

Minutes

Present: **CAHSS**— Amrhein, Anson, Bunch, Deiser, English, Estes, Finzer, Giammo, Kleine, McAbee, Porter, Yoder. **CB**— Edison, Funk, Nickels, Watts. **CE**— Barrett, Burgin, Hayn, Nolen. **CEIT**— Anderson, Babiceanu, Jovanovic, Tschumi. **LAW**— . **LIBRARY**—. **CPS**— Collier-Tenison, Rhodes, Smith-Olinde. **CSM**— Benton, Cui, Grant-Scott, Guellich, Prince, Sims, Tarasenko. **EX OFFICIO**— Robertson, Ford; Senate Counsel: Faust.

Guests Present: Steve McClellan, Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration; Laura McCarty, Bursar; Angela Brenton, Dean of Professional Studies (for the Undergraduate Curriculum Task Force)

Absent: **CAHSS**—Bailey, Clausen. **CB** – Mitchell. **CE**— McAdams. **CEIT**—Tebbets, Tramel. **LAW** -- Fitzhugh, Goldner; **LIB**—Russ. **CPS** – Barnes, Golden, Thombre. **CSM**—Douglas, McMillan, Yanoviak. **EX OFFICIO**— Anderson, Lewis, Patterson.

N.B. Attendance was only recorded for October 21, 2011. When a meeting goes into recess and reconvenes later, attendance is not recorded a second time. Absent on October 21 but present and voting on October 28 were: Bailey, AHSS; Tebbets, CEIT; Russ, LIB; Barnes, CPS; Douglas, McMillan, Yanoviak, CSM.

I. Welcome and roll call

President Smith-Olinde welcomed the senators and called the meeting to order at 1: 11 p.m. and, in the absence of Secretary Jeanette Clausen, asked Vice President Sara Beth Estes to call the roll.

II. Review of minutes

Senators were invited to comment on the minutes of the September 23, 2011, meeting of the Senate as distributed with the agenda and posted on the web site. It was moved and seconded that the minutes be accepted. Motion passed on voice vote.

III. Announcements

President Smith-Olinde thanked the provost for providing refreshments for us.

IV. Introduction of New Topics (2 minute limit; no discussion)

President Smith-Olinde invited senators to address topics of interest to the body.

Watts alerted the senate to the likelihood of a forthcoming policy recommendation regarding the termination of health benefits for faculty on less than twelve-month contracts who resign at the close of the spring semester.

English asked if we have any data on the success of African-American and Latino students, who comprise a significant percentage of our student body. Tschumi noted he knew of an old report, but not about what assessment data we might be now collecting.

V. Reports

A. Chancellor: Joel Anderson

The chancellor was unable to be present today.

B. Provost: Sandra Robertson

The provost suggested that we might not want her here today since she just came from The Power of the Purse luncheon, an annual event sponsored by the Arkansas Women's Foundation, and was particularly feeling her oats.

She reported that we haven't gotten anything official from ADHE yet, but all CAOs are meeting next week. We have heard by the grapevine that ADHE may be backing off the common-course-numbering system, largely because of its hugely adverse effects on institutions like ours. What they seem to want is to make the ACTS system work [ACTS=Arkansas Course Transfer System].

Secondly, on the 120-hour core requirement deadline, there is an exception process, and there are a number of legitimate exceptions that we'll take forward. Also, ADHE seems to be rethinking its impossibly tight deadline for compliance (February 15, 2012). Nothing in the law required it

Nickels added some comments about the performance funding policy. He has strongly suggested to Interim ADHE Director Shane Broadway that they convene a meeting that includes faculty from the four-year institutions in order to engage them in the process of establishing standards for performance funding. Nickels further suggested that Broadway consider inviting faculty in regularly, perhaps quarterly, so that they're not just getting information from chancellors and provosts.

C. Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance Steve McClellan and Bursar Laura McCarty: Update on Confirmation Process

McClellan reminded those present of that he had reported to the Senate in the spring, a report on the first semester of requiring students to confirm their intent to attend UALR. He was present to provide an update and answer the questions: Is the policy working? Is it doing what we intended it to do? Bursar McCarty distributed a handout.

In the past, we were incurring \$300K of accounts payable [but not collected] each semester. The system seems to be doing what we hoped it would do. The number of accounts sent for

collection dropped from the beginning. Once the confirmation process was initiated, the numbers fell off even further. By summer, we saw a 40% decrease in the amount referred for collection.

Cindy Bennett was hired to find out why the students who didn't confirm didn't confirm. Overwhelmingly, those who didn't were financially unable to confirm. Thus we saved them from incurring further debt.

McClellan praised faculty and administrative staff for giving information to his office, enabling them to track down what happened, and in some instances, fix a situation. He encouraged faculty and staff to keep getting in touch with them.

He noted that any graduate assistantships that might be applied to tuition and fees should be sent in as early as possible. If it comes in too close to the deadline, he said, Financial Assistance may not be able to get it posted in time to help.

Q from Jovanovic: Why does it take so long for scholarships to be posted so that any charges and students' financial aid show up at the same time? *A:* Financial Aid will have to answer that. He suspects that things will be better next fall, citing better communication among offices on campus. *Follow-up Q:* Does ADHE not post scholarships until September? *A:* That's correct, but they do "memo them" to student accounts. When the memo is there, McClellan's office can take it into account.

D. *Mark Burris, STaR Office:* Blackboard SafeAssign

Burriss noted he had been asked to do a brief presentation on SafeAssign. He'll take about ten minutes. STaR normally does a two-hour training, and Burriss invited all to attend that.

It's two tools: SafeAssign, used by students to upload their files and get the report, and a DirectSubmit tool for the faculty upload/submission process. The software checks the document's contents against four sources: web pages accessed via the MS Bing search engine, periodical and journal articles via Proquest ABI/Inform databases, as well as against other papers that have been submitted by UALR students or faculty, and papers submitted through SafeAssign from any other university.

It obviously doesn't cover everything; there may be sources on Google that aren't available on Bing, for example. And it uses bots to search. Anyone who doesn't want their files searched by bots can block them fairly easily. Burriss noted that personal web pages at UALR will not be subject to bot search.

Does it determine whether plagiarism has occurred? No. It merely notes quoted and lightly paraphrased content, which may be properly cited in the work. A judgment as to whether plagiarism has occurred must be made by the faculty member. What it does provide to faculty is far more information from a wider variety of sources than we would ever reasonably check on our own. It assists the faculty member in determining whether sources have been properly cited.

Burriss said he's found SafeAssign to be a good tool for encouraging students to do more original writing and to properly identify and cite sources.

Does it give false positives? Sometimes. SafeAssign makes no distinction between cited and uncited content, but looks only for common words and phrases.

Does it give false negatives: Sure. It doesn't search printed text, won't find bot-protected sources, and so on. The SafeAssign report has to be interpreted by the faculty member. It's a great teaching tool for undergrads. For more information contact Burriss (mfburriss@ualr.edu).

E. *Undergraduate Council:* Jeanette Clausen, Chair

Clausen was out of town at a conference and will report at the November meeting.

F. Graduate Council: Amanda Nolen, Chair

Nolen had nothing new to report, but wanted to thank Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School Pat Pellicane. Thanks to his efforts, beginning in 2012, fulltime doctoral students will be eligible for health benefits.

VI. New Business

President Smith-Olinde recognized Past President Ford. The agenda is supposed to go out to the entire faculty, and it seems that today's agenda went only to the Faculty Senate list. Ford took responsibility for having not adequately explained the process to the new president. Ford suggested, then, that we discuss but not take action on the motions on the agenda for decision today, deferring them until next month, when the notice requirement could be met.

Tschumi concurred with Ford. Dean Brenton, present to represent the Undergraduate Curriculum Review task force, expressed concern about the compression of the time remaining to the task force to get its work groups up and running by the beginning of the spring semester, but said she saw the wisdom of Ford's suggestion.

Anson noted that the first motion has been disseminated and discussed, so it's not as if all this is brand new, but has been distributed.

The president called for discussion of the first motion.

A. MOTION. Presented by Felecia Epps on behalf of the Undergraduate Task Force [Second required; majority vote at one meeting.]

FS # 2011-12_02. Motion to Approve Philosophical Statement of the Purpose of General Education and Educational Outcomes:

Motion: That the Faculty Senate approve replacement of the current UALR Core Competencies (attachment 2) by the Philosophical Statement of Purpose of General Education and Educational Outcomes (attachment 1).

Commentary: The Undergraduate Curriculum Revision Task Force (UCR) met with employers, the UALR Board of Visitors, alumni, and faculty to receive their input on the Knowledge, Skills, and Values that a UALR graduate should possess. Based on the input received and a review of the information available from peer institutions the UCR prepared a Philosophical Statement of Purpose of General Education and Educational Outcomes (attachment 1).

B. MOTION. Presented by Felecia Epps on behalf of the Undergraduate Task Force [Second required; majority vote at one meeting.]

FS # 2011-12_03. Motion to Approve UCR plan to create faculty task groups to make recommendations on how the new Educational Outcomes will be accomplished:

Motion: That the Faculty Senate approve the UCR Plan to create faculty task groups to develop recommendations on how the new Educational Outcomes will be accomplished.

Commentary: The UCR has concluded that it needs to receive input from faculty on the best way to accomplish the Educational Outcomes. The UCR plans to create faculty groups and charge the groups with developing recommendations on how each outcome will be accomplished. Once the UCR receives reports from the task groups, it will develop specific recommendations for the Faculty Senate.

Discussion:

Dean Brenton, reporting for the task force in Epps's absence, began by reminding the Senate that the new framework they're proposing will replace the blue-ribbon competencies adopted more than twenty years ago. The first motion is to affirm the new competency areas. Skills, knowledge, and values are included in each. These would constitute the guidelines for the second part of the process, where specific course requirements, for example, would be determined.

The second motion sets out the process we would follow from here, and it's helpful to understand it in order to understand and evaluate the first motion.

In discussion, Giammo returned to the question of whether to vote or not on this motion today. He argued that the first motion is the more important of the two, and expressed his opinion that in the interest of full transparency, we should discuss but not vote on this motion.

Brenton outlined the implications of a delay, which would push the first meeting of the task groups to next year.

Watts asked to speak to the substance of the motion; he sees nothing in the motion that addresses knowledge of business or government, which seems of great moment in these times.

Ford rose to a point of order, observing that no motion is yet on the floor, noting that the chair of the task force is not a senator and so cannot move it.

Anson, a member of the UCR, indicated his willingness to move it on behalf of the Task Force. He moved FS # 2011-12_02.

In ensuing discussion, an informal poll was taken to determine the sense of the Senate: 16 were in favor of discussion only, 12 in favor of voting. President Smith-Olinde found the sense of the Senate persuasive.

Watts asked if we were now in real discussion. On hearing that affirmed, he underscored his previous point with admirable economy of words: "What I said."

In response to Watts's comments, Brenton said they see the issue Watts raised, and others like it, as falling to the task groups.

Comment from Jovanovic: As much as he would like to have engineering courses in our core, he acknowledges that we long ago lost control of our own core curriculum. He said he thought the only thing we can prudently do is to adopt the state's minimum core requirement. He said he thought an important part of what we're trying to repair with this task force is our current requiring of much more from our native students while accepting transfer students with no more than the state minimum core.

Brenton said there is a strong sentiment on the part of the task force not to simply fall back to the state minimum core, and to have the faculty task groups take a hard look at how we want to treat our core requirements..

Senator Tschumi spoke to the difference in the times now and when the blue-ribbon-panel did its work on core curriculum. He suggested that we've undertaken this process largely because of what Jovanovic pointed out, which is our having lost control of the core and imposing very

different requirements on our native students than on transfer students. This raises for him a concern about discouraging, and perhaps disillusioning, the many faculty we propose to send into a difficult and demanding process only to emerge with recommendations that they find cannot be implemented.

Brenton responded that while 70% of our students transfer in some hours, only 28% transfer in enough to meet the state's minimum core. She suggested that there are more questions to be considered than just what courses we require. She said the task groups must discuss cross-cutting themes, such as how to be sure that students graduate with, say, real competence in writing.

Giammo made the argument that we shouldn't give up control of what we can control. The pressure is likely to continue to point downward, but why should we rush to the bottom?

Anson said he's eager to see the kind of lively discussion and debate that needs to occur.

Provost Robertson clarified that many schools that have reduced their core to 35 hours have taken a number of courses from the previous, larger core and put them into the majors. That requires some good thinking about how we really can avoid dumbing-down the curriculum.

Tschumi said he, too, thinks we need to consider carefully additional upper-level requirements that will serve to move students developmentally along the path toward the proposed competencies. (The provost requested that the minutes reflect that Sen. Tschumi registered agreement with her. The substitute secretary affirmed that it had, indeed, already been noted.)

Brenton concurred with the previous discussion, suggesting that the task force wants the task groups to think and work much more broadly than simply focusing on what we've traditionally seen as the core.

Jovanovic said we should perhaps worry about setting our standards higher than any other institutions.

Senator Rhodes moved that we recess and reconvene a week from today so that all faculty might be notified of the motion at hand. Anson seconded. Motion approved on voice vote.

The president declared the meeting in recess at 2:55 p.m.

October 28, 2011 Dickinson Auditorium.

President Smith-Olinde reconvened the meeting at 1:07pm and invited UCR Task Force chair Felecia Epps to the podium.

Epps: I used to teach trial skills – the attorney is not supposed to read stuff, but I have comments from my Task Force. I regret having missed last week's meeting and the lively discussion. I have not replied to the discussion on FacFocus. I want to acknowledge, using terminology from the Marine Corps, part of my fire team – Ed Anson and Tom McMillan. Recalling my Trial Ed days, I asked myself: What is a good theme? The theme is "Let's Talk about It," not just here but in small groups. She read from the Task Force's charge:

"The overarching charge to the UCR Task Force is to study the undergraduate curriculum within the parameters of UALR's mission, existing law, policies of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, and current trends, and to consider appropriate revisions to the UALR undergraduate

curriculum to ensure its relevance for the 21st Century. Topics for review and possible revision include, but are not limited to, the core curriculum (the number of hours required and courses included therein), the number of hours required for an undergraduate degree, the requirement of a minor, and the residency requirement. The charge includes consideration of specific recommendations that could be voted upon for acceptance by the Faculty Senate and enacted as curriculum policy, in addition to making broad recommendations. Task Force members should feel free to make any recommendations to revise the undergraduate curriculum which they feel appropriate within the context of the charge.”

Epps continued by explaining that the UCR wants to have an inclusive process with input from as many different constituencies as possible. Former Provost Belcher had recommended a book called *Avoiding the Potholes: Strategies for Reforming General Education*. An important strategy was not to leave anyone out, but rather, get as many people involved as possible.

Epps reminded those present that the blue ribbon competencies are 20 years old. It’s time to revisit them. They don’t necessarily meet what students need in the 21st century, and they have never been assessed. The Task Force wants the new competencies to be assessable. She emphasized that it’s too early to replace the old competencies with the new ones: Rather, we seek your support in principle for what we have proposed. We don’t want to start off on the hike without receiving the Senate’s support. As we discuss these issues in the [still to be appointed] Task Groups, there may be changes, and once the Task Groups have completed their work, we can return . . . As for the educational outcomes – we want to really separate them from this issue of what the state minimum core is. We envision the educational outcomes as being spread throughout the curriculum, e.g., critical thinking, writing – these cannot be achieved by taking just one course but must be infused across several courses that the student will take during his or her academic career, in order to achieve the educational outcomes.

In the Educational Outcomes, Epps pointed out a change in Knowledge Outcome #2: (The ways of knowing and major works of the arts and humanities). She emphasized that core curriculum and educational outcomes are not necessarily tied together. What the UALR core curriculum should look like is part of what the faculty Task Groups should be discussing.

Epps then called on the Fire Team to comment. Anson stated that originally, the UCR had planned one Task Group to work on both arts and humanities, but now they propose to separate the two and to have one Task Group for each. Epps explained further that there will be a web link with information about each Task Group; you can volunteer for the one(s) that interest you.

President Smith-Olinde invited discussion. Senator Jovanovic objected that last week, we didn’t move it as a motion; we agreed to just have a discussion. Faust said that the motion never got a second, and needed one because it did not come from a standing committee.

Smith-Olinde: I stand corrected. Does the Task Force still wish to introduce the motion in its current form?

Anson moved to place motion A, FS #2011-12_02, on the floor. McMillan seconded.

Smith-Olinde invited discussion, now that the motion is on the floor.

Tschumi: What motion is it exactly?

LSO read the motion as it was stated in the October 21 Agenda:

Anson said the Task Force would like to propose a friendly amendment. Epps stated the proposed change as follows: instead of “to replace” say “agreement in principle” with the statement of educational outcomes. (Amended motion below; deleted text in ~~strikethrough~~, inserted text in **bold**.)

FS # 2011-12_02. Motion: That the Faculty Senate ~~approve replacement of the current UALR Core Competencies (attachment 2) by~~ **agree in principle to** the Philosophical Statement of Purpose of General Education and Educational Outcomes (attachment 1).

Kleine: I want to thank the Task Force for its hard work. My department has a problem: the courses Comp 1 and Comp 2 have been singled out [in the charge to the Task Group on Communication Skills: “Should the learning objectives for Comp I and II be revisited and standardized?”] Our department has worked long and hard on these and has incorporated recommendations from the WPA [Council of Writing Program Administrators]. We see the singling out of the learning objectives of Comp 1 and 2 as an academic freedom issue.

Smith-Olinde and Ford pointed out that the charge to the Task Groups is not part of this motion; it’s in the second motion that will be moved later.

Deiser: So we are agreeing in principle to look at new core competencies but in the end we might decide that we don’t need new core competencies? And no decisions will be made until the Task Groups have met?

Epps: The Task Groups will report back to the UCR and to the Senate, and we will either have new educational outcomes or something else.

Anson: The Senate will have to approve whatever comes forward; it cannot be implemented without Senate approval.

Deiser: So on the one hand, there’s pressure to get started doing this and on the other hand there is no time frame.

Epps: Dr. Belcher said “as long as it takes.”

Smith-Olinde: But there is a desire for the Task Groups to get started before the end of the year. She recognized Senator Jovanovic.

Jovanovic: I have a couple of problems with the way the outcomes are written. Under Knowledge, #1: [The concepts, methodologies, findings, and applications of mathematics and the social and natural sciences], I object to grouping the social and natural sciences together; I think this will get us into difficulties later on. Social Sciences are about humans and have more in common with humanities than with the sciences; they should be split out.

Smith-Olinde: Do you want to move that?

Anson was asked if the Task Force would accept this as a friendly amendment. He replied that there would have to be discussion in the Task Force to decide whether it is analogous to splitting apart the arts and the humanities. "I'm not sure that it needs to be split out here." The suggestion was not accepted as a friendly amendment.

Anderson seconded Jovanovic's motion.

Smith-Olinde asked Jovanovic to restate the motion.

Jovanovic: I didn't have anything prepared – I just think social and natural sciences should be separate. A brief discussion ensued as to whether it would be sufficient to just separate the two using commas.

Jovanovic: The same wording would be fine, but make it separate (a separate numbered item for each) for natural and social sciences.

Anson: In the Task Force, we were separating out knowledge combinations, with the understanding that these are certainly different disciplines but with enough in common to justify their being grouped together.

Giammo: In the social sciences, our methodology has much more in common with the natural sciences than with the humanities.

Epps added that these formulations are not going to be set in stone. Getting too specific at this point may be getting the cart before the horse.

Jovanovic: The truths of mathematics and the sciences would be true even if there were no humans here, while the humanities and social sciences would not exist if there were no humans.

Ford: So is what you are suggesting that we repeat the wording, and replace "social and natural sciences" with "natural sciences."

Giammo: The point is, there are the same methodologies at work in each.

Sims: From an Earth Science perspective – it seems to me that part of the idea of these core competencies is that the knowledge from different disciplines should be integrated rather than separated. So separating seems to me less than productive.

English: Call the question.

Smith-Olinde restated the motion and called for a vote by a show of hands.

Proposed restatement of Knowledge #1.

1. The concepts, methodologies, findings, and applications of mathematics and the ~~social and~~ natural sciences

1. [a] The concepts, methodologies, findings, and applications of the social ~~and natural~~ sciences.

The amendment failed, 12 in favor and 23 opposed.

President Smith-Olinde recognized Senator Jovanovic.

Jovanovic: I move that to Knowledge #1, we add engineering and technology. Anderson seconded the motion.

English asked for the justification for this addition.

Jovanovic: The greatest life expectancy increase came about through increased sanitation – in other words, civil engineering. Engineering and technology are responsible for the world we live in. We need to recognize that engineering and technology are not just specialist training, but everyone should have some understanding of these disciplines.

Smith-Olinde: Just for the record, public health and increased understanding of health care also contributed to increased life expectancy, not just engineering and technology.

Anson: So do you want to put it in humanities?

Gealt: Engineering is being introduced into K-12 education as part of the Standards, so in the near future, students will be coming to us with that knowledge.

Jovanovic: The State of Massachusetts has already done this.

Smith-Olinde called for a vote by a show of hands to amend the statement by adding engineering and technology to mathematics, social and natural sciences:

Knowledge. 1. The concepts, methodologies, findings, and applications of mathematics, ~~and~~ the social and natural sciences, **and engineering and technology**.

The amendment to the motion passed by a vote of 23 in favor and 8 opposed.

Douglas asked to have the amended statement read. Smith-Olinde read it as stated above.

Epps restated that the [amended] motion is for the Faculty Senate to agree in principle to the philosophical statement of purpose and educational outcomes.

Ford: Are we going to approve this with allowing editorial changes to insert commas?

Anson: Why the heck not.

Smith-Olinde called for a vote on the amended motion by a show of hands. The motion carried.

Smith-Olinde asked that we move on to the second motion:

FS # 2011-12_03. Motion to Approve UCR plan to create faculty task groups to make recommendations on how the new Educational Outcomes will be accomplished.

Epps read the motion:

Motion: That the Faculty Senate approve the UCR Plan to create faculty task groups to develop recommendations on how the new Educational Outcomes will be accomplished.

Commentary: The UCR has concluded that it needs to receive input from faculty on the best way to accomplish the Educational Outcomes. The UCR plans to create faculty groups and charge the groups with developing recommendations on how each outcome will be accomplished. Once the UCR receives reports from the task groups, it will develop specific recommendations for the Faculty Senate.

Anson moved FS # 2011-12_03 and McMillan seconded.

It was pointed out that there will be 9 Task Groups, because arts and humanities have been split into two areas.

English: Will we put Engineering into one of those competencies?

Epps: Yes, Engineering and Technology will be a part of that now.

Jovanovic moved that the proposed faculty Task Group #6, Social and Natural Sciences, be split to make Social Sciences a separate group, and Natural Sciences and Engineering and Technology a separate group. Anson seconded the motion.

Discussion. Yoder asked how this is different from what we just voted on. Anson said the Task Force will take that [Jovanovic's motion] as a friendly amendment.

Epps: So we're now proposing 10 task groups? Several voices answered yes.

Smith-Olinde invited additional discussion.

Tschumi: I have a general problem: when you create these broad groups, you get many good ideas that people think are very important. Even before [with the Blue Ribbon Committee], when we had much flexibility, some people came away disillusioned (not everyone). The climate is very different today. I'm all for in-depth discussion. But a process that's so open, with 10 groups – that's well over 100 people, and when you get down to it, most of those ideas can't be accomplished. It would be better if we addressed some of the basic questions (for example, are all our students taking the same core, etc. – points outlined in my email of the previous day). I want a broad discussion, but I also want some of that structure in advance of the discussion.

Anderson: Like Pete, I go back a long time. I remember the Blue Ribbon Committee and wish we could get some of that back. I'd like us to be without any constraints. I was chair of the implementation committee and brought us down to the ground. But let the sky be the limit, get some new ideas and see where it goes.

Smith-Olinde: Do I understand correctly: We are referring to the full 4 years of undergraduate education.

Tschumi: I recognize that, I think there should be requirements that are distinct from the core. But if we decide that we want a core, that still leaves room for all these discussions. Let us focus on what's practical to do. [**N.B.** For a fuller discussion of Tschumi's arguments, see the memo pasted in as an addendum to these minutes.]

Ford: I would speak in favor of the motion, and in favor of those task groups. Pete raises an interesting point: what are the parameters? The questions (e.g., small or large core) are things we can debate. Last week Joe spoke of the value of a large core, and Nick proposes the value of a small core. We could have two baccalaureate degrees, the legislative degree and the academic degree (laughter).

Jovanovic: What if a person wants to be involved in more than one area? What if a faculty member wants to serve on all 10 Task Groups?

Epps: If we needed numbers and you volunteered for all ten, it's possible that you could end up on all 10 but the UCR will make that decision. We will probably not have one person on all 10. If we had 100 different volunteers for those Task Groups . . .

Jovanovic: So if 25 people volunteer for a TG, they won't all get on it?

Epps: We have to think about what is feasible and can work.

Brenton: Our intent is to use everyone who has volunteered. We're not sitting there trying to decide who's on which group.

Faust: To piggyback on what Angie said – a group of 25 can be manageable, so if we should be in the happy position of having 100 volunteers, why not use them all.

Anson: We do need to have enough people to have some for each group.

English: Are there criteria? Any particular expertise? Or just anyone who volunteers? Have you guys thought about what criteria to use?

Anson: We did want to have a broad base. On the original Blue Ribbon Committee, I was on the natural science committee, for example.

Ford: These are sub groups of the Senate and as such, they are open to anyone who wishes to attend – all we have to do is publish the meeting times. So I'm not sure this is a terribly critical issue.

Tschumi – I was on critical thinking [of the Blue Ribbon committee], and there were about 6 people who showed up at the meetings.

Watts: I move the previous question. Nickels seconded.

Smith-Olinde asked for a vote on the motion to stop discussion at this point. The motion passed.

Smith-Olinde called for a vote on FS #2011-12_03, read it as stated above, and noted that it includes 10 Task Groups. The motion carried.

Douglas: We just voted on something that doesn't exist; we don't have any new educational outcomes, we just voted on a philosophy.

Giammo: I don't think there's a problem.

Tschumi: Just use educational outcomes and delete "new."

Jovanovic: For many reasons that have been made clear all week long, all of our transfer students are eligible to meet the state minimum core and native students don't have that option. I move that the Faculty Senate approve in principle to use the state minimum core as the framework for the upcoming discussions.

Jovanovic was advised to prepare this motion for the next meeting. It should be submitted by November 9 to President Smith-Olinde for the November 18 meeting.

VII. Open Forum

Mohan: It's important that the subgroups maintain their minutes, maybe on a web site. Faculty are pretty much issue-driven, so if I see something that I think I can really contribute to, I might participate. We need open discussion.

Tschumi: What concerns me: We have such an important topic that's being discussed in a limited venue – could we create a temporary list that would go to all faculty. Some faculty maybe don't like that because they don't want to hear it – so they could opt out, but at least you might have wider participation.

Matson: Would like to have some clarification on what we just passed.

Smith-Olinde: There will need to be revision because we now have 10 Task Groups.

Matson: But what is the force of those statements? Many of them are not something I would endorse.

Smith-Olinde: They are simply a starting point.

Matson: But it says "you will answer these questions. . ."

Epps: We will take another look; our intent was not to leave it totally wide open, it was meant as a starting point, so if there are statements that you are taking as "you must do it" we need to take another look at them.

Kleine: I think there's a huge issue in terms of control of courses that count toward this core. So do we want departments to decide or do we want external forces to tell departments what to do.

Tschumi: The process we used before was that we came up with basic requirements, and then came up with a Curriculum Review Board. The Assembly established the competencies, and then all courses had to go to the Curriculum Review Board to be approved. So with respect to the core courses, they were owned by the faculty as a whole, not the department.

Kleine: So you're saying, all those courses (World Literature, Western Civilization) are under the control of this body? This is big for me – so is it the sense of the Senate that at least, the disciplinary frameworks will be respected?

Tschumi: It sounds like, what we need to do is send out to the entire faculty the frameworks for all these Task Groups and allow a feedback period.

Smith-Olinde: That could occur during the volunteer period.

Epps: Some universities have a separate web site where anyone can go . . . rather than having us just send you a bunch of stuff . . .

Tschumi: Our basic understanding is: the Board of Trustees assigns curriculum to the faculty as a whole and we find ways through our governance process to do that. Allow departments as the experts. With the previous core we had the Curriculum Review Board. You have to trust the process.

Deiser: Earlier Pete mentioned that all faculty should be informed. Maybe initially, one email could go out to everyone to let them know about the web site.

There was no further discussion. The meeting adjourned at 2:29pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Clausen, Secretary
With help from Judith Faust

Attachments: (attached as sent on 10/20/2011; for revised versions see UCR web site)

UCR_Attachment1

UCR_Attachment1

UCR_Framework_CommunicativeComptency

UCR_FrameworkCriticalThinking

UCR_ProposedFacultyTaskGroups

UCR_TaskGroupChargeSocial+NaturalSciences

Addendum to Minutes: Memo from Pete Tschumi, sent on October 20, 2011

First, I want to ensure that there is no misconception that I am arguing for low quality. I am actually trying to find realistic ways to improve quality. Through my years of teaching I have become more and more concerned that we are lowering the quality of a college degree throughout the country. If we look back to the beginning of universities in Europe, we see that at first it was education for the professions: law at the University of Bologna, theology at the University of Paris. As other universities were established medicine was added. Beginning in the 1400's an important conceptual change occurred first in Florence and then spreading. The new concept revolved around education to produce well qualified citizens.

If the people are to govern themselves, if there is to be a well-functioning democracy, then one needs to have citizens who have the depth of understanding and the critical thinking

skills to make well-reasoned, practical decisions. Looking back to the late 1700's and early 1800's during the founding years of the United States, one can see that educating citizens was one of the key concerns of Thomas Jefferson. I do not have space to go into my arguments on how and why I think we have gotten off-track but for some time now a college education has become more and more education for jobs.

Second, I want to address the need for us to be realistic. When we did the Blue Ribbon curriculum process before, we were operating in an environment where the faculty could still focus on education for qualified citizens. The task forces put a lot of time and effort into studying what was needed in each of the competencies. Yet even in that environment, we could not implement much of what was identified as being needed. The possibilities were constrained by numerous factors. While quite a few faculty were satisfied that we had made progress and the efforts were worth it, there were numerous faculty who felt that they had expended enormous effort to little or no affect.

The present situation is worse. While before we could require both transfer and native students to fully meet our core, now only native students must meet our core. Transfer students have more flexibility due to either meeting the core with a transferred associate degree under state law or policies passed by the Faculty Senate either directly addressing the matter or indirectly by giving department chairs authority to determine that the requirements are met. Before we set the minimum hours for a baccalaureate degree to 124, now the state legislature has set the maximum hours to 120 with the possibility of exceptions. While the politicians and state agencies supporting them give lip-service to quality, they insist that the number of graduates needs to double, while totally ignoring the fact that the pool of students available to meet this goal are not nearly as prepared or as good as the ones who are currently receiving degrees.

Another constrain on our possible actions is the concern that all students should be required to meet the same requirements. Faculty have expressed concerns regarding the fairness of some students having to meet more intense and restrictive requirements for the same degree. Whatever the new degree requirements become, they must make sense and be workable in the current environment.

Third, I want to address one of the negative consequences of not being realistic. I mentioned above that some faculty felt the blue ribbon process was a waste of time. I made the general point in the last senate meeting that people are willing to exert a lot of effort if they see those efforts actually leading to change and they are happy that they have done so. However, when a group of people exerts a lot of effort only to see it come to nothing, then they become disillusioned and unwilling to engage in such processes in the future.

One problem I see with the current proposal is the broad, open nature of the charge to the faculty task groups. This charge seems to entice faculty to dream so broadly that there will be no chance of implementing the vast majority of ideas developed. While there can be value in generating numerous ideas, the likely negative impact of a broad disillusionment more than offsets the likely gain. In voting on the proposals, it seems to me that either the current committee will feel they have wasted effort or the members of the proposed task forces will in the end feel that way. Considering that the current proposals will involve a hundred plus faculty, I will choose to disappoint the twelve members of the committee rather than a much larger group of faculty by voting no on the proposed task forces.

I tend to object when people are opposed to something without being willing to propose their own solution. So at the end of this document I will show a draft of a proposed framework for baccalaureate degree. The goal is to restrict the range of solutions but to then generate in-depth discussions of possibilities within the framework.

Before presenting the framework, there are several concerns that need to be articulated first. The issue of transfer students and their core requirements has been a major issue for many

years. Some transfer students get a 35 hour core, others get a 44 hour core but with more flexibility than native students, and some of the later group will have department chairs that waive some of those requirements. Our native students are a minority of the students graduating. Is it fair to require more of the native students? Is it fair to require a range for transfer students? In my view it is not fair. Restricting the core to 35 hours does not mean that we have to abandon the goals we used to associate with the core but it does mean we must find alternative ways of reaching those goals.

Some aspects of our goals for students can only be accomplished through a developmental process. For instance, it was recognized in the original blue ribbon process that learning critical thinking was a developmental process that takes the student through stages. Research shows that students need time (many semesters) to progress through the stages. The core was never able to take students to the higher level stages. We have relied on the majors to accomplish the higher levels. It would improve the quality of our students' critical thinking abilities if we could incorporate higher level critical thinking skills in areas outside the major.

One concern I have had for a long time is the deficiency in people's ability to view issues from multiple points of view as generated from very disparate disciplines. Many complex, real world problems can be better understood and solved if one can analyze them from multiple perspectives and synthesis an overall solution incorporating and balancing the different views. Our current degrees do not really address such concerns.

One more thing before looking at the draft framework is terminology. We have come to link the idea of a core with the idea of all the broad goals for a degree. At the same time, core has come to mean the common courses in the first two years of college. Trying to make the two meanings the same limits our ability to build a strong degree. I will use core to mean common courses in the first two years of college, which matches the way we see it used in common between two and four year colleges. Other broad common courses needed to meet the broad goals will be a part of upper level degree requirements.

The draft framework shown below seeks to resolve all three concerns. It restricts the core to 35 hours. It adds six hours of upper level degree requirements. The new upper level requirement is designed to be in courses well away from the student's major and to require higher level critical thinking skills. I have not addressed the question of an academic minor. Other degree requirements similar to existing ones would also be needed beyond those listed.

Baccalaureate Degree Requirements

- A minimum of 120 hours

- 35 hours of core courses from the distribution shown below
 - 6 hours of English composition
 - 0-3 hours of speech communication
 - 3 hours of college algebra or college mathematics
 - 8 hours of lab science
 - 6-9 hours of arts and humanities
 - 3 hours of U.S. history or U.S. government

- 6-9 hours of social science
- 45 hours of upper level (3000 level or above) to include 6 hours of designated in-depth courses from the distribution shown below
 - Students with major in CAHSS
 - 3-6 hours in CSAM
 - 0-3 hours in CPS
 - Students with major in COB
 - 3 hours in CAHSS and 3 hours in CSAM
 - Students with major in COE
 - 3 hours in CAHSS and 3 hours in CSAM
 - Students with major in CEIT
 - 3-6 hours in CAHSS
 - 0-3 hours in CPS
 - Students with major in CPS
 - 3 hours in CAHSS and 3 hours in CSAM
 - Students with major in CSAM
 - 3-6 hours in CAHSS
 - 0-3 hours in CPS

The framework shown above still leaves a lot of room for questions and discussions:

- Are there criteria a course must meet to be in the list of acceptable core courses?
Are there unique criteria in the various areas?
- What are the criteria for the in-depth courses? Are there common criteria among all the courses? What special criteria are used within specific colleges?
- Do we still want to require minors?

UCR Proposal – October 21, 2011

Philosophical Statement of Purpose of General Education

General education nurtures in students the knowledge, skills, habits of mind, and values that provide a foundation for their baccalaureate program and for lifelong learning. General education fosters intellectual breadth, serves as a context for more specialized study, and is essential to the full development of persons who wish to participate meaningfully in the various communities of which they are a part.

Educational Outcomes

Skills:

1. Communication (oral, written, visual, second language, professional self-presentation).
2. Critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and solving problems individually and collaboratively.
3. Information technology (locating, retrieving, evaluating, synthesizing).

Knowledge:

1. The concepts, methodologies, findings, and applications of mathematics and the social and natural sciences.
2. The ways of knowing and major works of the arts and humanities.

Values:

1. Commitment to ethical behavior.
2. Civic and personal responsibility.
3. Global perspective and cultural sensitivity.
4. Appreciating diversity.

(Attachment 1 to UCR Motion)

(Attachment 2 to UCR Motion)

UALR Core Competencies

The purpose of the core curriculum is to establish a foundation for the undergraduate academic experience and to ensure that students develop fundamental skills and a lifelong commitment and ability to learn. All courses stress active learning, reading and writing, and critical thinking. In addition, all courses are aimed at one or more of ten basic competencies.

Aesthetic Experience:

This competency includes knowledge about different art forms and their history; an understanding of how creative processes compare among art forms; and the ability to describe and analyze artistic works.

Critical Thinking:

Critical thinking requires the ability to analyze data, synthesize information, make decisions, and systematically and imaginatively solve problems. All core courses stress critical thinking, providing practice in the techniques of inquiry, logical reasoning, and critical analysis.

Ethical and Moral Consciousness:

Competency in this area involves the ability to recognize ethical and moral issues that may arise from scientific and technological developments or that may be inferred from aesthetic and humanistic works.

Historical Consciousness:

Historical consciousness requires the knowledge of the main stages of human cultural development, along with the ability to relate one's historical heritage to that of other cultures, past and present. This competency involves understanding historical events, whether social, economic, or political, and then examining the relationships among them—relationships such as change, continuity, and causation.

Information Technology:

Competency requires using contemporary technologies to communicate effectively; to locate, manage and analyze information; to critically evaluate information obtained through these technologies; to comprehend basic information technology concepts in order to understand and quickly assimilate new technologies as they evolve; and to have an understanding of and respect for the ethical and legal aspects of the use of information technology.

International Awareness:

The international awareness competency involves the ability to examine one's own culture, society, and nationality from perspectives acquired through understanding other cultures and nations, including their languages, literature, art, history, and geography.

Mathematics:

Competency in mathematics includes an understanding of the concepts, the methodology, and the application of probability and statistics; the ability to use and interpret functions and graphs to express relationships; an appreciation of the importance of numerical information; and a recognition of both the role and the limitations of mathematics in all areas.

Philosophy and Methods of Science:

Competency in the philosophy and methods of science involves understanding the strengths and limitations of science, including how scientists learn about the world through observation and experiment, through modeling and interpretation, and through the skeptical scrutiny of the work of other experts in the field. This competency includes the following: an awareness of relationships between science and society; the ability to use scientific reasoning to evaluate conflicting statements in order to arrive at informed opinions on contemporary issues; an appreciation of how experiencing the universe scientifically differs from experiencing it in other ways; and knowledge of the questions that science neither asks nor answers.

Social and Cultural Awareness:

Social and cultural awareness requires viewing human beings as organisms functioning within a set of global, interconnected systems, including nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, class, law, religion, and communication—that influence and are influenced by changing individuals. This competency includes knowledge about how persons develop and grow; awareness of how social and cultural systems influence values, thought, and behavior; and appreciation for the interactions, conflicts, and communication among systems.

Verbal Literacy:

Verbal literacy includes four skills: writing, reading, speaking, and listening and the ability to use language to learn and participate in the discourse and decision-making of academic, personal, professional, and public life. Competency in written literacy involves the ability to read and write clearly and thoughtfully; to understand different writing and reading processes; and to use these processes to advantage when writing and reading about experiences and ideas. Competency in oral literacy involves public speaking and interpersonal and small group communication. All core courses address this competency.

Framework for the Communication/Critical Thinking Outcomes and Charge to the Faculty Task Group (Revised 8/31/11)

Overview

As the Task Force for Undergraduate Curriculum Review met with faculty, employers, board members and other constituents, we have established the need for communication skills and critical thinking as vital outcomes for all UALR graduates. We have thus adopted the following statements of learning outcomes:

The university should produce graduates who can write well, interact professionally with others in small group and public speaking contexts, and present a polished image.

The university should produce graduates who can think critically, solve problems individually and collectively, and exhibit creativity and innovation.

Framework

We hope to produce communication competencies and critical thinking both through required coursework in the general education curriculum, as well as through repeated communication and critical thinking experiences throughout a student's degree program. Communication competencies and critical thinking cannot be met in the core alone, but must be developed and reinforced throughout an undergraduate education.

We propose that all students are required to complete Composition I and II and Speech Communication, as they are currently required to do (Comp I and II and 0-3 hours of oral communication are required in the state minimum core). We also propose that each undergraduate major at UALR require at least 2-3 intensive writing assignments with feedback and 2-3 oral communication presentations so that students' writing and speaking skills will be reinforced and strengthened. We hope that in the process of teaching writing and speaking that students also gain skills in developing arguments and reasoning, evaluating audiences and evidence, and creatively crafting messages.

We are interested in your conclusions about how critical thinking skills can best be achieved – through a required course, through instructional methods across the curriculum or through other means. At present no coursework is presently required specifically for critical thinking either in the State Minimum Core, nor in the UALR general education requirements.

Charge to the Faculty Task Group on Communication Skills:

We need help in fleshing out how this framework can be implemented at UALR. Please draft a proposal that specifically responds to the following questions:

- 1) Should the learning objectives for Comp I and II be revisited and standardized?
- 2) What should constitute an "intensive writing assignment" and an oral presentation?
- 3) How many should be required in each major?
- 4) How can the writing and speaking assignments be adapted to the particular style of different disciplines?
- 5) Should we develop a common rubric on campus for evaluating writing and speaking so that the same criteria will develop a common approach to improving writing? If so, how can faculty be trained in using these instruments?

- 6) Could communication classes also be structured to promote critical thinking, problem solving and creativity skills? If so how?
- 7) How can we build accountability to make sure that all students actually are receiving continuous reinforcement for developing writing, speaking and critical thinking skills?
- 8) Should UALR's requirements exceed those of the State Minimum Core? If so, what are the consequences of requiring more of native UALR students than of a significant portion of UALR's large transfer population that is subject only to lesser requirements? Are these consequences problematic?
- 9) Once standards and learning objectives for this knowledge competency are determined, how can they be assessed? A long standing criticism of assessment of the current core is that the focus is far more on particular course content than on the broader competencies the courses purportedly develop.

Framework for the Critical Thinking Learning Outcomes and Charge to the Faculty Task Group (Revised 8/31/2011)

Overview

As the Task Force for Undergraduate Curriculum Review met with faculty, employers, board members and other constituents, we have established the need for critical thinking as a vital outcome for all UALR graduates. We have thus adopted the following learning outcome statement:

The university should produce graduates who can think critically, solve problems individually and collectively, and exhibit creativity and innovation.

Framework

We are interested in your conclusions about how critical thinking skills can best be achieved – through a required course or courses, through instructional methods across the curriculum or through other means. At present no coursework is presently required specifically for critical thinking either in the State Minimum Core, or in the UALR general education requirements.

We are also interested in your ideas about how these skills can be developed across the entire undergraduate degree (including courses in academic majors and extracurricular activities).

Charge to the Faculty Task Group on Communication Skills:

We need help in fleshing out how this framework can be implemented at UALR. Please draft a proposal that specifically responds to the following questions:

- 1) What skills do we want students to demonstrate in the areas of critical thinking, individual and collective problem solving, and creativity/innovation?
- 2) What objectives should the university adopt to help students develop and demonstrate these skills?
- 3) What type of instruction or experiences can best promote these skills? Is this best done in a class on critical thinking or by educational methods across different types of courses (such as case studies, application and applied problem solving activities)? Can non-curricular experiences also develop these skills?
- 4) How can we require or promote instruction in majors to further develop and reinforce skills in critical thinking, problem solving and innovation/creativity?
- 5) How can we build accountability to make sure that all students actually are receiving continuous reinforcement for critical thinking skills?
- 6) Should UALR's requirements exceed those of the State Minimum Core? If so, what are the consequences of requiring more of native UALR students than of a significant portion of UALR's large transfer population that is subject only to lesser requirements? Are these consequences problematic?
- 7) How can critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and innovation be assessed?

Proposed Faculty Task Groups

Skills

1. Communication
2. Second language requirement
3. Critical thinking
4. Information technology

Knowledge:

5. Mathematics
6. Social and Natural Sciences
7. Arts
8. Humanities

Values:

9. Values (commitment to ethical behavior, civic and personal responsibility, global perspective and cultural sensitivity, appreciating diversity)

Framework for Knowledge of the Social and Natural Sciences and Charge to the Faculty Task Group (Revised 10/12/2011)

Overview

The Task Force for Undergraduate Curriculum Review met with employers, board members, other external constituents, faculty, and students, and has established that knowledge of the sciences is vital for all UALR graduates. We have adopted the following statement of educational outcomes for the sciences:

The concepts, methodologies, findings, and applications of the social and natural sciences.

Framework

Note: Currently in the UALR Core World Civilization (History 1311 and 1312) is in a separate category, Historical Consciousness, not part of our designation as a humanity or as a social science. History has the feature of being a social science in its methodology, but a humanity in terms of its content.

The Task Force recognizes that while students majoring in the social or natural sciences will acquire a deeper knowledge of these sciences through their majors, it will be acquired by other students primarily through coursework in the core curriculum. The Task Force also recognizes that coursework in the core curriculum must meet State Minimum Core requirements, which are currently as follows:

8 hours of science courses that include laboratories

(“Institutions may require students majoring in math, engineering, science, education, and health related professions to take higher or specific science courses as part of the State Minimum Core.”)

Social sciences to include 3 hours of US History or US Government and 6-9 hours of additional social sciences.

Charge to the Faculty Task Group on Knowledge of Social and Natural Sciences:

The Task Force seeks the assistance of the Faculty Task Group on the Social and Natural sciences in fleshing out this framework and developing appropriate courses. The Task Force suggests the following as some initial guiding questions:

- 1) What are the more specific learning objectives of these knowledge educational outcomes? What, more specifically, do we want every student to know and be able to do in this area? How should history be treated?
- 2) What is the appropriate level at which to address the methodologies of the sciences (as opposed to their salient findings and discoveries) in core courses? How large a component of courses should methodologies be?
- 3) Currently, in the case of the social sciences, many courses on the core curriculum menu also serve as required gateway courses to majors (e.g., POLS 2301, CRJU 2300, SOCI 2300, PSYC 2300, etc.). Are the goals of gateway courses always coincidental with the aims of core or general education? To what extent are the answers to the following questions identical? What should every student take away from course X if it is likely to be one of only several social science courses that he or she will ever take? What should every major in the discipline take away from course X? If the answers diverge, what are some alternative approaches for meeting this knowledge competency?
- 4) Currently some of the lab sciences on the core curriculum menu do not serve as required gateway courses to majors. Students in natural science majors are allowed to substitute other courses in their majors for the courses on the core menu on a two-for-one basis. This has caught students who begin as natural science majors but change to other majors before completing the lab science requirement in the predicament of having to take more than 8 hours of lab science. Is this a desirable consequence? If so, how can it be avoided?

5) Should UALR's requirements exceed those of the State Minimum Core? If so, what are the consequences of requiring more of native UALR students than of a significant portion of UALR's large transfer population that is subject only to lesser requirements? Are these consequences problematic?

6) Once standards and learning objectives for these knowledge educational outcomes are determined, how can they be assessed? We recognize that for students majoring in the social or natural sciences, the outcome will be assessed through assessments of the major. However, for students acquiring the knowledge of the sciences primarily through core courses, other sites and methods for assessment will be required. A long standing criticism of assessment of the current core is that the focus is far more on particular course content than on the broader competencies the courses purportedly develop. How might we assess the educational outcomes in a way that is not tied so tightly to particular courses?