

11-15-2011

Minutes, Arts and Sciences Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, Tuesday, November 15, 2011

Arts and Sciences Academic Affairs Committee

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Academic Affairs Committee

Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2011

Opening:

The regular meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee was called to order at 12:35 pm on November 15, 2011 in the Chapel-Room Classroom #1 by Gloria Cook.

Present:

Mark Anderson, Sara Bishop, Gloria Cook, Nancy Decker, Fiona Harper, Sebastian Novak, Samuel Sanabria, Wenxian Zhang

Visitors:

Robert Smither, Interim Dean of the Faculty

A. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the 10/25 meeting were approved with the updated notation of Toni Holbrook's title update to Associate Dean of the College.

The minutes of the 11/8 meeting are on hold with the addition of the text "RCC Director" to be added to the recommendation on page two. Also the "agreed on" and exact "recommendation" for the AAC recommendation on the grading of Peer Mentor will be presented in **bold** type for clarity and ease of retrieval for future AAC committee membership.

B. Review of Agenda

C. New Business (2 items)

(Item 1) Marine Biology

Fiona Harper reintroduced an issue that was brought to the Academic Affairs Committee last year in which the Biology Department asked that students not be permitted to double major in both Marine Biology and Biochemistry/ Molecular Biology. This request was subsequently denied. The Biology Department still sees an issue within this double major and is proposing a modification to the Elective area of the Marine Biology Major Map.

As it currently stands, there are thirteen courses that are required for the Marine Biology Major: eight are core marine biology courses, three are core chemistry courses, one biology elective course, one approved field experience in Marine Biology, and then a satisfactory performance on a comprehensive standard exam.

If you compare the Marine Biology major and the Biochemistry/ Molecular Biology major there are six common core courses. Students can also conscientiously select one elective that

will fulfill the elective requirement for both the Marine Biology major and the Biochemistry/ Molecular Biology major. Students then need to only take five additional courses to satisfy the requirements for a Marine Biology major. All in all, this basically reduces the required courses for the Marine Biology major to the equivalent of a minor.

Presently, Fiona has a student double majoring in Marine Biology/ Biochemistry/ Molecular Biology who is able to satisfy the requirements of both majors by taking seven courses and the same electives. We are all for students double majoring, but we would like students to take more than five courses to complete a major. Students are not allowed to major or minor in both Marine Biology and Biology. If you are a creative person, you can maximize the credits to take a reduced amount of courses. Sara Bishop inquired as to why you would impede students' initiative if they wanted to take on this potential double major. Wouldn't they be learning the necessary information required for both?

Fiona clarified that we can have six courses overlap, but we don't want seven. We want students to explore outside the core; it should be more than the five course required now for the double major. The philosophy of our major is to encourage exploration and increase the depth of knowledge. The course overlap reduces this diversity.

This proposal doesn't change the total semester hours required. It allows students to draw from a larger diversity of courses to fulfill the elective requirements. It increases the number of courses differing between the Marine Biology and Biochemistry/ Molecular Biology majors by one additional course. The expansion of the elective section increases both student and faculty flexibility. We would allow a combination of coursework in the upper-level courses above BIO 210 that adds up to 6-credit hours. We will be offering a number of 2-credit topics courses. It would be nice if they could get major credit for these elective courses. We are also allowing Biology majors to take these 2-credit courses. This is our creative solution to allow a greater diversity of topics, students, and providing additional credit hours. General Biology I & II are the pre-requisites for all of these courses.

The Biology Department has approved this proposed modification already. Our focus for the proposed re-wording to the Marine Biology Major Map, Electives section:

From: One elective from the following list or other approved by chair. Elective must differ from course taken for the Marine Organisms above. (There then follows a short list of possible Biology courses above BIO 210, all but one carries 6-semester hours.)

To: *BIOLOGY ELECTIVE Six (6) semester hours will be defined as:*

Any biology course above BIO 210. Courses from the core groupings, other than those used to fulfill the core requirements, may be used to satisfy this requirement. One (1) Biology internship (BIO 296, 396, or 496) may be used as an elective. The course(s) used to fulfill the biology elective for the Marine Biology major may not be used to satisfy the requirements of other majors.

A vote from the committee was called, ten in favor and one opposed to the modification. The change was approved.

(Item 2) Rollins Plan Review Update & Gen Ed Designation

Gloria announced that Dean Smither will sponsor a series of liberal learning lectures in a colloquium format and this will be scheduled during the time allotted for the Faculty Day of Scholarship on January 13th. The subject matter and presentations generally covered in the Faculty Day of Scholarship will be disseminated over future lunch hours.

Gloria Cook had some free time with Peggy Maki and asked her a number of questions in particular to Gen Eds. Gloria had also talked to Toni about this as well.

Gloria also took some time and went back and looked over the responsibilities and mission of the Academic Affairs Committee. We have primary authority in all policy matters concerning curriculum, student academic standards and honors, academic advising, continuing and graduate education programs of the College of Arts and Sciences, the library and media services, and in all matters pertaining to academic schedules and calendars. She pondered, how does the Academic Affairs Committee work with CPS? Or do we have a sense of process at this point?

Dean Smither responded that there is no plan at all to separate the Gen Eds. We separate Faculty into schools, not students. Aren't we the Gen Ed committee it was asked? What if it was decided by one of the schools that there was a "V" requirement and it was going to be applied? Are we supposed to have a CPS representative on our committee?

Nancy Decker mentioned that it was possible for a student to be exempt from the INB Foreign Language requirement, but not the Gen Ed Foreign Language requirement. Things have been in existence for decades. Modern Languages will eventually be brought down if this issue is not resolved. Battle on the horizon is brewing. Specifics when you can and can't. Nancy is there to uphold and state the policy, but she is not there to implement it.

Dean Smither shared that this is the body to approve Gen Eds. We formally acknowledge that there is a CPS, in the All College Faculty Meeting. Ad hoc discussion specifically if we should have an observer? The problem was that they wanted the CPS observer to have voting rights whereas the CPS wanted an AAC observer with no voting rights. With the limited number of faculty members in CPS and other A & S committees, it was going to become an onerous task. Many in attendance to these committee meetings are lecturers, who attend with no history.

Gloria Cook pondered, that our Gen Ed form is not where we want it ... can we assess it? Mark Anderson shared that the Gen Ed form has actually changed a lot through the years. Nancy Decker asked do we change the Gen Eds along with the change of the Rollins Plan? Mark stated that we shouldn't collect information that isn't going to help us get to a decision.

Gloria mentioned that she would like to make a statement at the January 13th colloquium. The CRC will also report. What statement can we make? The Rollins Plan came from the Academic Affairs Committee completely. The AAC appointed and delegated various other faculty members and committees to work on it. Then the AAC stepped out of the Rollins Plan and did not take a leadership role. Is it time for the AAC to step back in? It has been six years since we started. No need to start from scratch. Peggy Maki will deliver her assessment report in two weeks. It will go to the Steering Committee and then AAC. So what should we do? There was an opportunity missed, there are structural changes that are going on now as opposed to two years ago. Dean Smither encouraged that AAC move forward and take charge with the Rollins Plan and the Gen Eds. Be assertive. Faculty Load will be a problem.

Fiona Harper referenced that developmental is a good aspect...the melding of the current alphabet soup and the Rollins Plan. Students want to know how courses will transfer. Students can lose credits. We can lose good students. For example, Calculus has no credit other than the hours.

Mark Anderson added that the proposal was to go down to five. Whatever we do, don't go back to what we currently do. The Rollins Plan is what we need to do for the 21st Century. We have multi-disciplinary versus inter-disciplinary. We have no integration. The Rollins Plan has a transfer of knowledge. Those that stick with the Rollins Plan found a lot of relevancy. There is a generational gap in those 40 and older in embracing this concept. We have a 200-level skillset and coursework that carries onto the 300-level skillset and coursework. Faculty members in the Rollins Plan are using the same rubrics, skill levels and language throughout.

With regards to hiring for the Rollins Plan, we look for interdisciplinary people. Gloria Cook observed that we come in as specialists and become generalists. It was asked if there are for example, seniors and freshmen taking 100-level classes together? Mark answered that the Rollins Plan Gen Eds are 100, 200, 300 & 400 level classes. Sebastian asked if you could tier courses to the class year? Mark replied, that part of the Rollins Plan is that juniors/seniors take classes together but not freshman/ seniors. Most of the problems we experienced were because it was a pilot and the Gen Ed requirements were already done. We found benefits in that seniors had senior-level skills; they were more engaged and more relevant. Sam Sanabria asked if we lose flexibility? Mark replied that we had so few students, that there was not a wide range of courses to offer. With more students, there will be more global challenges and more topics. There are two models for Gen Eds, we have done one and now it is time to explore another. Sebastian Novak wondered about students who change majors during their first and second year. Mark explained that students are exposed to different disciplines and every discipline has the opportunity to teach global challenges. He compares it to the difference of eating a buffet meal or a planned menu. There are lots of choices with a buffet. However, the meal in which someone has carefully designed the menu, with perhaps unexpected tastes and complimentary flavors is really good. The student chooses an overarching idea to study, just five courses. The Rollins Plan tweaked.

Part of the Rollins Plan curriculum is change; it is development, recurrence and refinement of ideals. Jana Matthews added that we really need to have the student voice in this. It may be a really hard thing to get their minds around. Mark agreed and said that maybe we need to refresh our own memories about what the Rollins Plan is. Would like to make a statement to that effect on Thursday. Several committee members agreed that we should consider sponsoring a student colloquium on Gen Eds.

Positive reaction from the Rollins Plan, it will be easier to continue fine-tuning it from this point on. How will it overlap? Five specially tailored courses plus a Foreign Language, Math and Writing. It is 5 courses versus 14. Learning this in your own discipline and it all comes together in the Capstone course at the end.

What are the ramifications when you graduate and go for an interview for a job or for further study? Jana Matthews responded that this trend of study is very popular at such aspirational colleges such as Duke, NYU, Harvard, etc. This is the norm. It is very student centered...you are invite to study...it is very student drive. Mark added that our current Gen Eds were initiated back in 1982.

Gloria Cook stated that we would wait for Peggy Maki's assessment report of the Rollins Plan. Mark Anderson acknowledged that we have not taken a leadership role with regards to the Rollins Plan and offered to make a presentation on the Rollins Plan to the Academic Affairs Committee.

Leadership will bring proposal in the Spring. Plan is to host a colloquium with the students on Gen Eds and the Rollins Plan.

Dean Smither will work on CPS questions.

D. Old Business (1 item)

(Item 1) Gen Ed Form

This item was tabled due to lack of time.

E. Agenda Topics for Future Meetings

November 29, 2011 → Next meeting date

- Barry Allen
 - Sustainability
- Gen Ed Form
- Mark Anderson
 - Rollins Plan

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 1:50 pm by Gloria Cook. The next general meeting will be at 12:30 pm on November 29 in Chapel-Room Classroom #2.

Minutes submitted by:

Mark Anderson

Approved by:
