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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, Monday, February 15, 2010

Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee

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Minutes approved at the meeting of February 22, 2010

AAC Minutes – February 15, 2010

In attendance: Jim Small (Chair), Alex Boguslawski, Wendy Brandon, Don Davison (Dean's Office), Annie Hilb, Tocarra Mallard, Dawn Roe, Don Rogers, Steven St. John (Secretary), Lito Valdivia

Guests in attendance: Adam Arthur, Allisa Johnson, Elizabeth Boggs

The meeting was called to order at 7:39 a.m.

Minutes. The minutes of February 8 were approved.

Old Business.

London Summer Program

Jim reported that he had received a new description of the pilot program, available on AAC's Blackboard site, which addressed the concerns raised in the previous meeting. Don reported that Adam Arthur and Barry Allen were scheduled to meet this week with Dean Joyner to discuss the detailed budget. Don summarized that the program needed greater than 12 enrollees to break even, that with 13-16 students the program would likely return some revenue to the college, and that with greater than 16 students the pilot program would comfortably return revenue to the college. He also noted that if the pilot was successful and led to a full-scale overseas program with 40-60 students, there would be "a good return" of revenue. As a pilot program, such revenue would be returned to International Programs. If the London Summer Program became a part of Maymester, such revenue would be returned to the College of Arts and Sciences.

Adam noted that the budget projections were based on a 4-course model, with 2 professors teaching 2 classes for the pilot, and suggested that alternate arrangements might be possible.

Don emphasized that he was more interested in seeing the program be successful than in launching the program before it was ready.

Don Davison asked if thought had been given to how courses would be selected in the future; that courses from politics, English, etc. might be attractive additions to the schedule. Don replied that, similar to Maymester, he anticipated that after learning from the pilot program, a more general solicitation of courses would be made. Don also noted that currently the pilot was slated to run with professors teaching 2 courses, but likely it would be more attractive to faculty to participate if that number was reduced to 1 course.

Wendy felt that the committee had in principle approved this proposal last week and that the additional information from Don and Adam did not give cause for any change in AAC's recommendation. Jim urged that the committee take a formal vote nonetheless. Wendy

moved to recommend the pilot program to the Dean of Faculty's Office. The recommendation passed unanimously.

Curriculum Renewal Committee Phase II

Jim reported that he spoke to Laurel Goj, Paul Stephenson, Rachel Simmons, Steven St. John, and Marc Sardy about the possibility of serving on the Curriculum Renewal Committee Phase II. Some of the individuals had potential conflicts, but both Paul and Rachel, who had experience recently on curricular renewal committees and work groups, were enthusiastic about joining the Phase II committee. AAC voted to approve Paul and Rachel as the two appointed members of the committee, for two year terms.

Jim asked Tocarra about the status of an appointed student representative. Tocarra reported that she expected Student Government to offer a nominee to AAC by Wednesday of this week.

Hoyt Edge Clarification Request

Hoyt Edge asked AAC to clarify the rationale behind a question on the New Course Request Form ("How many electives does your department offer each year?") AAC delegated the question to the New Course Subcommittee. Steve reported that New Course Subcommittee had a full agenda with new courses for Fall, 2010, but had at least 2 more meetings planned and would discuss the issue at the earliest convenience. Steve felt that there was no rush to act on the question until the time when faculty would again be heavily dealing with the New Course Request Form (i.e., during Fall, 2010 when faculty are finalizing the Spring, 2011 schedule).

Blended Learning

Don reported that his ad-hoc subcommittee to gather information about Blended Learning would prepare recommendations to AAC this week, and post the results on the AAC Blackboard site. The committee had reviewed the way Blended Learning was used at peer and aspirant institutions, but was not done with that process. Don noted that according to Jim Eck the issue was no longer on the Holt School's "Urgent" list.

Internship Clarification

Allisa summarized that the case involving a request for clarification on the status of internships occurred because a Psychology student was hoping to count an internship (graded CR/NC) towards the major, but that the Chair of Psychology (Paul Harris) had noted the language in the catalog that internships graded CR/NC could not count toward a major.

Elizabeth felt that this was specifically for "Courses normally given a letter grade," and Don felt that the catalog was attempting to make a distinction between department-initiated CR/NC courses (course that are, by policy, CR/NC) and student-initiated CR/NC courses (courses that, by default, are graded with a letter). Don believed that when Rollins began offering the CR/NC option to students a decade ago, changes were made to the catalog with the intent of limiting the misuse of the CR/NC election, and that these changes never had the intent of preventing departments from using internship experiences in any way that augments the major program.

Indeed, assigning CR/NC rather than a grade is considered a “best practice” regarding internships, based on evidence that the academic content of an internship (journals, reports) is often not the most impactful part of an internship experience.

Wendy was concerned that the primary flaw in the catalog sections on “Internships” and “Courses Taken Credit/No Credit” was the structure of the sections, rather than the policies embedded within those sections. She felt that a lot of the contradiction and confusion would be resolved by better organization of that material, using subheadings such as “Eligibility” and “Applications”, etc.

Don Davison agreed that the apparent contradictions in the policies on Internships (noted in the Minutes of 2/8) were the result of small incremental modifications meant to address particular concerns.

Don noted that the Intent to Register form that a student uses to set up an internship informs the student that the Department Chair must sign the Credit Approval Form in order for a student to receive credit for a major – i.e., that departments are, in principle, tracking these internships from the beginning.

Elizabeth Boggs circulated a paper titled “Academic Internship Program – Policies Approved By AAC and the Executive Committee” which provided yet another view of the policies followed regarding internships and credit. This paper was compiled from discussions in AAC in 2007 and considers the number of credits from internships that can count toward graduation, how to compute the number of hours of credit (2, 3, or 4), the number of internships a student may hold at any one time, and other such detailed policy statements. Wendy felt that this paper more clearly spelled out the policy than the catalog did.

Wendy moved that AAC delegate to Allisa Johnson and Elizabeth Boggs responsibility for redrafting catalog sections on Internships and Courses Taken Credit/No Credit by incorporating some of the text from the document provided. AAC could then vote to recommend this language to the Executive Committee at a future meeting of AAC. Don seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.