

9-11-2008

Minutes, Arts & Sciences Executive Committee Meeting, Thursday, September 11, 2008

Arts & Sciences Executive Committee

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**Minutes
Executive Committee
September 11, 2008**

Members Present: Laurie Joyner, Lewis Duncan, Roger Casey, Barry Levis, Don Davison, Mike Gunter, Wendy Brandon, Susan Libby

- I. Call to order—Davison called the meeting to order at 12:35 PM.
- II. Approval of Minutes from September 2, 2008—The minutes were approved as amended.
- III. Old Business

- A. Academic Affairs

- 1. Curriculum Steering Committee—Davison handed out a document from Cook of the revised version of their working document. Cook suggested sending it out to the faculty. Davison wanted feedback from Executive Committee before sending it out to avoid any confusion (see attachment 1). AAC has met once to discuss curriculum revision. Brandon said the committee would have two more meetings before the September faculty meeting. Davison wondered what the faculty will be asked to approve. Because it is only a pilot they do not have all the answers or even all the questions. Davison felt the motion should be general and simple to allow a pilot to take place with a timetable for reporting back to the faculty. Brandon handed out a document outlining what AAC saw as their role in the curriculum revision process (see attachment 2). Joyner expressed concern that AAC might only have a police role in the process, which she sees as problematic. She fears that might undermine the work of the committee and other standing committees. She thought that the pilot courses need to be overseen by a committee made up of both representatives from AAC and the curriculum revision committee. Davison argued that curriculum review committee has worked hard but also it needs to work with AAC in this phase of the experiment. Duncan saw a need to have strong assessment procedures in place. Harris also observed that those who designed the system should not be involved in the assessment of the system. Brandon hoped that AAC had been able to anticipate some of the questions that might arise in this process of pilot development. Brandon asked Harris for recommendations for an evaluation process. Harris said that he had no idea. The college needs to hire someone from the outside who has expertise in this area of evaluation. Joyner suggested that a program from AAU&C might be available to assist Rollins. She felt that assessment should be part of the proposal for a theme proposal. Duncan said that designers should be asked to develop criteria for what make the program a success. These criteria need to come from the outside. Joyner saw a need for both pieces: faculty assessment and also from outside the institution. Harris expressed concern about the lack of detail for the faculty to approve. Brandon thought that the RPs were perhaps precise enough so that they could be assessed. Joyner asked what are the specifics needed to make the faculty more confident

about what they were doing. Harris said that there needed to be a timeline for the classes. Davison said he had told Cook the proposal needed a timeline and an assessment process. Joyner asked if the Executive Committee needed to have a very detailed proposal before we will be comfortable about going ahead. Harris felt that there was a need for categories of skills development to be established and the classes placed into the appropriate category. Here is what you can hang a curriculum on, he argued. Casey thought that it was an integrated model and that if there were a check-off system it would restrict the pilot too much. Libby expressed concern about having too many details at this time since it might limit faculty support. It is only an experiment and not a final proposal. Duncan asked if this would be one curriculum option or would other possibilities be presented. An integrated curriculum might not work with students who after not integrated. Joyner suggested that there might be students who will change their RPs but because the proposal reduces the number of general education requirements from 13 to 8 the change can be done relatively easily. Duncan expressed concerned that it is an affordable plan. Harris thought that not all departments could accommodate this change. General education requirements are now accomplished within the disciplines. Some departments cannot add additional courses to meet the new RP. This curriculum does not accommodate his department well. Other smaller departments that teach large numbers of gen eds can adapt to this proposal more easily. Joyner asked why this pilot does not allow choice. Harris thought that it sounded like another major. Casey wondered how our current structure delivers the cognitive skills it promises. Harris said that he had not seen that many problems with the current system. He would be happier with a full first-year experience, and no major courses during the freshman year. Brandon said that would be going in the wrong direction. Levis felt that in the past the college has adopted a curriculum and then discovered its problems later. He thought that the pilot represented a much better approach, and the more open the experiment the better. Casey stated that all the LEAP data suggest the developmental nature of student learning. The RPs then conforms to that developmental process. Harris saw the need a four-year pilot. Joyner said that the committee had decided that the pilots would run for four years but there needed to be an escape mechanism in case there is a disaster. Duncan thought about having about having a number of pilots each with a different approach. Joyner said that could be, but it would take a lot of resources. Duncan expressed concerned about the lack of a control group for assessment, but Joyner said that students in the alphabet soup would serve as the control. Brandon saw need to commit to an outside evaluator. Libby vouched for the fact that the committee had put a tremendous amount of effort and we should trust their judgment. Harris said that at times committees do put in great effort but the product does not work. Duncan asked about the number of students involved in the pilot. Joyner replied 80, with 20 in each class. Harris just wanted to know what he was going to vote for. Casey saw two different forms of assessment that needs to take place, Davison will write the motion to be presented to the faculty and pass it around to the members of the Executive Committee. Brandon said that AAC will meet twice before the faculty meeting and so can refine the motion further. Davison said that in summary there would be two RPs beginning in the Fall 2009, the CRRP will report regularly to faculty, an external evaluator would be hired, and after two years the faculty will decide to modify, stop, expand, or continue the current pilot. He said that the AAC motion should contain these elements.

IV. New Business

A. Professional Standards

1. Timetables for faculty evaluation—Davison has forward to Libby information from Papay, chair of FEC, concerning the timetable for faculty evaluations with the revisions made last year. Joyner said she has number of timeline problems especially with grievance procedures. Libby also said that the committee will consider the family leave policy and concerns that Joyner has about the breadth of the policy. Libby said the committee has been asked to name two faculty to the Cornell Outstanding faculty award committee.

2. Faculty evaluation—Proposals from FEC for bylaw changes about online submissions of evaluation materials (Attachment 1). Casey wondered if the candidates could blame the system if it breaks down as a circumstance beyond their control. Davison said that in that case the evaluation committee could not accept online submission or even require submission on disc. Duncan said not to get bogged down in the technology since that will change. He recommended just having a timely manner requirement.

B. Finance and Services

1. A & S planning priorities—Davison hoped that would be useful to have a summary of the planning surveys collected by the Dean of Faculty. He thought they might bring consensus on some priorities.

2. Review of benefits—Davison felt this should be a priority with an eye toward COLAs. Duncan recommended the need for the committee to meet with Maria Martinez about what we have been able to maintain, especially because of the rising cost of health care.

D. Executive Committee

1. Replacements for Faculty Appeals and Finance and Services—Davison asked for two names for the Faculty Appeals Committee. He also recommended that Barry Allen be nominated for F&S and have a faculty vote via Email ballot.

V. Adjournment—the meeting was adjourned at 1:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Levis
Secretary

Attachment 1

September 8, 2008

To: All Arts and Sciences Faculty

From: Curriculum Review and Renewal Steering Committee

Subject: Update on our committee's activities and request for help/support

The Curriculum Review and Renewal Committee has met regularly since its establishment a little less than a year ago. We are writing this memo/proposal to the faculty in order to report on our activities and on our hopes regarding the next stage of the process. Since the next stage involves piloting a newly designed model for the general education curriculum, we respectfully request authorization from the Faculty, by way of the AAC and Executive Committee, to proceed with the pilot.

Many faculty members have attended recent meetings and colloquia at which our proposal has been presented and discussed. This memo will serve as an introduction for those who have not been able to attend these meetings and a review for those who are already familiar with the proposed plan.

Background

In the spring of 2006 the AAC addressed the question of curriculum reform and renewal by setting up the 4C's Committee, a group charged with the tasks of researching curricular models and educating the faculty on options and possibilities. With a series of lunches and other meetings throughout the 2006-2007 academic year, the Committee successfully fostered discussion of curricular issues on campus.

In the summer of 2007 five groups worked on specific issues related to curriculum and its possible reform, producing a series of white papers on (1) content of the liberal arts curriculum; (2) curriculum architecture; (3) developmental considerations; (4) citizenship education; (5) interdisciplinary curriculum. These white papers were gathered and bound into a single volume made available to all faculty. (Presently available as a pdf on the Curriculum Steering Committee Blackboard).

In the fall of 2007 the AAC set up the Curricular Review and Renewal Steering Committee, consisting of eight faculty members, one staff person and one student. This Committee was charged with the tasks of (1) gathering and vetting ideas, guided by the white papers and by input provided by faculty members in regularly scheduled open meetings; (2) moving toward concrete proposals for curricular renewal and reform at Rollins. The Committee met nearly every week throughout the late fall and spring of academic year 2007-2008 and heard suggestions and ideas from a number of interested

and engaged faculty members (see Appendix A). We arrived at a list of “Essential Elements” that almost everyone seemed to agree are important for any new general education curriculum (Appendix B). In June, 2008, four committee members plus Dean Joyner attended an intensive four-day curriculum workshop in Minneapolis organized by the American Association of Colleges and Universities. For the rest of the summer the committee sought to solidify ideas that originated in meetings with our faculty and were refined and synthesized in discussion in Minneapolis.

Proposal/Request

The Committee developed a list of learning objectives that we think should be achieved by every graduate of Rollins. These objectives derive in part from the mission and “core competencies” of the College of Arts and Sciences (see Appendix C), and in greater part from the learning outcomes developed by the AAC&U project entitled Liberal Education and America’s Promise (see Appendix D). We believe these learning outcomes to be widely supported and relatively uncontroversial, though of course we welcome discussion and improvement. The learning outcomes are as follows:

I. Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world

To obtain knowledge of the distinctive methodologies and subject matter of the

- A. Natural and social sciences
- B. Expressive arts
- C. Humanities

II. Intellectual and practical skills

Ability to read, think, and communicate critically, creatively, and analytically using multiple forms of multiple literacies and forms of expression.

- A. Inquiry, analysis, and problem solving (individual and collaborative)
- B. Critical reading and thinking
- C. Creative thinking
- D. Written communication
- E. Oral communication
- F. Quantitative literacy
- G. Information literacy
- H. Bilingual literacy

III. Personal and social responsibility

- Civic knowledge (local and global)
- Civic engagement

- Respect for and knowledge of diverse peoples and non-western cultures
- Ethical reasoning and action

IV. Integrative learning

- Ability to synthesize and apply knowledge, skills and responsibilities to new settings and cultures, and complex local and global problems

Once we have agreed on the appropriate learning outcomes, however, the substantive question remains: how can we best organize and structure our curriculum (in accordance with the previously mentioned “Essential Elements”) in a way that will ensure that all of our graduates have met these learning outcomes?

In the course of the spring we became intrigued by a possible curricular structure that synthesizes ideas from a number of different faculty members who attended our meetings and made proposals to the Committee. The idea is to offer a few sets of eight courses, with each set focused on a specific big idea or big question. Such a thematically integrated set of courses will be called (provisionally) an “RP” (for “Rollins Plan”). The courses are to represent all divisions of the College and to present an integrated multidisciplinary investigation of the focal question or idea. The RP is designed so that the each learning outcome is both introduced and reinforced. The series of courses would normally be focused most heavily in the sophomore and junior years, though there would be a writing class in the spring of the students’ first year and a capstone course in the senior year.

We think that this structure has unique advantages that warrant our trying it out in an organized way. First, from the student’s perspective, the general education curriculum would have a focus and coherence that the present letter-based distribution structure lacks. Large groups of students across campus would be addressing common questions and engaging common readings – in a way that might foster informed out-of-classroom discussion of ideas. The process of planning and designing these interdisciplinary RP’s would offer unusual opportunity for faculty development by requiring substantive intellectual discussion among colleagues from across the College. The sequential and developmental features could be built into the design of the RP. There could be fully integrated and carefully structured inclusion of co-curricular activities and opportunities in the RP’s – i.e. community engagement, service-learning, leadership development. The plan would offer great flexibility in the ways the RP’s could be designed, but always with a strict eye upon the fixed goal of covering and reinforcing the complete list of learning outcomes that characterize a successful liberal arts education.

We do not know of any other institution whose general education curriculum is structured in the way that we are considering (though we recently discovered that Temple

University is trying something somewhat similar). We are acutely aware that full implementation of this structure for all of our students would be a dauntingly complex undertaking, fraught, no doubt, with unexpected pitfalls and difficulties. But we also think that there is great potential in a positive direction – much of it likewise unknown and unpredictable at this point.

Rollins has a long and proud tradition of curricular innovation and experimentation. Indeed, such innovation is perhaps that for which the College is best known in higher-ed circles. With that tradition in mind, the Committee requests authorization and approval to undertake a pilot program in which two RP's could be brought on-line for a subset of our incoming first-year students in the fall of 2009. The Dean of the Faculty has committed to provide financial support for two teams of faculty members who would design, in detail, two RP's focused on different thematic issues or questions. Students entering the College in fall, 2009 could choose to participate in the pilot project by choosing to fulfill their general education requirements by means of one of the two RP's on offer. These two groups would be monitored in various ways as they go through these series of courses, and the successes and failures would be reported back to the faculty on an annual basis. If it looks good, the transition could be made into a larger set of RP's for future incoming classes, ultimately replacing our present general education program for all students. If unexpected serious problems arise, either in the original pilot RP's or in the effort to scale the project up to cover all students, changes could be made or (worst case) the pilot abandoned.

In sum,

we ask that the faculty, through its governance system, approve and authorize an experimental pilot program, beginning in the fall of 2009, to enroll approximately 80 students in this pilot and to permit these students to satisfy their general education requirements for the AB degree by achieving the learning outcomes listed above via the RPs' series of courses and other educational activities.

If authorized to proceed we would hope to solicit ideas for possible RP's this fall and to select two of these ideas for detailed elaboration in the spring and implementation in the fall of 2009. The faculty would be kept apprised of all significant developments and provisional assessments would be provided to the faculty each spring thereafter until 1) the pilot's success indicates that we should implement the new structure for all students; or 2) problems and difficulties reveal that the new structure is unworkable or undesirable and should be changed or should not be pursued further.

We were able to present some of these ideas to a sizable group of faculty at a meeting in the Bib Lab in mid-August. We convened a colloquium on Friday, September 5 to explain and discuss these items further with interested faculty members. The turnout was quite good, and the ensuing questions, suggestions and discussion were just the sort of thing we hope for. We write to you to present our formal request at this time, though, for there are temporal constraints on the process. In order to include courses in next year's schedule we need to be able to identify them by early in the coming spring term. In order

to do that we need to select the most promising thematic ideas by the end of the fall semester. In order to generate several proposals for possible RP's in time for such a selection, we would need to put out the call as soon as possible. We hope that faculty members will find time to think, talk, negotiate and brainstorm through the early fall in order to submit thoughtful and creative proposals. Thus our efforts to communicate with the faculty via colloquia, and thus our present appeal to the Academic Affairs Committee, the Executive Committee and the full A&S faculty for support.

APPENDIX A

Faculty and staff members who visited Curriculum Committee meetings, made presentations to the Committee, served on the present Committee or on the 4C's Committee or otherwise took an active role in this process (a doubtless-incomplete list)

- Barry Allen
- Ben Balak
- Erich Blossey
- Wendy Brandon
- Jenni Cavanaugh
- Dorothy Mays
- Scott Rubarth
- Pedro Bernal
- Bill Boles
- Dexter Boniface
- Mark Anderson
- Sharon Carnahan
- Martha Cheng
- Doug Child
- Mario D'Amato
- Kim Dennis
- Hoyt Edge
- Rick Foglesong
- Laurel Goj
- Fiona Harper
- Paul Harris
- Karen Hater
- Scott Hewit
- Doug Little
- Cara Meixner
- Michele Meyer
- Ryan Musgrave
- Mark Anderson
- Christine Bucci
- Thomas Cook
- Deb Wellman
- Philip Kozel
- Carol Lauer
- Marc Sardy
- Jennifer Browning
- Julian Chambliss
- Denise Cummings
- Laurie Joyner
- Tom Lairson
- Lee Lines
- Jonathan Miller
- Rachel Newcomb
- Alan Nordstrom
- Rachel Simmons
- Bruce Stephenson
- Trish Moser
- Sharon Carrier
- Sharon Lusk
- Gordie Howell
- Gabriel Barreneche
- Rich Morris
- Eric Smaw
- Paul Stephenson

APPENDIX B

“Essential Elements” for a successful General Education Curriculum

- Simple to explain
- Simple to assess
- Engage “big questions”
- Developmental sequencing
- Cohesion
- Engaging
 - academics
 - civic and global responsibility
- Integrative learning
- Promote lifelong learning

APPENDIX C

Mission Statement of the Arts & Sciences College

Our mission is to provide a rigorous liberal arts baccalaureate education of the highest quality, encouraging in our faculty pedagogical innovation and continued professional growth, and fostering in our students both the intellectual curiosity that underlies a desire for lifelong education and the practice of making principled, ethical decisions for functioning as responsible citizens and workers in a global society.

Core Competencies

- 1.To obtain knowledge of the distinctive methodologies and subject matter of the sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities,
- 2.Ability to read, think, write, and speak critically and analytically,
- 3.Ability to identify and articulate ethical dimensions of a personal or social issue.

APPENDIX D

The Essential Learning Outcomes

From AAC&U and the LEAP Initiative (Liberal Education and America's Promise)

Beginning in school, and continuing at successively higher levels across their college studies, students should prepare for twenty-first-century challenges by gaining:

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

- Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts Focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

Intellectual and Practical Skills, including

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical and creative thinking
- Written and oral communication
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork and problem solving

Practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance

Personal and Social Responsibility, including

- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning and action
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

Anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges

Integrative Learning, including

- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies
- Demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings

and complex problems

Note: This listing was developed through a multiyear dialogue with hundreds of colleges and universities about needed goals for student learning; analysis of a long series of recommendations and reports from the business community; and analysis of the accreditation requirements for engineering, business, nursing, and teacher education. The findings are documented in previous publications of the Association of American Colleges and Universities: Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College (2002), Taking Responsibility for the Quality of the Baccalaureate Degree (2004), and Liberal Education Outcomes: A Preliminary Report on Achievement in College (2005). Liberal Education Outcomes is available online at www.aacu.org/leap.

Academic Affairs Committee
September 9, 2008
CSS 249 5:00pm

AGENDA

Old Business

Approval of 9/5/08 minutes

Student Representation on AAC

Discussion of Curriculum Committee Pilot Proposal

Some preliminary points for context:

1. Curriculum Review & Renewal Committee is AAC sub-committee
2. AAC charged CRRC to gather and vet ideas from White Papers and move toward concrete proposals.
3. CRRC devised list of “Essential Elements” for curr reform
4. CRRC attended AAC&U meeting concerning curr reform
5. CRRC met summer 2008 to synthesize all data and develop a Curr Reform proposal tentatively titled the “Rollins Plan”

AAC Role in Process

CRRC as a sub-committee of AAC has requested that AAC approve and authorize a pilot program they are calling the “Rollins Plan” and bring their proposal to the Rollins Faculty for a vote at the Sept 23rd meeting.

AAC responsibility at this point in the process is to bring a critical eye to the pilot proposal and determine if this pilot proposal **reflects the essence of what should be a liberal arts education at Rollins College.**

We will have CRRC representatives at T 9/16 and F 9/19 meetings to answer our questions and there is another colloquium on the proposal TH 9/18. The next Exec Comm meeting is 9/11. I should bring something to them on 9/11 (e.g. what we are focusing on and some preliminary evaluation of the pilot). They will decide if there should be a special meeting of Exec Comm called to hear our formal report.

AAC Responsibility

At Sept 23 Faculty Meeting, AAC will recommend or give our consent for the CRRC to present their pilot proposal to the A&S faculty for a vote. We can recommend and/or give consent and still offer some suggestions and/or concerns for amending/enhancing/strengthening the pilot proposal.

Suggested Plan for AAC Discussion Today

1. In turn, around the table—each say what works/what needs work (limit one contribution from each person)
2. Prioritize the items AAC feels need work or more attention or we have questions about.
3. Plan for next meeting.

Feedback from AAC to CRRC's Proposal

Strengths: Breadth, interdisciplinary which brings faculty together for cooperative teaching and learning, unique program marketable for Rollins.

Weaknesses: Student's may pick through the courses in the way that undermines the intended breadth. Suggestion: no student can pick more than on RP course from one department or two courses from one division?

A list of questions to be addressed at next meeting 9/9:

1. student representative's concern: Does RP has enough flexibility to accommodate all students including transferred and those study abroad?
2. How long and in what way do teaching faculty commit to the RP? (Will a long commitment affect a small department/what about departments that teach courses in faculty rotation and fixed semesters and serve other depts and majors?)
3. What unites RPs other than the four learning objectives? (Do we need to address the content issue in criteria/directions for RP)
4. Who will decide/vet what "big ideas" or big themes are appropriate for the RP courses?

5. How does RP affect the minor(replace, enhance or make it redundant?)
6. How well do you think RP can sustain the interest of the faculty and students?
7. How can RCC be used to educate, connect and contextualize RP?
8. How many faculty members are needed for the proposal of RP, how many and who should serve as oversight/vetting group? What is their composition?
9. How to develop special evaluation criteria for particular RP pilots and the RP concept and how to implement them?

AAC suggests CRRC not use the Florida plan in its presentation to the faculty. To win faculty support for the pilot, a more specific plan should be developed including timeline and tentative eval/oversight particulars (may be use float chart?)

In presentation and for faculty vote—CRRC needs to format the pilot proposal faculty will vote on—keeping it concise and clear. Look at CIE pilot proposal?

Attachment 2

Proposed New Bylaw to Article VIII, D, section 2 of Arts and Sciences:

FEC requests that you take the necessary action to add the following sentence to Article VIII, D, section 2 of the A & S by laws after the sentence which ends with "June 15":

Online submissions must be fully functional by June 16.

This amendment is engendered by the problem FEC now faces. We have a candidate for tenure who put all of his materials that the Dean, Provost, President and FEC are to read and use in the evaluation procedure on line. However, none of us could read it until he remedied his "computer problems" and that JUST happened last week. That is worrisome. It gives FEC less time to evaluate those materials.

Bylaws seen by Executive Committee April 24, 2008, and Waiting for Faculty Approval:

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO Article III, Section 1 OF THE BYLAWS OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

To be inserted immediately before the last full sentence in the present Section 1 of Article III.

The President of the Faculty shall, on or before May 30 of each academic year, forward to the Provost a copy of all amendments to these bylaws which have been approved by the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences in accordance with these bylaws.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE V, SECTION 5.

The following sentence is to be added to Article V, Section 5:

Notwithstanding anything contained in these bylaws to the contrary, faculty members who serve on any Standing Committee of the Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences, must be tenured or on official tenure track in the College.

Attachment 1