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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, Monday, March 1, 2010

Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee

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Minutes approved at the AAC meeting of 3/15/10

AAC Minutes – March 1, 2010

In attendance: Jim Small (Chair), Wendy Brandon, Chris Fuse, Barry Levis, Laurie Joyner, Sebastian Novak, Dawn Roe, Don Rogers, Steven St. John (Secretary), Lito Valdivia

Guests in attendance: Allisa Johnson, Elizabeth Boggs

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 a.m.

Minutes. The minutes of February 22 were approved pending three clarifications submitted by Allisa Johnson and two wording changes.

Announcements. Jim announced that the Division of Natural Sciences elected Fiona Harper to the Curriculum Renewal Committee Phase II and Student Government Association appointed Sebastian Novak. A memo has been sent out to all Division Heads but the other three divisions have not responded.

At the request of Don Davison, Don (Rogers) presented a brief report from the RP Implementation Committee. Don reported that there are some issues currently occupying discussion in the Implementation Committee: 1) the issue of differential workloads as faculty balance commitments to RP, RCC, Honors, and Departments, especially in that some faculty seem to take on more of these outside-the-department commitments than other faculty; 2) how transfer students will be handled, and 3) the “HR management issue” – whether the RP program can be maintained beyond the initial pilot program. Laurie commented that she did not see the transfer issue as it related to the potential RP requirements as distinct from the issues currently faced (how transferred credits count toward the current Gen Ed requirements or the requirements of a particular major).

Old Business.

London Summer Program Pilot

Don reported that the London Summer Program will not take place (as authorized by AAC in the previous meeting). Due to the administrative demands caused by Jennifer Campbell’s departure and the late attempt to market the program, Don and Adam Arthur felt that the pilot would not be sustainable financially this summer. Don asked for AAC’s assent to defer the approval of the program one year, so that a full effort at a pilot could be staged in May, 2011.

Laurie noted for AAC’s background that current International Programs do not return revenue to A&S but rather back into International Programs which was the only program that so operated. She advised AAC that she intended to pursue clarification of that procedure and that she would advocate that because A&S provides the resources for all student programs that result in academic credit, that it would make sense to treat International Programs like any on-campus A&S offering. Laurie also noted that tuition is not charged for academic internships,

that both International Programs and Academic Internships require only a \$250 matriculation fee, and that this was inconsistent with practice at other schools – namely, it is the usual case that tuition is charged for all credit-bearing opportunities.

Barry asked if this wasn't, after all, one of the selling points of the programs, that program costs went towards airfare and other student costs. Don noted that it used to be that A&S students could also take Holt summer courses without tuition so long as those courses were designated as being cross-listed with A&S.

Jim moved Don's request to transfer AAC's authorization of a one-time pilot from May, 2010 to May, 2011. The motion passed unanimously.

Internship Clarification

Don again raised a concern about the catalogue text pertaining to CR/NC courses. AAC was continuing its review of the attempt to clarify that section and the section on Academic Internships in the catalogue. The section in question was a sentence in the current catalogue reading "Courses normally graded as CR/NC (internships, information technology, and applied music, for example) do not count toward the per term or graduation limits." Don's concern was that, while the intent of the statement was to allow students to exceed maximum credit limits with CR/NC courses, it could be misread as preventing a student from using CR/NC courses to reach graduation or term minimums. Laurie reported that, based on conversations with Registrar Toni Holbrook, this sentence has never presented confusion. The committee agreed that "limits" need not imply upper limits only and that it would be best to preventatively clarify the wording. Barry proposed adding "maximum" before "limits". The wording was passed unanimously.

Hoyt Edge Clarification Request

Barry reported email conversations among Laurie and the New Course Subcommittee and also on an in person conversation he had with Toni Holbrook and Laurie present. He summarized the New Course Subcommittee as being in disagreement on how to address Hoyt Edge's question about the intention of the question on the New Course Proposal Form asking how many electives a department offered each semester.

Laurie commented that her main concern was to assure that student needs were being met. In particular, if a department offered a high number of upper division courses of interest to only a small number of majors, students in that major may have difficulty getting courses they required to progress through the major.

Barry commented that, while he might share that concern, there was still the issue of whether the question was clear enough to gather the data needed. Annie suggested that the current question could be dropped and replaced by two questions, "What interest (e.g., enrollment numbers) do you anticipate from majors?" and "What interest do you anticipate from non-majors?". Laurie responded that such a question could also be easily validated in terms of how accurate these projections ended up being once the course was actually taught.

Steve made a motion to direct New Course Subcommittee to modify the New Course Proposal Form as recommended by Annie. Annie seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Blended Learning

Don presented the ad-hoc subcommittee's revised Recommendations. In the previous meeting, he had presented the subcommittee's report with 6 recommendations for AAC regarding Blended Learning. The third of those recommendations was "We recommend that IT develop an initial set of guidelines/protocols for BL courses." In the previous meeting, AAC asked the subcommittee to instead develop those guidelines and protocols themselves. Don presented a list of 15 protocols.

Laurie, in preparing for the meeting, had noticed that Professional Standards had passed a resolution to not act on any Blended Learning proposals prior to a majority of faculty voting to support the initiative. Jim said that he would clarify PSC's position with Thom Moore.

Wendy asked what the purpose of the fifteen protocols were – guidance for the pilot program or something more far-reaching? She said she was uncomfortable with sanctioning these protocols without more information on what led to them. Don responded that the protocols grew from AAC's charge last weeks and that he saw them as providing guidance to PSC's review of Blended Learning proposals in the future and to the New Course Subcommittee in reviewing individual courses using a blended format.

Steve responded to Wendy that he felt that AAC became involved because of the RFP. Steve suggested that there was really nothing preventing individual professors from proposing courses using a blended format and that AAC's New Course Committee would view those proposals by the usual standards (e.g., of academic rigor and attention to learning outcomes). However, he felt that the "pilot program" alluded to in Ed Huffman's RFP was something different – asking instructors who might not teach a course in blended format for pedagogical reasons to consider doing so (and for financial inducement). It seemed to Steve that this was why AAC was involved in the Blended Learning issue in the first place.

Laurie asked if AAC might accept the compromise position of allowing the two proposals to go forward (Rick Bommelje's course and Margaret McLaren's), but with an analysis afterwards similar to the kind of review AAC did this year of Maymester. She suggested it might be possible to review student evaluations, etc. Steve suggested Rick and Margaret might also give a report directly to AAC next year to share their own perspective on their course.

Laurie asked if Rick and Margaret's courses even met the standard of Blended Learning as assessed by Don's ad-hoc committee report. Don said that it did – there were in class meetings and also guided, out of class synchronous "virtual" meetings. Steve asked why Don and Chris did not consider Roger Ray's Media-Based Introduction to Psychology course to be an example

of blended learning. Both Don and Chris noted that Ray's students performed work asynchronously (this time would be seen as more like out-of-class homework time).

Dawn expressed her concern that AAC really did not know what the format of Rick and Margaret's courses would be based on their responses to the RFP from IT. Don responded that his committee had interviews with Rick and Margaret, and their conclusions were based on those interviews.

Laurie felt that it might indeed be advisable for a faculty colloquium, sponsored perhaps by IT, so that they might inform and receive advice from the faculty about the future of blended learning at Rollins.

AAC was then uncertain as to the current status of Rick and Margaret's courses. They were slated for summer, 2010, but apparently were not using a blended format because IT had elected not to carry out the training/informational workshops. This decision was IT's decision alone, AAC had clarified weeks ago that it did not have any jurisdiction over workshops created by IT, and in fact advised that it would be prudent to present the workshops regardless of what AAC and PSC might decide about in terms of funding the class proposals.

In the end, it was not clear if any request was being made of AAC – from PSC, the Holt School, IT, or any other party. The issue was tabled in the interests of time.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 a.m.