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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, Monday, April 5, 2010

Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee

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Minutes approved at the AAC meeting of 4/12/10

AAC Minutes – April 5, 2010

In attendance: Jim Small (Chair), Wendy Brandon, Chris Fuse, Annie Hilb, Laurie Joyner, Barry Levis, Tocarra Mallard, Sebastian Novak, Dawn Roe, Steven St. John (Secretary)

Guests in attendance: John Sinclair

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 a.m.

Minutes. The minutes of March 22 were approved with one minor wording change.

Announcements. Laurie asked for confirmation that AAC approved that students taking a full Maymester load (i.e., 2 courses) were permitted to take Holt courses later in the summer. The committee agreed that this was the intent.

Old Business.

Anthropology

Discussion of the Anthropology major changes was tabled last meeting to await information about the thinking behind restricting core courses in the major to Rollins College offerings. Barry noted that this was not a new condition but is also on the current major map. Laurie noted that this stipulation included an Archaeology course, which has been difficult to staff given that the Rollins Department does not have an Archaeologist. Usually, the course is taught by a visitor, but whether it can continue to be taught by visitors is a year by year decision.

Chris asked if LACS course enrollment would be affected given the new major map in Anthropology, which no longer requires electives in other areas (optionally LACS courses). Laurie noted that Latin American Studies generally is a strategic priority for Rollins. Several members asked what the thinking was behind reducing this requirement.

Steve read from the rationale memo provided by Anthropology: "The size of the major in terms of numbers of required courses is being reduced in keeping with requirements at our peer and aspirant schools, with the intention of more intensive and purposeful coursework within the department rather than simply additional coursework in other social science courses. Rather than having elective coursework in other social sciences (Sociology, for example), we now strongly encourage them to spend a semester abroad."

Wendy noted that the other major change was restricting the capstone course to seniors only. She asked how many majors Anthropology had. Sebastian found the answer on the Rollins website: 42 (and thus about 10-15 seniors).

The committee reiterated its desire to have a member of Anthropology present. Wendy moved to table and Barry gave a second. The motion carried.

Psychology

Steve introduced a memo that provided a sample schedule of faculty to courses to demonstrate that the new major proposed could be adequately staffed with the current faculty and that Psychology faculty would maintain an ability to contribute course for non-majors. Over the next 4 years, the plan allowed for 5-11 courses per year to be directed to non-majors, RCC, RP, and Honors offerings. These would be in addition to an expanded offering of courses with Gen Ed designation, including O-N, V, Q, and S courses.

One issue that was discussed was that Psychology has a history of not contributing to the RCC program; that such requests had been met with a defense from Psychology that because of the high number of majors, no faculty could be spared. The committee was doubtful, despite the provided schedule, that a 12-course (as apposed to 11-course) major could possibly improve that situation. Steve responded that he believed the committee was in error and that Psychology had provided a fair number of RCC and Honors courses over the past several years, and that Psychology faculty were also involved in the development of the RP programs. Wendy disagreed. Steve said that he would investigate and provide data on Psychology offerings in recent years.

A second issue has the request to include pre-requisites on several courses in the major, especially the requirement of the lab course for students to take PSY 150, PSY 155, PSY 250, and PSY 255. The concern was that this, along with capping laboratory courses at 18, would prevent these courses from serving non-majors. Steve agreed that some courses, such as Physiological Psychology which carry an O-N, routinely enroll non-majors seeking these Gen Eds. He also noted that he had raised this concern within the department. He provided the department's rationale that these courses would also allow entry "by consent of the instructor" but that he could see the counter-argument that non-majors would nonetheless be "scared off" by such pre-requisites. Annie asked what the purpose of the pre-reqs was – was it to make sure that Psychology majors took the Research Methods courses early in their careers? Steve answered that yes, this was the main intent. Some of the laboratory courses (more than others) also pedagogically required this level of preparation.

The committee asked Steve to return next week after consultation with the department on the extent to which it would be able to contribute to non-major education under the new major.

Music

John Sinclair introduced the changes to the major proposed by the Department of Music. He noted that, originally, the Music major assumed that performance would be a critical component of the major for all students. As the department has grown, however, and consistent with Music majors at other schools, it was recognized that students may track not only toward performance but also composition or research. The Music major is being altered both to accommodate the varied career paths of music majors and also in recognition of their better preparation for the major when they enter.

For example, the requirement for MUS 151 was dropped in acknowledgement of the fact that many students can place out of this basic course. The first year laboratory experience was reorganized to MUS 153-154 to ensure that all students would have a year of keyboard instruction, consistent with peer and aspirant schools.

All students must also take a Senior Project, but in recognition of the various trajectories of individual students, the Project might be a performance, a composition, a research paper, etc., and thus might be supervised by any of a number of faculty members. The department suggested handling this by independent study, and that the department was willing to take on this “off load” commitment.

Chris asked if this might be problematic, and whether the Music Department could create a capstone course. John said that the department wanted to preserve freedom of choice for the students. He noted the department graduated 18-28 students a year across both A&S and Holt, and that the major would be consistent for both programs.

Laurie noted that she had been involved in a course in which students met occasionally with a main professor to discuss shared features of their work but also did some work with individual professors particular to individual projects – perhaps this approach might work for music.

John felt that this might indeed work. AAC asked John to bring this suggestion back to the department.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 a.m.