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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, Monday, April 12, 2010

Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee

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Minutes approved at the AAC meeting of 4/19/10

AAC Minutes – April 12, 2010

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

Guests in attendance: John Sinclair, Bob Moore

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 a.m.

Minutes. The minutes of April 5 were approved.

Announcements. Jim announced that the AAC website was not up to date and asked whose responsibility this was. Steve said that it was his and he would attend to the updating. Jim also asked how the minutes are archived. Laurie said that the dean's office keeps copies in Mills, but that the committee Chairs also provide the Archives with paper copies each year. Jim announced that the Natural Sciences and Social Sciences needed to find divisional representatives to replace him and Steve. He also said that Rick Foglesong had requested the names of potential At-Large representatives. Don expressed his willingness to serve a full term, as he joined AAC this year to fill Susan Lackman's final year while she was on sabbatical leave.

Old Business.

Anthropology

Bob Moore attended to entertain questions about the Anthropology proposal for revision to its major. The committee asked for an overview of the requested changes. He reported that the department had responded to a request that all majors consider reducing the number of hours required, and the department determined that reducing the number of hours to 10 was easily done and without negative effects on student development. The hours reduced were from the formerly-required 2 courses outside Anthropology from certain departments (e.g., Sociology). Students of course could still take those courses if it was their interest.

Alex asked about the requirement to take core courses at Rollins. Bob responded that this was a long-established requirement but that it was waived in many instances, and that the requirement was not problematic in experience.

Laurie asked if the department had difficulty filling 400-level courses. Bob agreed that there had been low enrollment at times, and that the department was responding by offering fewer of these per semester. He noted that the change in the capstone to only admitting seniors had the benefit of making planning of those courses easier.

Wendy moved to accept the changes to the Anthropology major and Alex offered a second. The motion carried without objection.

Psychology

Jim summarized questions AAC had about the new Psychology major, including whether the staffing requirements would permit Psychology faculty the freedom to participate in the education of non-majors in, for example, RCC, RP, Honors, and General Education. In response to that concern, Steve provided a memo detailing the contributions Psychology has made over the past three years along with next year's teaching schedule. This memo supplemented a previous memo that concluded that over the first 4 years of the new major, Psychology could provide 5-11 courses (depending on sabbatical schedule) per year at the 100 and 200 level geared to non-majors (in addition to Gen Ed bearing courses that might enroll a small number of non-majors).

Steve summarized the content of the document, which indicated that Psychology had contributed 5 RCC courses, 3 Honors courses, and 31 courses bearing General Education Designations in a 4-year period (Fall 2007 to the current year plus next year's scheduled courses). The Psychology Department also offered 60 courses in that period that did not carry pre-requisites and could be expected to appeal to non-majors, including some courses (e.g., Introduction to Psychology and Stress Management: Hanging Loose) that have a strong history of enrolling large numbers of non-majors. Steve also noted that the department was expanding its list of GED bearing courses, adding two O courses and one O-N course, and that two Psychology faculty were developing courses for the RP pilot program.

Wendy asked if some of the courses listed as potentially appealing to non-majors and that lacked prerequisites might be renumbered at the 200-level to perhaps increase enrollment from non-majors. Steve responded that the department was, in fact, creating two courses whose primary content is Social Psychology, with an S GED-bearing 200-level course especially directed at non-majors. He also noted that some of the courses were at the 200-level already. He suggested that some courses might actually be more appealing to non-majors at the 300-level; for example, a Religion student considering Psychology of Religion or a Philosophy student considering The Mind-Body Problem might conclude that a 200-level class would be too basic but a 300-level class might be a worthwhile elective outside of their major. Steve noted that the current proposal for the Psychology major would only count 300-level courses toward the major, and so renumbering courses to the 200-level would have the unwanted effect of discouraging majors from taking those courses.

Barry suggested that a college-wide problem was that seniors are allowed to take 100-level courses, and Jim noted that they frequently do this having saved some General Education requirements to the end. Sebastian pointed out that this isn't always intentional, that many students request certain courses every year only to finally get them in their senior year. He cited science courses and ethics in particular as being difficult to get into.

Wendy pointed out that some of the courses might not be easy for non-majors to get into because of the new prerequisites. Psychology has proposed that 300-level courses would require one semester of the major's new Perspectives in Psychology course, and that the

laboratory classes would require essentially 4 courses. The committee felt this weakened the argument that Psychology was offering Gen Eds, for example, Physiological Psychology, which carries an O-N and currently serves non-majors, would screen those non-majors out through pre-requisites.

Steve responded that this had been an area of debate within the department, and that the department's response would be that it was important that our majors take the Research Methods series before taking a laboratory course, and that non-majors could always appeal to the instructor and have the prerequisite requirement waived. The committee wondered if this would occur in practice.

Laurie asked, thinking of the issues surrounding implementing the RP, if there might be some unforeseen difficulty in scheduling courses and having two Psychology majors running side by side (during the period of overlap when students under the old rules are taking classes). Steve said that he had at one time feared that might be a major headache, but said that as the new major began to take shape in the department's discussions, the only truly new course was at the first year level. While the new major has significant changes in the organization of 300 and 400 level courses, the courses themselves are still essentially the same courses as are currently "on the books". The number of lab courses, research methods courses, 300-level courses, and 400-level courses that would be scheduled each year would not change, so it did not appear that there was a major worry about the transition period. The committee agreed but also discussed the prospect that Psychology could report back in two years with an update on the implementation. Jim cited Chemistry as a department that made a change to its major and then recently changed back to the old system after encountering problems in implementation.

Wendy made a motion to accept the changes adding the stipulation that Psychology report to AAC in 2 years with a progress report. Barry asked to add the stipulation that Gen Ed bearing courses currently with no prerequisites maintain this status. (This would be Social Psychology and Physiological Psychology.) The motion carried without objection.

Music

John Sinclair appeared on behalf of the Music Department. First, he announced that David Charles had been elected to serve as the Expressive Arts representative to the Curriculum Renewal Committee Phase 2. Jim thanked him and noted that the committee was now full once the Social Sciences Division provided a representative.

John reported that the Music Department discussed AAC's recommendation on management of the capstone experience via a Senior Seminar course rather than Independent Study (but that IS remain an option for particular students). John said that the department endorsed this idea. Jim noted that this would require a New Course Proposal, and John acknowledged that he would provide one.

Barry asked if all incoming music majors had to take a music themed RCC course. John said not in all cases, particularly in the case of the fairly common double major, who might take some

other RCC. The Music department's Honors students, of course, took an Honors course. John pointed out that for those students, the music department was proactive in providing advising.

Barry moved to accept the Music Department's proposal. Don made a second and the motion carried without objection. Jim advised John to provide a revision to the major map and a New Course Proposal for the Senior Seminar course.

Associate Degree in Holt

Note: In the minutes, "Jim" refers to Jim Small and Jim Eck is identified by his full name.

Jim Eck announced that the Holt School was interested in discontinuing the awarding of an Associate 2-year degree. He said that at most 4 or 5 students took advantage of this, and that the school did not advertise this option. Given the aspirations of the school, the low level of student interest, and the practice of comparable 4 year schools in only offering 4-year degrees, the degree was viewed as having a negative impact on the perception of the Holt School.

Don asked if, procedurally, this issue would come before the Board of Trustees. Laurie felt that this was correct, and Jim Eck concurred.

Jim noted that he was aware of some objection to discontinuing the degree among the faculty. Jim Eck felt that this was largely a historical attachment. Barry noted that Holt students, who often must take courses intermittently while working a day job and taking care of family responsibilities, progress much more slowly to their degree than do A&S students. In this regard, the 2-year degree can be a very satisfying and treasured reward. Wendy noted that Pat Lancaster had spoken passionately in favor of maintaining the Associate option and viewed it as a contribution the community. Wendy asked if those getting the degree continue on towards the Bachelor's?

Jim Eck said he did not know, but assumed this was the case.

Don wondered what the student population was that took this option. In his experience, it was often Rollins employees. Alex also pointed out that students may get to a point where they cannot financially continue, and thus at least have a degree when they must make that decision. Jim felt that if the Holt School was "embarrassed by it", we should just get rid of it. Laurie noted that a 2-year degree is a desirable option for many people, but that Central Florida was not lacking in institutions that offered such a degree. Don added that the question was not whether some people wanted the 2-year degree, the question was whether Rollins should be offering the 2-year degree.

Don moved that AAC recommend to Executive Committee that the Holt School discontinue the Associate of Arts Degree. Alex gave a second. Some further discussion ensued. Wendy expressed a wish that Rollins staff member in particular had some kind of option. Jim responded that we had to think of the good of the entire institution, and that premier liberal arts schools do not offer 2-year degrees.

Discussion ended and a vote was taken. The motion to recommend discontinuation of the AA degree in Holt carried without objection.

Jim announced that Dick James would be invited to the next meeting to discuss the Computer Science major.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25.