

10-21-2009

## Minutes, Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, Wednesday, October 21, 2009

Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee

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### Recommended Citation

Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee, "Minutes, Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, Wednesday, October 21, 2009" (2009). *Academic Affairs Committee Minutes*. Paper 92.  
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Minutes approved October 28, 2009

AAC Minutes – October 21, 2009

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

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

**Minutes.** The minutes of the 10/7 meeting were unanimously approved pending a change to the text of the section relating to Maymester and Probation.

**Announcements.**

Jim noted that a request had been made by International programs to include not for credit courses on the official transcript. The Dean of the Faculty's opinion was that since these courses are not for credit and not associated with Rollins College, they should not be placed on the transcript, an opinion to which Barry Levis, Chair of the New course Subcommittee concurred. Jim also concurred and suggested, without any objections from other members of AAC, that the Committee support the Dean's decision.

Jim announced that due to the rapidly filling agenda, AAC will resume weekly meetings. Rather than November 4, the next meeting will be October 28.

**Old Business.**

LACS Major/Minor

Gabriel Barreneche attended the meeting and provided AAC with additional material in support of the proposed changes to the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Major. Those documents included a sample major map for hypothetical students and an analysis of the prerequisites of courses counting towards the revised major. Gabriel said that he was pleasantly surprised how few courses had prerequisites or that already accepted LACS courses as prerequisites. Gabriel noted that a strength of the revision was the LAC 205 topics course would now count toward the major; this course could be used to offer perhaps one course a year on a variety of focused topics with LACS. Wendy moved to accept the changes to the LACS major pending the receipt of final documents, such as the Major and Minor map in the format used by the college. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. Gabriel agreed to provide the committee with these final documents in time for the next meeting.

Psychology Course

Barry reported that the New Course Subcommittee had nearly completed reviewing a substantial number of new courses which had formerly been taught as a topics course, in line with AAC's recently clarified policy of requiring topics courses be reviewed for permanent inclusion in the catalogue after having been taught twice. The courses reviewed by the New Course Subcommittee included those that had been taught as topics courses, in some cases, for

many years. Barry asked the full committee for advice about one topics course, PSY 205: Hanging Loose In An Uptight World. Barry reported that the subcommittee felt that that title, which originated as an intersession course, was not appropriate as a permanent course title. The primary rationale given was that a title, which appears in both the college catalogue and on a students' transcript, should accurately convey both the content of the course and its academic rigor. Barry requested that the instructor submitting the form, Martin Farkash, suggest a new title consistent with those guidelines. Barry received an email from the Chair of Psychology, Paul Harris, reporting that the Psychology Department had discussed the issue in a departmental meeting, and voted unanimously to support Marty's decision to retain the original course. The primary rationale given was that the department had received no complaints about the title in the 15-20 years that it had been taught under that name.

Barry recommended that AAC not approve the course until the title was changed. Barry noted that Steve offered a suggestion of maintaining the current title as a subtitle. Barry also reported that in other cases, the New Course Subcommittee had asked for alterations to titles using the same guidelines. Jim voiced his agreement with the New Course Subcommittee. Sebastian noted that there are other courses with less academic titles (Love, Sex, and Arrows), and Annie felt that the title suggested by the New Course Subcommittee, Personal Stress Management, was awful. Annie asked if Marty had a reason behind maintaining the current title; given the good reputation of the course and the blandness of alternative titles, she wondered if the current title might actually be preferable. Barry pointed out that the New Course Subcommittee was not requiring a particular title, just one that conformed to the guideline of conveying the content and requirements of the course.

Laurie asked if Steve was at the Psychology Department meeting, and he reported that while he (Steve) attempted to clarify the New Course Subcommittee's request, the Psychology Department unanimously spoke in favor of the current course title. The members of the department found the request to change a 15-year old title without clear evidence that the title was harmful to be unreasonable. Steve suggested making the title a subtitle but that suggestion was not greeted with enthusiasm.

Jim noted that despite the 15 year history, the course had never come before AAC before because it was always taught as an experimental "topics" course, but that he had heard a number of complaints about this particular course title from faculty.

Don and Steve both voiced concern though as to whether this was a weighty enough issue to concern AAC. Don noted that in the Masters of Human Resources Program, the titles of Marty's courses had been raised and that Marty engaged in a thoughtful dialogue about the proper titling of the courses. Steve noted that he was loathe to tell a colleague what to title his class and wondered if this were an issue of academic freedom. Laurie disagreed, stating that courses are not owned by individual faculty members, but are owned collectively by the faculty of Rollins College, and that this body (AAC) was the duly elected committee of the faculty charged with overseeing the curriculum. Laurie also suggested this might be a good occasion to discuss the larger issue of who "owns" the curriculum. Barry agreed and reported that Toni Holbrook,

the closest thing to an “institutional memory” of the New Course Subcommittee, could not recall a time when a faculty member was unwilling to negotiate on a suggestion by that committee.

Wendy moved that AAC write to Marty reiterating that all former topics courses were being evaluated by the New Course Subcommittee and to offer again the suggestion of maintaining “Hanging Loose In An Uptight World” as a subtitle. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

#### Blended Learning Grants

The faculty received a memo from Ed Huffman on October 15 soliciting applications for a grant to pilot “blended learning” formats of existing courses. The memo explained that blended learning formats include both face to face class time and remote delivery. Jim, as Chair of AAC, received a number of emails from concerned faculty members who had not heard of the initiative and wanted to know if AAC had approved the pilot program and why PSC was not administering the proposal review process. Jim reported that AAC did not approve this pilot program, and he agreed with concerned faculty that this skirted “normal channels”. He stated that the series of emails had included some misinformation including that “Les Lloyd has been giving out grants for a long time”, which Jim said was untrue – that these always went through governance. Laurie clarified that in fact this was true until 2 years ago, but that Les Lloyd had been very enthusiastic about bringing IT grants into the governance process, and that the procedure is now clear. Laurie felt that the initiative should have gone first to PSC, who could have in due course sent the matter to AAC for its review and input.

Don, noting that the deadline for grant proposals was coming up, asked if this was a time-sensitive issue: would the money “go away” if not distributed in accordance with Ed Huffman’s outlined time course. Laurie felt that since all budgets are now rolling over, this was extremely unlikely.

Sue Easton, who was part of the committee that generated the Blended Learning Initiative, attended the meeting to provide AAC with the history of the initiative. As part of the administration’s review of the role of the evening program at the college, and in response to the Kaludis Consulting Report, a committee including Jim Eck, Sharon Lusk, Ed Huffman, Sue Easton, Carrie Schultz, and David Richard met to discuss the strategic vision for the Holt Program. As a part of these conversations, the committee discussed “product delivery options” including Blended Learning. The committee recognized the need to proceed slowly, to evaluate effectiveness, and to train instructors on issues surrounding blended learning. The committee also was determined to consider already-established courses (several members of AAC raised a concern that while these courses have been approved by AAC, considerable reformatting of the course to a blended learning delivery systems would raise new curricular issues).

Laurie asked if the Faculty Development Office was consulted, and Sue reported that it was not. Laurie also iterated her belief that any discussions involving the Holt curriculum that do not involve AAC don’t make sense. Sue expressed confusion as to when in the process these

committees should become involved, and Laurie and Jim agreed that PSC and AAC should become involved at least before any actions were taken. Barry noted that the issue had come up in the Holt Directors Meeting, but that it hadn't even occurred to Barry that the issue hadn't already been vetted by AAC in some previous year. He expressed his opinion that such a pilot program was almost to the magnitude of the RP Pilot program, which involved AAC and the whole faculty for years.

Laurie iterated the history of grant delivery at Rollins. Not that long ago, such initiatives came from several sources, which created a problem: when the faculty established a set of priorities, the initiatives from other sources would not always be in line with (and could be contradictory to) those priorities. Beginning 2 years ago, PSC began to handle all these initiatives, consulting with AAC when appropriate, which brought everything through faculty governance and established uniformity in proposal deadlines, formats, and evaluation criteria. Wendy noted that Les Lloyd had been in favor of this as it lent legitimacy to IT's initiatives.

There was a general feeling in the committee that the Blended Learning grants had to go through the governance process, but no action was taken in consideration of the time.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 am.