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Minutes, Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee Meeting, Tuesday, October 3, 2006

Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee

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Academic Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes October 3, 2006

In Attendance: Sharon Carnahan (Chair), Carolyn Carpan, Jay Yellen, Hoyt Edge, Thom Moore, Ben Balak, Marie Shafe, Ed Cohen

1. The minutes from the September 26, 2006 meeting were approved.

2. Old Business

a) The committee met with members of the Honors Program Committee, including Barry Levis, Jay Yellen, Ryan Musgrave, and Dexter Boniface. We asked the Honors Program the following questions and received the following answers:

- Ed Cohen - Why make the Honors class size smaller? Why not improve profile of program to attract good quality students?
- Barry Levis – Hard to find good quality students; Jay Yellen – Program not working, want to improve quality of program and then raise profile of program.

- Marie Shafe – What’s not working in the Honors Program?
- Barry Levis – The program structure is not truly interdisciplinary, with team teaching the program will work.
- Sharon Carnahan – What about transdisciplinary training? We can teach each other about our disciplines to enable faculty to teach interdisciplinary courses.
- Barry Levis – We currently can’t staff the Honors science course.

- Ed Cohen – The program is rigid and students find it hard to get invited to join program after they are students at Rollins.
- Barry Levis – We invite students after they are enrolled at Rollins, not everyone accepts.

- Dexter Boniface – The Honors Program proposal is our best attempt to move from model that’s not working
- Barry Levis – AAC was positive last year
- Ryan Musgrave – We addressed concerns AAC brought up last year in proposal currently on the table.

- Marie Shafe – Team teaching doesn’t mean interdisciplinary – How does team teaching address interdisciplinary issue? How does reducing student numbers sustain program?
- Barry Levis – Courses are often truly interdisciplinary, but a common syllabus (currently used in HON 201) doesn’t mean the course is interdisciplinary. Examples of team taught,

interdisciplinary courses in Spring 2007 – Tillman/Zivot teaching “Gender in Performance”; Jones/Van Sickle teaching “Social Issues in Literature.” Proposal requires more faculty members but offers faculty opportunity to create interdisciplinary courses with colleagues.

- Thom Moore – What about college requirements? Should we ignore college requirements for our best students?
- Sharon Carnahan – This is the best proposal the Honors Committee can create, but AAC is still concerned about students being able to avoid whole disciplines (e.g. Science), size of class, and the number of faculty needed for the program.
- Thom Moore – What happens if we approve this without fixing these problems?
- Barry Levis – We also want to change the junior and senior years, but we need to fix the beginning of the program first in order to resolve the attrition problem.
- Sharon Carnahan – How large can a major be in terms of number of students and number of courses required? Faculty not available to teach in Honors Program, even if they want to, because of departmental needs. What is the purpose of the honors program?
- Jay Yellen – For students with exceptional ability, intellectual community; give students breadth and depth of study.
- Sharon Carnahan – What about Honors programs at other colleges?
- Barry Levis – Our Honors program is unique in being a special degree program, most other schools offer Honors degrees in the Major.
- Sharon Carnahan – I propose we approve the proposal and ask the Honors Committee to report back in a year to explain how they’ve addressed the problems we’ve noted.
- Ed Cohen – I suggest we send the proposal to the Executive Committee, but I don’t agree with lowering the number of students in the program.

It was decided we will continue our discussion at the next meeting before we decide what to do with the proposal. Jay Yellen will report to the Honors Committee that we are still concerned about sustainability and breadth of the program and find out if they have solutions to these concerns.

The next AAC meeting will be on Tuesday, October 17 at 8:15 am in the Warden Dining Room.

Carolyn Carpan,

Secretary