

COUNCIL ON ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

156 University Hall

April 22, 2009

3:00 – 5:00 PM

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Faculty:

- ✓ Dr. Lawrence A. Baum (Political Science)
- ✓ Dr. Neelima M. Bendapudi (Marketing and Logistics)
- ✓ Dr. James W. Cogdell (Mathematics)
- ✓ Dr. Kathryn A. Corl, (Germanic Languages and Literatures)
- ✓ Dr. Marcia E. Farr (Teaching and Learning)
- ✓ Dr. Jay S. Hobgood (Geography)
- Dr. Michael Ibba (Microbiology)
- ✓ Dr. Daniel A. Mendelsohn (Mechanical Engineering)
- ✓ Dr. Robert J. Ward (Music)

Students:

- Mr. Robert D. Calhoun (CGS, History of Art)
- Ms. Sarah K. Douglas (CGS, History)
- Mr. Benjamin T. Reinke (USG, Physcs)

Administrators:

- ✓ Dr. W. Randy Smith, (Academic Affairs), Vice Chair

Guests:

- Dr. Alexis C. Collier (Associate Provost; Professor, Psychology)
- Dr. Katherine Meyer (Associate Provost, Professor, Sociology)
- Dr. Terrell L. Childers (Office of the University Registrar)
- Mr. Bradley A. Myers (University Registrar)
- Mr. John E. Dickhaut (Office of the University Registrar)
- Mr. David E. Roy (Director, Enrollment Services)
- Dr. Martha M. Garland (Vice Provost; Dean of Undergraduate Studies)
- Dr. John D. Wanzer (Assistant Provost)
- Dr. Kathleen M. Hallihan (Arts and Sciences Curriculum and Assessment Office)
- Dr. Harald Vaessin (Professor, Molecular Genetics)

The Council came to order at 3:09 PM.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF APRIL 8, 2009

Mendelsohn moved approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of April 8, 2009; the motion was seconded by Cogdell and approved unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR—PROFESSOR DANIEL A. MENDELSON

- Conversion to semesters

Mendelsohn gave an update from the Council on Enrollment and Student Progress (CESP) working group on calendar conversion. Corl had attended a meeting on behalf of Council Chair. Included among the issues that need to be addressed are finals week, what constitutes a “short-term”, and how short-terms might be used. The Chair noted that this Council (CAA) needs to determine dual decisions about the definition of a credit hour and class length. Potential calendar impact on accreditation requirements also needs to be taken up by Council.

- Syllabus template

Mendelsohn indicated feedback was being received regarding syllabus guidelines proposed for the updated version of the Academic Organization and Curriculum Handbook update. He will hold the discussion on the issues being raised until the end of the quarter.

- Other comments

Mendelsohn reported on a March 30, 2009 memorandum from Executive Vice President and Provost Joseph A. Alutto about two matters. The first was a reminder that final examinations are to be given during the designated time, and that the Provost has requested a list of exceptions that were made for Autumn 2008 and Winter 2009 quarters. The second was a reminder that federal regulations require students know about required textbooks in scheduled courses. The Provost has requested going forward that departments prepare a list of text requirements when a master schedule is prepared.

COMMENTS FROM THE VICE CHAIR — PROFESSOR W. RANDY SMITH

- Dual enrollment

Smith updated Council that a committee to address dual high school and college enrollment is being established that will report to Council. It would be convened soon, and will develop an inventory of cases in which dual enrollment is occurring. He estimates there are about 20 such programs underway.

- Other comments

Smith informed Council of the First Year Experience conference held at the Fawcett Center on April 22, 2009. The conference theme was ‘The Transfer Experience.’ Approximately 250 attended, many of whom were academic advisors. The keynote address was given by Dr.

Barbara Gellman-Danley, Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs and System Integration, the Ohio Board of Regents.

Smith updated Council on accreditation news. He recently attended the annual conference of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the regional body that accredits The Ohio State University (OSU). The organization is considering new accreditation mechanisms and pathways for both compliance and improvement. Smith noted that three teams had recently visited the institution for specialized accreditation reviews: Business, Nursing, and Public Health.

REPORT FOR ONLINE STUDENT EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION (SEI) – ASSOCIATE PROVOST KATHERINE MEYER

Meyer provided the annual report from the Council subcommittee that oversees the Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI). Vice Provost Martha M. Garland, University Registrar Bradley A. Myers, and Terrell L. Childers also provided input. The SEI is an instrument developed at the University to evaluate overall instructor effectiveness and is available for all courses offered. Currently the SEI can be administered by a paper survey or online. Over the last several years the institution has been evaluating the differences between the two forms of administration, and now proposes to move to solely online administration in Autumn 2009. The advantages for doing so include: savings in paper costs of about \$40,000 per year and in personnel time estimated to be between \$50,000-\$100,000 per year, improved data security and quality, and possible increased student satisfaction with the inclusion of a default comment box that can be completed at students' leisure. With freed-up time, the Office of the Registrar would potentially be able to provide additional customized reports for faculty and departments, and will be able to maintain the same rules for reports and access as in the current system. Customized questions can be added. It is also timely to move forward. The SEI was not included in the Student Information System (SIS) that is going live at this time. There is now a window for additional programming that could allow students to link easily to a student portal in the SIS system for this purpose through Carmen.

Meyer presented a set of data on the differences and similarities between paper- and web-based SEI reporting. Overall, evaluations are somewhat higher for paper reporting. However, the differences between paper and web evaluations for instructors who have done both are small and in the order of the range of differences found for instructors across administrations using only the paper format. Response rates for the web version are significantly lower compared to the paper version. If students chose to complete the open comment section of the web version, they provide more feedback than if they were completing the open comment section of the paper version. Information from other institutions that have moved completely to online reporting suggests that response rates recover within a couple of years after students become used to evaluating all courses online. The literature suggests potential ways to increase response rates for the web-version, such as providing incentives, making grades available sooner for students who complete SEIs online, or having instructors emphasize the importance of students' opinion in shaping instruction. Council members were generally not in favor of using incentives or withholding grades. Council members raised questions as to when during the quarter the SEI could be completed by students. Opening the window for responding too early would not permit

a fair evaluation of the entire course; with team-taught courses, however, not having the window open early enough would not be fair to instructors who taught early in the quarter.

Other information presented was the likelihood that rolling two-year averages of instructor SEIs will be reported publically in the future. Exceptions would be made for Graduate Teaching Associates (GTAs) and for instructors with class sizes fewer than five to protect the anonymity of student responders. Garland pointed out that moving toward web-based SEIs has not been done suddenly. The institution has studied the issues and methods for several years and received wide feedback. The Faculty Rule indicates that each student will be provided an opportunity to evaluate each course but not the specific method. The subcommittee that monitors the SEI will continue to address the response rate issue.

The Council endorsed the proposal to shift to full electronic administration of SEIs as early as Autumn 2009, with the caveats that the decision to do so be communicated widely to faculty, and that the Council could revisit the decision next year following an update from the SEI committee on how the process fared.

REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY-LEVEL ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM – PROFESSORS ALEXIS C. COLLIER, PAST CHAIR AND HARALD VAESSIN, CHAIR

Collier presented a General Education Curriculum (GEC) status report, the first from the newly established University-level Advisory Committee (ULAR) for the GEC. Harald Vaessin, the current Chair, provided additional input. The committee was established Spring 2008 as a subcommittee of CAA to monitor the GEC and make annual recommendations to this Council. Key components of the committee's charge are to analyze and summarize annual GEC course trends, the actions taken on GEC proposals, and student selected course patterns in the GEC breadth categories. The committee is also to advise Council on proposals to revise the GEC, assess the efficacy of the GEC learning outcomes, monitor GEC advising, and track the national dialogue on general education (GE). The committee met six times between Spring and Autumn 2008, reviewed available data, and heard from college and office representatives on various aspects of the GEC. The results of the review, the committee's conclusions, and planned next steps are in the full report posted on the CAA website. Collier provided a summary to Council, the highlights of which follow.

- Even though there are multiple templates for delivering the GEC across colleges, there is substantial overlap in requirements university-wide. The key distinctions are that only three colleges require foreign language and two a GEC capstone experience.
- There are over 900 GEC courses. Using a database that collapses courses across all designations (e.g., decimals, Honors versions), there are 621 courses and 65% of the GEC enrollment occurs in about 10% of GEC courses. The smaller subset of about 62 courses, then, constitutes a functional core curriculum that most students share in common.
- Almost all GEC proposals for new GEC category status are approved. Between 2007 and 2008, 52 proposals were approved and 1 rejected; about 2/3 were for new courses; six additional proposals were to remove at least one GEC category status.

- One notable change in the breadth categories between 2007 and 2008 was an 8% enrollment decline in the Arts and Humanities Cultures & Ideas subcategory. The impact of the change to reduce GEC requirements by 5-credit hours in the breadth categories beginning with freshmen entering Autumn 2007 is not expected to be seen during the first two years under the new requirements.
- Increasing numbers of students are entering with Proficiency Examination (EM) and Advanced Placement (AP) credit, about 90% of which is applied to the GEC. 70% of students entered Autumn 2006 with some EM/AP credit; beginning Autumn 2009, an additional 1600 students are expected to enter with AP credit due to changes in state requirements.
- Student responses on the National Survey of Student Engagement about their learning in the GE program indicated improvement between 2004 and 2007 and were comparable to similar institutions; however students reported fewer capstone-type experiences. Student learning gains were at or greater than expected levels in skills related to GE based on a pilot study using the Collegiate Learning Assessment.
- Faculty opinions from focus groups suggest GEC expected outcomes are being achieved; student opinion of GEC learning gains from an ASC Exit Survey vary depending on category/major (e.g., higher agreement for gains in quantitative reasoning for mathematics and physical science majors than majors in the arts and humanities).

Within the context of the GE program that OSU has and the measures being used to assess outcomes, the committee concluded students are achieving what is intended. The committee further concluded significant problems did not exist based on their review of available data. The committee will nonetheless continue to review and deliberate capstone experiences, the increasing size of the curriculum, and whether there is a need for program-level GEC expected outcomes in addition to the category ones that have been developed. The committee expressed concern that the GEC is not understood or valued as it should be, and expects the calendar conversion to impact its work over the next year.

Council members asked about alternative models for delivering a GE program, and were interested in continued tracking of student course-taking patterns in the breadth categories. Smith pointed out that having a group monitor the GEC on an ongoing basis will allow the curriculum to be dynamic and the program to be improved regularly. Further, having a group with representatives from across the university allows for input that takes into account various programmatic needs in a way that did not exist before.

PROPOSALS FROM SUBCOMMITTEE D—PROFESSORS DANIEL A. MENDELSON AND W. RANDY SMITH

- **Revision to Sexuality Studies Minor, Colleges of the Arts and Sciences**

Mendelson presented a proposal to revise the minor in Sexuality Studies. The proposed change is to add three new courses to the 'central course core' section of the minor. Doing so would increase the frequency of central core offerings and student choice. Cogdell noted that one of the courses to be added to the core has not previously been part of the minor, Psychology 555, and

that Sociology 606 has been removed from the elective list. Cogdell seconded the motion which passed by voice vote.

- **Agricultural Communication Minor, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences**

Mendelsohn presented a proposal for a minor in Agriculture Communication designed to provide students with communication skills in agricultural and environmental sciences. The Chair noted that the required courses are pre-requisite free, and Agriculture Communication 367, a recommended course, is usually already taken by students. Cogdell pointed out that the concurrence letters and syllabi which were to be appended to the request for a minor were not included. The Chair therefore tabled the proposal until the additional materials could be gathered and distributed for review.

- **Revision to Linguistics Major, Department of Linguistics**

Mendelsohn presented a proposal to revise the Linguistics major. Currently, all majors are required to take a research course. The proposed change is for the requirement to apply only to Honors students. The rationale is that the current mix of Honors and non-Honors students in the same classes results in too much diversity to adequately challenge Honors students. Philosophical objectives were raised regarding the reduction of the research requirement for non-Honors majors. The Chair indicated that he would provide the proposers an opportunity to address Council before a vote would be taken.

CLOSING COMMENTS

The annual Council Activity Report will be created for the upcoming May 7, 2009 University Senate meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Randy Smith
Alexis C. Collier