

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES ASSEMBLY

Minutes

Meeting of 2 March 2004

Rooms 128-30, OAKLAND CENTER

Attendance

Present: *Wallis Andersen, Robert Anderson, Dikka Berven, Keith Berven, Peter Binkert, Art Bull, Chris Clason, Jerrold Grossman, Abdi Kuso, Jay Meehan, Karen Miller, Michael Mitchell, Michelle Piskulich, Ingrid Rieger, Mark Rigstad, Sam Rosenthal, Brad Roth, Susan Wood, Jill Zeilstra, Xiangqun Zeng*

Ex Officio Present: *David Downing, William Macauley*

1. Call to order

Dean Downing convened the meeting at 3:40.

2. Approval of minutes December 9, 2003

Moved to approve the minutes from December 9, 2003 (Michelle Piskulich). Supported. Approved unanimously as presented.

3. Approval of Ingrid Rieger to replace Jude Nixon for Winter 2004 on the Committee on Instruction

Moved to appoint Ingrid Rieger to replace Jude Nixon for Winter 2004 on the Committee on Instruction (Susan Wood). Supported. Approved unanimously.

4. Discussion of General Education

Discussion took the form of question-and-answer, with Michelle Piskulich, who headed Task Force II, and Dean Downing responding.

Dean Downing reported that the Senate has had 2 readings of the final proposal, which incorporates many of concerns raised by the Assembly over the past two years. At the last Senate meeting a number of amendments were proposed based on reports from the Senate review committees (Budget, Planning Review, General Education, UCUI), and Provost Moudgil deferred Senate action until the March meeting to give Senators time to analyze the modifications. Dean Downing feels the document is “very, very strong.” He thanked the College faculty for serving on the various task forces and Michelle Piskulich for her leadership.

Concerns and comments:

••The assessment requirements seem impractical, onerous, more work for faculty not related to teaching.

response: one of the concerns most clearly articulated by NCA for its upcoming (2005) focus visit is OU’s lack of assessment for General Education. Assessment is being mandated externally, by accrediting bodies across the nation.

To minimize extra work, the current plan proposes embedded assessment with multiple choice tests or papers, depending upon the class. The assessment plan will have to be fleshed out, of course, and will become part of each (involved) department’s assessment plan; departments may propose alternate assessment approaches if they wish, as departments know how to assess their programs best. A staff person will assist and coordinate assessment for the full General Education program. Surveys (testing) of graduating seniors are possible, but more expensive. As an example of embedded

assessment, Psychology is identifying objectives for its General Education courses and plans to develop a bank of questions to roll into its exams.

The General Education and Assessment Committees will be happy to assist departments; having an assessment plan will probably be part of getting a course approved for the new General Education program. A very important part of the process of developing General Education courses is to articulate what skills and outcomes the department/program is looking for; departments can/must identify these desired outcomes themselves, not let external people set standards. The current Assessment Committee has been cooperative, working with programs in “conversations” about their assessment, and in at least one case recommending simplification of the department’s assessment plan. Michelle will ask the Assessment Committee and General Education Committee to send representatives to talk with the English Department about its concerns.

●●The budgetary implications will mean a shift in some departments’ energies; in some cases new staff will be necessary to implement the program.

response: The Senate asked for a more detailed budget, and Michelle Piskulich, Dean Downing, and Mary Papazian are meeting tomorrow to discuss finances. It is important to have goals and try to meet them, despite uncertainties on budget. Some 70 to 80% of the Senate amendments incorporated wording recognizing the budget constraints, planning a phase-in while articulating that “this is where we want to be eventually” when funds permit.

Michelle will confirm the General Education Committee’s assessment plan expectations and share it by e-mail with the Assembly members. She will also include information on budget and anything else that comes up.

4b. College theme

The College has recently begun adopting an annual theme which encourages departments to plan related, focused events.

The 03-04 theme tied in the national Dickens Conference and related activities
The 04-05 theme is “Presidential Leadership”

The social sciences departments and history are putting together academic programs, and Student Life has agreed to participate. The Rhetoric “community book” will be The Press Effect, and already 8 or 9 courses related to the theme have been scheduled. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, author of The Press Effect, will be on campus the Monday after Thanksgiving for a public lecture. The Student Program Board has pledged significant funding to support this and other activities. Additional departments are encouraged to join in: e-mail Michelle.

5. First reading of Religious Studies Proposal

Moved to create a program in religious studies with specific minors in Judaic, Christianity, and Islamic Studies. (Jay Meehan). Supported.

governance: Minors go to Senate as information items; they are approved at the Assembly level. Second reading of this proposal will be scheduled for the March 16 Assembly meeting.

Gary Shepherd summarized the proposal, noting that the concentration began in the early days of the institution. In recent years, world-wide issues/problems seem to call for OU to give students background to understand and respond to world conditions. There are some prospects for significant donor contributions (and these would be necessary to

implement the proposal). Such “mutually contingent” issues are difficult (primarily, getting funding before approval, when approval is not assured).

Concerns and comments:

- a comparative religion approach might be better than single-religion minors. Also, ideally should expand to include Hinduism, Buddhism. response: The required introductory course is comparative. Because the three overlap in many ways, a lot of the courses which are in individual areas will be comparative. The current Arab-Israeli conflict course, for example, could be taken for two different minors. Finally, though, this is one of the limitations of a minor (20 cr.). Dean Downing noted that the intent was to have a framework for a religious studies minor, and then to plug in specific religions; the current three play to OU faculty expertise and current coursework. The Religious Studies concentration emphasizes the comparative approach (28 cr.).

- could the comparative religion concern be dealt with through internship?

response: the faculty will think about this possibility.

- for Christianity Studies, Latin should be added as a recommendation.

- will OU be able to offer sufficient courses for students to complete the minors timely? response: for Islam and Christianity, current coursework is sufficient, though more courses would be better. Funding to support added Judaic Studies coursework is being pursued. Dean Downing noted that the Judaic Studies minor would not be launched without external funding, but having conceptual approval from the university will help in securing funding. CoI had similar questions, and assumes that the first few years will be “rough,” but that course offerings should improve over time with the structure in place.

- approval of a 3-part proposal where one of the three tracks is very weak seems unwise. response: the faculty would be comfortable with approval “in principle” for the third (weak) minor. Dean Downing pointed out that some of the difficulties for students could be handled through advising, to direct students correctly.

- grammar/diction—“Christianity” is a noun, Judaic and Islamic are adjectives; also please clarify Judaic v. Jewish. response: “Christian” sounds more faith-based than “Christianity” Studies. Judaic and Jewish are used alternatively, without any apparent preference or distinction. The faculty will reconsider word choices.

- will the specific courses in the proposal be taught? response: when asked for potential courses, most department chairs responded, “if we can pay for it.” Dean Downing pointed out that the courses are illustrative examples of courses, not courses to be voted on. Gary will share the list of potential courses and course descriptions prepared for CoI with the Assembly.

- will enrollments be sufficient to offer the courses? response: Many courses are cross-listed. Current academic year courses average 17 students, with spring/summer numbers around 13. One argument for a minor (rather than a major): students will minor in an “impractical” interest when majoring in a “practical” area for income; Women’s Studies has many minors.

6. Good & Welfare

Has the all-faculty meeting of the Assembly been scheduled? Dean Downing is waiting for more budget information. He hopes to schedule it for March 16.

7. *Moved to adjourn the meeting.* (Robert Anderson). Supported.