

Faculty Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2010

SEM II B1105, 1:00-3:00pm

Joe opened the meeting at 1:15.

Announcements

- Women's Suffrage – Sandy Yannone announced that there are many events in honor of the November 8 Women's Suffrage Centennial, including the Cal Anderson lecture in the Recital Hall on October 28, as well as other events sponsored by Evergreen and the State. She offered a website with further info: www.washingtonwomenshistory.org. Frederica Bowcutt indicated she has posters for distribution. Committee members were thanked for their work.
- Biomass Research – Evergreen student Dani Madrone provided information on Evergreen's biomass research process. She indicated the committee has valued the multiple perspectives that have been provided to date on this complex issue. She indicated she hosted a student forum on Monday, which went well. She indicated the group included students with divergent views who came together to talk in a peaceful and friendly way. She will plan additional student forums as well as a community forum scheduled for this Friday 6-8 p.m. in SEM II C1107. She indicated she has identified four major issues: carbon neutrality; forestry practices; potential health impacts; and other alternatives. She also announced a lecture by Mark Harmon on November 4th entitled, Forest Carbon and Carbon Cycling.
- WashPIRG – Hilary Stevens presented the Open Textbooks campaign, which makes textbooks available online with the option for faculty to provide guidelines. WashPIRG is asking that faculty sign a statement of intent to use an open resource textbook at some time in their career to show publishers that these are needed resources.
- CounterPoint Journal Fundraiser – Anna Wolfe-Pauly presented an Arts Walk fundraiser this weekend for the CounterPoint Journal, which is an alternative to the Cooper Point Journal. She indicated that the group is fundraising because they are not a student group this year. Their website is www.counterpointjournal.org
- Curriculum Planning Retreat – Bill Ransom reminded faculty of the Curriculum Planning Retreat on November 3. Details are in an e-mail that Planning Unit Coordinator Amy Cook sent out yesterday.
- RTaLE DTF – Interim Provost Ken Tabbutt thanked the DTF for their work, particularly co-chairs Kathleen Eamon and Julia Zay. He went on to state that faculty have always been the stewards for the curriculum. He indicated that Academics, the College and the Board of Trustees all support the RTaLE work and recognize that resources are likely to be required if the proposal passes. Additionally, if there are workload or compensation issues, the UFE and College will include them in bargaining discussions.

RTaLE DTF – A Handout was passed around to guide the conversation. DTF members were introduced. Co-chairs Julia Zay and Kathleen Eamon, with DTF members Krishna Chowdary and Stephen Beck, guided the conversation. Julia described the process, both for today as well as for the week 8 faculty meeting where additional discussion and a vote on the final proposal will ensue. Julia clarified why the process asks for overarching support of advising and academic statements prior to agreeing on the specific models for carrying forward the work. At the week 8 Faculty Meeting, faculty will vote whether or not to move closer to realizing a way the academic statement and advising will be implemented. Kathleen and Julia indicated the first proposal (draft included below) is intended to understand whether or not faculty recognize a need for new structures. If faculty indicate there is a need by voting yes on the proposal, the commitment will be to narrow down the implementation models to those that have the broadest agreement by faculty. The facilitators went on to review the handout, beginning with the Statement of Principles. The following draft of the proposal to be voted on at the week 8 faculty meeting was read:

In order to better meet our institutional commitment to a culture of critical reflection, an iterative Academic Statement will be required annually of all degree-seeking undergraduate students. The final version of the Academic Statement will be required in the transcript as a condition of graduation. The

Statement will serve as a key feature in college-wide advising structures, which will include faculty student work on intellectual synthesis. Implementation of the Academic Statement is contingent on the development of these advising structures and on institutional support of these structures and of faculty, to include workload reconfiguration and possible compensation.

The floor was opened for questions and comments regarding the proposal (facilitator responses in parentheses):

- The proposal is missing a sentence to address what an academic statement is (synthetic document, a narration of their undergraduate education guided by the fact that we are a public, interdisciplinary liberal arts college)
- This could be a four-part summary or a synthesis (the thinking the student would be asked to do each year would be a little different given the iterative nature of the document)
- What happens to the final document (A final statement would be in the transcript and would be required for graduation)
- How would the requirement be met? Only with a signature of the faculty?
- The main message I have heard is the need to shrink the transcript. This seems to be counter to that thinking.
- I agree with the “responsible autonomy” section of the statement of principles; we owe it to our students to provide more guidance and that is the commitment of this proposal.
- Appears that the typical student is a four-year student. Assume there is room to interpret for an eight-year student, such as not requiring them to write eight statements. (Correct, and perhaps there is another way to phrase the proposal so that it more clearly describes the variety of ways students proceed through their education.)
- No language about the e-portal in the proposal and a sense that we need some guidance so that it does not become unwieldy (Included under college-wide advising structures; we need to decide how we would imagine using the e-portal in advising)
- Would transfer students be asked to do a catch-up statement (That’s included in the moveable pieces to be decided later)
- Could a public records request be made on the student records? (Details need to be worked out but many already have access to student transcripts, etc.)
- Requirement vs. expectation is a detail to be worked out.

Moveable Pieces – Faculty were asked to spend 10 minutes reviewing a part of the model that most interests/worries them. Faculty were then asked to collectively describe the various parts of the proposal (facilitator responses in parentheses):

Academic Statement

- The 8 students who participated this summer all found the exercise of both writing the statement as well as the feedback they received to be very valuable. They were able to make sense of the decisions they made over the many years of their education in a way that is clear to an outside audience. These students worked retrospectively. In the proposal, they would be writing both retrospectively and prospectively.
- While framed as a requirement, the understanding is that it’s not meant to be constrained to one model (it’s up to the faculty to decide)
- Academic Statement models reviewed this summer were varied in quality, yet useful for work as a faculty advisor. Much of the benefit of this kind of structure is that we can anticipate a form of information that will be made available to faculty to make the best use of what’s available at the college to help students find what they need to continue to improve. We should answer/identify what kind of model would we like to see for advising conversations, and which will shape the final transcript document
- How long were the statements (2-4 pages)

Advising

- If faculty are the primary advisors, would each have 25 students? Intellectually, it’s hard to grasp advising 25 students at this level. (The ratio depends on a number of factors, including how broad the pool of faculty is who do the advising)

- An academic plan is mentioned. How can one produce an academic plan in a curriculum that's relatively fluid? (The thinking of the DTF is that the academic plan goes hand in hand with the academic statement.)
- How would this proposal impact Academic Advising? (It would provide support and scaffolding for the advising that happens between faculty and student, give support to students on an academic plan, general advising/problem-solving)
- The target for this is the students who never come in to Academic Advising to have a discussion about their work.
- The student voice in the transcript needs to be strengthened.
- Advising should be thought of as teaching and should be primarily the responsibility of the faculty vs. the advising office.
- We need to work on faculty development re: effective listening and mentorship.
- How do we use the statement to ensure we are working with students on breadth and depth?
- What kind of thinking did the committee kick around regarding workload and the CBA?
- This is work for students, which could result in credit (Two models were discussed: adding a week to the academic year or assigning credit)

Proposal – Facilitators sought final comments on the proposal (facilitator responses in parentheses):

- The proposal addresses a set of issues that we have attempted to do in the past. We have made lots of false starts and we need to find a way to turn this into a culture shift rather than something we just “fit in”. This needs to be a re-alignment of the kinds of work that we do, particularly with advising, which has not stuck. (This cannot be add-on work)
- As a student, this proposal brings about a huge culture shift for students regarding intellectual critical reflection that needs work.
- What does it mean to have broad agreement? (Joe responded that Robert's Rules will be followed. He expressed hope that everyone with an interest will have done their best thinking so that when we get to the final vote it will not be a close vote.)
- Workload issues will not be agreed to until the Union and College have reached agreement, which is then approved by the Board of Trustees
- Appreciation was expressed about the work that has been done. Are you asking for input via e-mail response to the DTF? If yes, there should be a page limit (Feedback should be specific to the proposal)
- The proposal in front of us provides support of students taking control of their education in a more informed way. Once the decision is made, it is all of our duty to help work towards implementing it as proposed with good intention and the idea that we will give this a try in the spirit of the experimental college that we are.
- The Advising week allows faculty to become a teacher of students vs. a teacher of subject matter for a period of time.
- We can revisit our work in a couple of years and expand or modify what we're doing.

Meeting adjourned