MINUTES
Academic Senate
March 17, 2015
3:30 p.m.
Alumni Gallery

Members present: Paul Delaney (Professor of English), Michelle Hardley (Secretary - Registrar), Tori Ippolito (WCSA Student Rep), Tatiana Nazarenko (Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness), Mark Sargent (Chair and Provost), Brenda Smith (Professor of Psychology), Jim Taylor (Professor of Philosophy), Niva Tro (Professor of Chemistry)

Absent: Mary Docter (Professor of Modern Languages), Paul Morgan (Professor of Economics and Business), Edd Noell (Professor of Economics and Business), David Vander Laan (Professor of Philosophy)

Others present:

I. Devotion – Tatiana Nazarenko

II. The minutes from March 10, 2015 were approved with a minor correction

III. Motion for an Adjustment to the General Education Curriculum
Senators discussed motion to remove the Productions and Presentations, Research and Integrating the Major Discipline courses from the General Education Program. The question is whether this requirement is best housed and assessed within the General Education program or within individual departments. Removing these areas does remove the need to assess them within the GE program. Most departments have a required course that meets this area already, and other departments are developing such a course.

There was some concern that departments might remove or replace their course in this area if it was created mainly for the GE and is no longer required by the GE. We do not currently have a basic blueprint for a major, so there is nothing requiring a capstone type of course to be present in any major. The major standards are typically set by external guilds and general expectations for graduates within the disciplines.

Senators voted 3-2 to send the motion to the full faculty for consideration.

IV. Discussion on Removing One Writing Speech Intensive Course from the GE
The General Education committee discussed at length whether to add flexibility to the Writing /Speech Intensive (WSI) portion of the GE by removing the need to have a WSI course both within and outside of your major. The majority of General Education committee wants to keep both the inside and outside requirement. It was suggested that a possible option would be to remove the Writing for the Liberal Arts requirement but keep the composition requirement. This would benefit those
students who completed their competency requirement with an SAT score by allowing them to take 2 WSI courses (one inside and one outside of their major), but not a 3rd WSI course for the Writing for the Liberal Arts requirement. Those who had not met their competency requirement would take ENG-002 Composition, and then a WSI course inside their major (provided that they were not an English major).

Senators discussed this option with reference to the original intention of the GE program, which was to ensure that students had sufficient experience in writing. Some saw this idea as a move in the wrong direction. It was mentioned that the reason students are having trouble fitting in their WSI courses is because the intention was that students would have lots of writing throughout their career with many lower division courses in this area being proposed by a variety of depts. What has happened is that many of the WSI courses are upper division courses and/or have lots of prerequisites. This makes them largely inaccessible to students outside of the major. One downside to the proposal is that a student who had not met the composition requirement could have ENG-002 Composition in their first year, then not take another WSI course until their Senior year. The underlying issue was that there were very few lower division courses outside of the English department that students can take in the context of their other GE requirements.

The General Education Committee has been asked to take a look at the number of routes to completing this area of the GE. Should there be a special dispensation for the English majors in this area? Should we change the GE requirements for those majoring in English? Should we remove the WSI within and outside the major requirement for all students?

The English department has been encouraged to make a recommendation to the General Education committee for an exception to the WSI outside the major requirement for English majors. This exception would be to allow English majors to count an English course as their WSI outside the major requirement.

V. Discussion on Requiring English Composition to be Completed Prior to Achieving Junior Standing

The General Education committee is asking Senate to consider whether we should require students to complete their English Composition requirement before they reach Junior standing.

A few Senators agreed in principle that this would be a worthy idea, the concern was in the implementation of the requirement. Many majors (especially in the Natural and Behavioral Sciences) are heavily sequenced, making it hard to fit the course into the first two years. It would be difficult as well for any Pre-Medicine students and transfer students. Bill Wright mentioned in conversations with Mark and Michelle that the college used to require this, but the logistics to implement were difficult.
Senate will continue this conversation next week when more Senators are able to be present. Then a recommendation could be made to the General Education committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Hardley
Registrar