

## LIBERAL STUDIES COMMITTEE

### Minutes

October 22, 2004

**Attendees:** Blase Scarnati, Karen Pugliesi, Pat Muster, Rebecca Cole, Aregai Teclé, Bruce Fox, John Doherty, Dean Pielstick, Gayle Houser, Jack Ferrell, Anne Medill, Laura Michael-Blocher, and Marcia Metcalf.

**Absent:** Eileen Mahoney, Cynthia Conn, Kapri Saunders, Jeff Berglund and Margaret Conger.

**Guests:** Paula Garcia and Gioia Woods

#### I. Welcome, introductions and issues – Blase Scarnati

- The Liberal Studies Committee had a late initial meeting date due to the university restructuring and Fall elections for committees. The Committee did not have a functional quorum until now.
- Several Committee members have been working since September on numerous projects (i.e., LSC Assessment Subcommittee).
- The responsibilities for the Committee were reviewed (LSC Bylaws, Article II). Expectations for all Committee members are to attend the meetings regularly and to participate in subcommittee work. Committee members will also be expected to communicate back to their unit any and all issues concerning the Liberal Studies Committee and to seek feedback for the Committee from their colleagues.
- Overview of the Committee's work in 2003-04.
  - Reviewed thirty-four courses for liberal studies, capstone and junior level writing designation.
  - Approved and sent to the Faculty Senate US Ethnic and Global Diversity definitions.
  - Ongoing discussion of AAC&U's Greater Expectations document.
  - Chose the summer reading book.
  - Established a LS Program Assessment Plan.
  - Recommended the elimination of UC 101 to the Faculty Senate.
  - Recommended to the Faculty Senate the establishment of a Faculty Senate Liberal Studies Program Review Committee. Blase Scarnati will serve on this Committee by way of being the LSC Chair.
- Issues that the Committee will address this year.
  - What is the purpose of general education (Liberal Studies) at NAU?
  - What are the educational outcomes of the Liberal Studies Program?
  - With three thematic foci, five distribution blocks, and nine essential skills, do we need to simplify the Liberal Studies Program?
  - Establish a Communications Plan to more effectively communicate with LS stakeholders.
  - Changing Committee Bylaws to take into account the recent University reorganization.
  - Streamlining the course submissions and approvals process between the University Curriculum Committee and the LSC.
- Committee agreed to add an additional meeting on October 29, 2004.
- Possible Committee retreat in January. Committee members to report back if January is a good time for a retreat.

## **II. Liberal Studies Committee Charge – Karen Pugliesi**

- Committee in maintenance mode this year – good time to communicate with departments to assure that courses are following guidelines. Collect and review master course syllabi of existing courses.
- Need to move forward with the liberal studies program assessment. The NCA will be on campus 2007.
- The Liberal Studies Committee should be a leader in general education dialogues.
- Summer Reading Program: Need to address future of program due to UC 101 being eliminated. Work with the Faculty Senate and others to integrate the book into course experiences. Gioia Woods is the Summer Reading Program Coordinator.
- Play an active role in providing input and recommendations to the Faculty Senate Liberal Studies Review Committee.
- Freshman Year Task Force report distributed to members. The task force's first year was spent trying to understand the freshman experience and what the retention issues were. The task force found the freshman year experience to be significant and that liberal studies was very important. The task force will continue this year and Karen will provide the LSC with updated information as needed.
- Washington State University report distributed to members. Their Faculty Senate approved the report in 1992. The document is very good example of the freshman year experience. Provost Grobsmith would like the LSC to look at the freshman year experience (FYE) as a vehicle to retain students.

## **III. Nominations for Vice Chair – Blase Scarnati**

- Reminder that all can nominate a voting Committee member to stand for election as the Liberal Studies Committee Vice Chair. Pat Muster will contact nominees to be sure that they are willing to serve as Vice Chair. Election will be held by voting members by email.

## **IV. Subcommittees – Blase Scarnati**

- Committee members to think about on which subcommittee they would like to serve and to let Blase know by email. Additional ad hoc committees may be formed at a later date if members do not find a current subcommittee in which they are interested.

## **V. Update on Diversity Subcommittee of University Curriculum Committee – John Doherty**

- The Subcommittee revisited definitions last year. This year they have started defining procedures and forms. The deadline for course submissions is November 25, 2004. This is a requirement for all entering Fall 2005 freshmen. The Subcommittee will also be meeting with groups to get the information out. The goal is to have courses approved by March 2005. The subcommittee may add an additional spring deadline for course submissions.

## **VI. Summer Reading Program – Gioia Woods**

- Eighty percent of universities across the country use a summer reading book. Many fold it into their FYE program or use it throughout the curriculum for the freshman year experience or use it during Previews. The program is also popular with K-12. Facilitator evaluations were positive for this Fall's program.
- Gioia would like the Liberal Studies Committee to provide the purpose, goal and implementation for the Summer Reading Program.

- The Summer Reading Voting Page is open but will close in mid-November. Gioia will bring a list of the top ten books to the Committee on November 19, 2004 and the Committee will choose three books to read during the semester break. Upon return from the semester break the LSC will vote on which book to offer next year.

#### **VII. LSC Assessment Subcommittee Update – Bruce Fox**

- The end result of this work is to define learning assessment. The Subcommittee is working on operational definitions of skills. Bruce will send the LSC the definitions as they stand right now.
- The Subcommittee plans to use rubrics so there is no extra work for faculty. The process needs to be made appealing for faculty so that they are willing to participate. The procedural results will be examined and then used for each stage.
- It will be important to keep faculty and department heads informed as to the purposes for which the data will be used. The LSC should also find a way to showcase faculty and courses with effective assessment and use them as best practices examples.

#### **VIII. Other**

- The Committee may also want to look at creating an electronic newsletter to keep the university informed of LSC activities.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM

#### ***Fall Meetings***

October 29  
November 5  
November 19  
December 3

#### ***Spring Meetings***

January 21 (Retreat?)  
February 4  
February 18  
March 4  
March 18  
April 1  
April 15  
April 29