

**Liberal Studies Committee
Minutes
10-21-05**

Approved 9-15-06

Attendees from Northern Arizona University: Jeff Berglund (via phone), Virginia Blankenship (presiding), Terence Blows, Doug Brown, Brandon Cruikshank, Katie Desmond, John Doherty, Jack Ferrell (via phone), Jean Ann Foley, Bruce Fox, Louise Lockard, Eileen Mahoney, Anne Medill, Laura Michael-Blocher, Shelly Pleasants, Karen Pugliesi, David Sherry, and Aregai Tecele.

Attendees from Northland Pioneer College: Eli Blake, Patrick E. Canary, Suzanne O'Hop, and Benjamin Schoening.

Attendees from Coconino Community College: Kathleen Corak, Kathryn Kozak, and Ingrid Lee.

Attendee from Yavapai College: Kathryn Reisdorfer.

Attendees from Diné College: Herbert Benally, Priscilla Etsitty, Gloria G. Price, Mary Shimabukuro.

Welcome and remarks – Virginia Blankenship

This is a special meeting to discuss General Education / Liberal Studies programs at Northern Arizona University and regional community colleges. In addition to liberal studies committee representatives from NAU, representatives also attended from Northland Pioneer College, Coconino Community College, Yavapai College, and Diné College. All attendees were welcomed and invited to informally discuss any topics or issues related to general education programs.

There was much discussion regarding AGEC. There is some inconsistency among the three AZ universities in what courses they will accept as transfer credit. For instance, ASU recently announced that they will no longer accept any HUM courses.

Some students at the community colleges do not complete their AGEC because the math requirement to do so is a higher level than is required by many majors at NAU. Also, Diné's AGEC requires nine hours of culture and language that NAU does not require. Students are better off completing the block than transferring individual credits. At NAU, the AGEC is transferred as a block and can't be unbundled.

The NAU liberal studies committee has recently been discussing two issues: how to implement and assess programs and individual courses that are approved; and the philosophy and central premise of the program and how it prepares citizens for the 21st century. The NAU liberal studies program attempts to teach students nine essential skills in three thematic foci. The liberal studies committee is discussing ways to make the

program less cumbersome and easier to assess. The distribution blocks seem to be working okay.

The community college representatives discussed ways that they are assessing their general education programs. Some give pre and post tests. Some collect samples of assignments and assess them for key skills and measure them against course objectives. The data are then aggregated. Coconino Community College's assessment data might be on their web site.

At NAU, each syllabus documents measurable learning outcomes and course imbedded systems for assessing those outcomes. This semester, we initiated a pilot to look at a value added program. We will follow a sample of freshmen longitudinally as a panel for four years, using a problem-focused instrument.

There was some discussion about NAU's new ethnic and global diversity requirements, which are governed by the curriculum committee, rather than the liberal studies committee. The AGECE completion will not necessarily fulfill the new NAU diversity requirements. **The community college representatives want to know what they need to do to submit their courses for approval for NAU's liberal studies and diversity requirements.** The UCC sub-committee will review course syllabi submitted by Arizona community colleges and universities.

The representatives from the community colleges stressed that their students need to know about all the requirements from the universities up front so they can plan for them in their first two years. They cannot afford to take any credits over and above what is absolutely needed. They would like to see a clear second year level in each of our majors that corresponds to the second year courses at their community colleges. The transfer should be seamless.

Private schools are starting to be more competitive because, even though they charge more, they will accept up to 90 credits, so students can finish faster there than at one of the universities.

In addition to transfer issues from community colleges to NAU, there are also transfer issues for students who transfer from NAU to the community colleges.

The representatives from the community colleges asked that NAU inform them of any discussions of new programs so they can be included on the front end of the process.

There was general consensus that having a similar meeting once a semester would be helpful. A planning committee might be formed including representatives from each institution; Karen Pugliesi, Kate Kozak and Kathryn Reisdorfer agreed to lead planning for a spring meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.