

LIBERAL STUDIES COMMITTEE
Minutes
September 15, 2006

Approved 10-13-06

Attendees: Jeff Berglund (presiding), David Best, Katie Desmond, John Doherty, Jack Farrell (via phone), James Leve, Louise Lockard, Eileen Mahoney, Anne Medill, Laura Michael-Blocher, Shelly Pleasants, Karen Pugliesi, David Sherry.

I. Welcome and introductions

Jeff Berglund introduced himself as the new chair of the liberal studies committee and David Sherry as the vice chair. All attendees introduced themselves.

II. Approval of minutes

- The 10-21-05 minutes were approved
- Approval of the 4-21-06 minutes was tabled until the next meeting

III. Changes to the liberal studies program

- A few minutes were spent reviewing the report that the liberal studies review committee of the faculty senate published March 13, 2006, and Karen Pugliesi's email to dean's associate deans, chairs and directors, which summarized the revisions.
- At the next meeting, the committee may consider making some exceptions, on a case by case basis, to the moratorium on new course proposals.
- The essential skills still need to be defined. Katie Desmond, from the office of academic assessment, offered handouts to assist with the task, and suggested that members look at what other campuses have written. She also offered to assist with research. The following subcommittees will work on those definitions and bring a draft to the next meeting.
 - Redefine **effective oral communication & effective written communication** skills: John Doherty, Laura Michael-Blocher, Louise Lockard and Jack Ferrell
 - Define **critical thinking** skill: Anne Medill, Jim Leve, Dayle Hardy-Short and Jeff Berglund
 - Define **scientific reasoning** skill: David Sherry, Enid Rossi, Brandon Cruikshank and Aregai Tecele
 - Define **quantitative reasoning** skill: David Best, Marcia Metcalf, Doug Brown and Justin Wilcox

Once the skills are defined, we will need to discuss learning outcomes tied to those skills definitions. Faculty will need to align those learning

outcomes with their syllabi, and this committee will be charged with ensuring that the courses are aligned.

IV. Introduce new faculty to Liberal Studies

The committee will try to implement a pilot plan to introduce new faculty to the liberal studies program. A subcommittee could meet in the dean's office, who would invite new faculty, to have an informal discussion about the program. We could start with the college of arts and letters and expand from there.

V. Office of academic assessment's rubric design and implementation project for liberal studies program assessment

Katie Desmond went over a handout summarizing OAA's data results and recommendations. This is a highly abridged summary:

- The majority of students from participating courses scored within the *Exemplary* or *Good* category in each of the LS student learning outcomes.
- Strong correlation between the student performance in the LS SLO's and the final course grades is evident.
- It is recommended that we continue to obtain direct assessment measures of student learning in the LS program.
- It is recommended that we garner stronger administrative support and faculty participation, and clearly publicize the assessment expectation.
- It is recommended that we use indirect measures for assessment of LS skills, and triangulate this data with direct assessment data.
- Any LS assessment will contribute to an understanding of student learning in the LS skill areas, as well as to the LS curriculum.

VI. Collegiate Learning Assessment report

- Karen Pugliesi talked a bit about the CLA report. The standardized test was given to a large sample of our fall 2005 freshmen, who will be given the test again their sophomore and senior years. We also sampled seniors for comparison. There are one hundred or so institutions with which we can compare our results. Our freshmen performed in the range of *Average*. Our seniors performed *Above Average*. As we continue to test the original group of freshmen throughout their career at NAU, we hope to be able to calculate NAU's value added.
- Karen Pugliesi agreed to pass to Jeff Berglund any sample questions that have been released, as well as the final version of the Spellings Report, which speaks to the expectation that colleges engage in this type of assessment.

VII. Freshman seminar pilot

- A coordinator needs to be hired in fall 06 to be in place spring 07. We will need to publish an ad for the position in early October 06, so John

Doherty, Laura Michael-Blocher, Jeff Berglund and Marcia Metcalf will draft a job description and present it to the committee at the next meeting.

- Karen Pugliesi shared the rough budget plan for the 07-08 freshman seminar pilot. A conservative estimate of 15 sections was used for a starting point. The budget plan will need to be adjusted and increased as the program grows. We will want to meet with the colleges and the gateway to promote the program. We also want to be sure that the catalog copy is interesting to students.

VIII. Lots to do

We have a lot to accomplish this year so we may want to develop a calendar flow sheet or checklist so that at each meeting we can see what has been done and what is still left to do. With so much work to be done, attendance is imperative, so Jeff Berglund will call the members who did not attend today's meeting to encourage them to attend future meetings.

Adjourned