



LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAM

Liberal Studies Committee Meeting Minutes March 27, 2009

Approved 4-17-09

Present Voting Members: T.S. Amer, Betty Brown, Ryan Holder, Alyssa McKinley, Linda Robyn, Robert Rose (via phone), Blase Scarnati (presiding), Aregai Teclé, and Joseph Wegwert.

Present Ex-Officio Members and Guests: Don Carter, Greg Glau, John Hagood, Eileen Mahoney, Tom Paradis, Shelly Pleasants, Karen Pugliesi, John Stevenson and Melinda Treml.

Excused Voting Members: Bill Grabe, Brent Nelson, Cheryl St. George and Todd Welch.

Absent Voting Members: Doug Brown, Becky Garrison and Vicki Ross.

I. Welcome, introductions, issues

- Blase Scarnati called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM
- Blase encouraged everyone on the committee to read the material he emailed to them, prior to our next meeting (Apr 17) which will feature a workshop by Linda Shadiow regarding 'Decoding the Disciplines.'

II. Acceptance of minutes

Minutes from the meetings of Feb 27, Mar 6, and Mar 27 will be submitted for approval at the next meeting.

III. Degree Progression Plan Analysis: Part II

Melinda Treml shared an updated degree progression plan analysis. The updated analysis weights plans (majors) differently. The committee discussed the findings. The LS Assessment Subcommittee will use this analysis to determine what further data might be useful to the Committee.

IV. Discussion of the Liberal Studies Program

- The March 6, 2009 action to begin to explore a pilot based on the Distribution Blocks was reconsidered, since the Blocks are so tied to issues of course capacities. It was decided to explore issues around a pilot focused on Skills.
- A motion was approved to begin the review in Fall 2009 of the approximately 15 new course proposals submitted in 2008-09 with an "expansive view of what constitutes critical thinking." By an "expansive view of what constitutes critical thinking" is meant that the current definition of critical thinking will

not be read closely when evaluating the 15 new course proposals received in 2008-09. This is an initial step by the Committee in reconsidering what is meant by critical thinking and how it functions in the Program.

- A motion was approved to resume accepting new course proposals for review in 2009-10 for all of the skills *except* for critical thinking. The effect of this action will be to place a moratorium on the acceptance of any new critical thinking courses until the Committee can review the results of the pilot discussed immediately below.
- A motion was approved to conduct a pilot in Fall 2009 based in the First Year Seminar Program's sections and in the UC 299 State of the World sections (taught by Marcus Ford and David Cole) where critical thinking is considered an overarching skill to be demonstrated and assessed through one of the *other* skills. For example, critical thinking is demonstrated through effective writing; critical thinking is demonstrated through scientific inquiry; etc. After the semester has concluded, the Office of Academic Assessment will compare the assessment data of the pilot.

V. Other

Tom Paradis shared information from the Texas A&M conference on assessment; particularly about faculty learning communities. He shared a matrix that they use which combines blocks and skills in an easy to read format.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 PM