

Minutes of the Liberal Studies Committee (LSC)

September 24, 2015

UC - Cardinal

Members Present: Brent Kinser (Chair), Carol Burton, Damon Sink, Elizabeth McRae, Heidi Turlington, James Deconinck, Jeanne Dulworth, Jen Schiff, Paromita Biswas, and Sean June

Members Absent: Baldwin Sanders and Ethan Schilling

Recorder: Deidre Hopkins

Ex-Officio Members: David Onder, Erin McNelis, and Randa Hodges

Guests: Beth Huber, Peter Tay, and Nate Kreuter

1. Introductions around the table.
2. Update on HIP capture in FAD:
 - Brent Kinser and David Onder met with Andrew Adams on Sept 22 and discussed the possibility of adding the HIP screen into the course entry phase of the Faculty Activity Database (FAD.) It looks as if it will be pretty easy to do. Brent will get some additional information to Andrew to finalize it all. Hopefully, when Andrew meets with the Committee on October 8th, he will be able to show us exactly how this is going to work.
3. Update on C3 & C4 Assessment Teams:
 - The C3 team has been assembled and they are awaiting orders.
 - Brent is looking to get a meeting with the C3 people to see where their data is located, etc.
 - The C4 team is partially assembled, waiting to hear back from a couple of people but that is in the works.
4. Discussion of the C1 Assessment Report with the C1 Assessment Team (Erin McNelis, Peter Tay, Jim Deconinck, and Beth Huber)
 - The C1 Assessment Report was provided to committee members and members were provided the opportunity to review the document.
 - The committee agreed that they would need to accept/reject the C1 Assessment Report and then once that was decided they could move forward with recommendations to the C1 Assessment Team.
 - Motion was made by Jeanne Dulworth to accept the C1 Assessment Report. The motion was seconded by Elizabeth McRae. No further discussion. All was in favor and motion was carried.
 - The floor is open for discussion of the Report and any recommendations that will be made to the Report:
 - **Ensure students enroll in the English 101 and English 202 sequence prior to the start of their junior year.** The Assessment Team suggests increasing the number of sections of English 101 and 202 offered (not the enrollment in each class) each semester in order to

fulfill this recommendation.

The LSC concurs, but also recognizes that the complexity of the issue goes beyond simply increasing the number of sections. Staffing in the English department, advising, course availability, programs who discourage their majors, and needs of transfer students represent some of the issues relevant to the problem of ensuring that students receive 101/202 before they begin the junior year of study. The LSC will work with the Associate Provost for Student Affairs and the Director of Advising in order to generate processes for increasing the number of students who take 101/202 before junior year and supports efforts to increase staffing so the number of sections will meet the need. LSC will also ask the Director of Assessment to generate reports of the number of students who take 101/202 and when they take it so as to understand the full scope of the problem.

- **Review syllabi prior to beginning of the semester.** The Writing, Rhetoric, and Critical Studies program should be responsible for verifying all English 101 and 202 syllabi contain a description of the purpose of the C1 category, the appropriate Liberal Studies Student Learning Outcomes, and the WRCS Learning Outcomes prior to the start of the semester. These details must be included in the syllabus itself rather than a separate document.
The LSC concurs and has consulted with the director of WRCS, who will develop processes that will ensure review of syllabi before the beginning of the semester. The chair will follow up in January to assess progress towards implementation.
- **Increase the focus on primary and secondary research and citation within the WRCS Program.**
The LSC concurs and has consulted with the director of WRCS, who will conduct a revision of the curriculum directed towards these goals. This process represents a long term vision for the program will be developed and implemented prior to the next round of LS assessment, to occur Fall 2018 and Spring 2019.
- **Strengthen ties with Writing Across the Disciplines.** The Assessment Team supports the addition of a full time Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) hire to be a faculty member in the English Department.
The LSC concurs, adding that this position should be separate from hiring intended to increase numbers of sections of 101/202 offered. A full time expert in the activities associated with WAC will increase the levels of connection among the 101/202 sequence and the Major/Minor experiences, with the contention (as indicated in new LS Document Language) that Writing represents a skill that is universally essential among the disciplines.
- **Provide additional support for English as a Second Language (ESL) students in English 101 and English 202.** The Assessment Team believes sections of English 101 and 202 should be reserved for ESL students and facilitated by faculty with background and training in teaching students for whom English is a second language. Suggestions include mandating that international students with TOEFL reading and writing scores below a benchmark level (determined by a team of the appropriate faculty and staff) should be required to enroll in these specialized sections. Grades First could be adapted to include a feature that will allow advisors or faculty to identify students who would greatly benefit from participation in an ESL section of English 101 or 202. If a student with such a flag tries to enroll in a non-specialized section of English 101 or 202, permission of the instructor should be required to allow the student to register for the class.
The LSC concurs and will work with Advising, the Associate Provost for Student Affairs,

International Programs, and the Director of WRCS to improve these services to our foreign students.

- **Provide the assignment instructions along with each artifact.**
The Director of Assessment will work to determine whether or not this revision to the assessment will be possible. Once the LSC receives this report, it will review the desirability and worth of the recommendation in the context of the next round of assessment (C4 and C3).
- **Add more dimensions to the Liberal Studies Assessment Rubrics.** The Assessment Team recommends revising not only the rubrics for SLO 1 and 3b assessed in C1 category, but determining if more dimensions or sub-skills could be highlighted for each of the seven SLOs. Not only would this aid the reviewers, but it should help to provide more depth to the review findings as well.
LSC concurs and will revise assessment team charge accordingly.
- **Increase number of artifacts sampled and the number of faculty rating the artifacts.**
LSC concurs, but remains sensitive to issues related to faculty work load. For next semester's data capture, the number of artifacts collected will be increased incrementally so that the balance between quality of assessment and limiting the increased workload for instructors is maintained at reasonable levels.
- **Include inter-rater reliability measures in the assessment.**
LSC concurs and has asked the Director of Assessment to incorporate into assessment
- **Provide earlier access to artifacts and more time for scoring.**
LSC concurs and will make every effort to begin processes earlier. This should become easier as the plan is implemented and becomes more familiar.
- **Require a norming session early in the assessment.** Multiple artifacts for each learning outcome to be assessed should be included.
LSC concurs and will revise the assessment team charge accordingly.
- **Revise the description of the Writing portion of the Core.** Currently, the description of the Writing portion of the Core refers to and focuses on the First-Year Composition Program no longer in place rather than the purpose of the required Liberal Studies course sequence. The Assessment Team believes the description should reflect the purpose of the writing portion of the Core (as delivered through a two-course sequence that is a two-year sequence), the placement of the courses in the students college career (within the first and second years), and the Liberal Studies Student Learning Outcomes specifically addressed in this portion of the Liberal Studies Program, though additional student learning outcomes may also be incorporated.
LSC concurs and will revise the LS Document accordingly. These revisions will be approved by LSC and forwarded to the Faculty Senate for Final approval.
- **Improve working conditions for full-time faculty as a strategy for improving student retention.** This includes restoring student enrollment caps in 101/202 courses to pre-budget-cut numbers.
The LSC concurs, noting also that this work represents a continuation of the effort, since before the budget crisis the maximum number of students on 101/202 was 19, which was expanded to 24. The current maximum, 22, moves in the correct direction, but needs to continue to shrink, so that individual attention to students' writing and the work-intensive processes related to that attention needs to be increased as much as possible.

- **Include two kinds of focus-group interviews, one with randomly selected students, and another with randomly selected faculty, in each Liberal Studies component assessment.**
The Liberal Studies Committee should consider including both faculty teaching courses in the component being assessed as well as faculty not involved in delivering courses for the component. This may help the Committee better understand and address misconceptions regarding what occurs in these courses as well as expectations for the students.

The LSC will consider.

- **Changes to the Charge & the Liberal Studies Document:**
 - Brent will look at the recommendations and makes notes based on the discussion. Then present the recommendations to the LSC and to the Assessment Team for reevaluation and come to an agreement that these are the recommendations that we want to put forward as the recommendations of the Assessment Team and the Committee.
 - Since this is the first time assessment – it would be good to have a consensus statement from the LSC and the Assessment Team as to what needs to happen in the context of the recommendations.
 - Then there will be a set of recommendations from the LSC that will go to Faculty Senate that will go separate from the Report. These are the recommendations that the LSC concurs with the C1 Assessment Team and sends to Senate for consideration.
 - The main action item for Senate is to approve and sign off on the changes that we want to make to the LS Document. This document can't be changed until Senate approves.
- The LSC agreed that Brent will go through these recommendations and give a revised version in the context of the conversation. At our next meeting we will review and finalize.

5. Next meeting – October 8, 2015 – UC Cardinal with Andrew Adams (FAD).

Time of Meeting Adjournment: 5:06pm