

College of Arts & Sciences Faculty Meeting Minutes

April 4, 2008

Meeting was called to order at 12:07 pm

- I. Dean Ballenger Opened the meeting, announcing that it would end at 1:15, with hope that we would take a vote on the motion by 1:05. If not, then we would need to reconvene one week later.
- II. Professor Branton, Chair of the Faculty Working Group (FWG), announced that Professor Maris would act as the parliamentarian for the meeting. He then introduced Professor McFarland, who read the official motion.
“Move that:
The College of Arts and Sciences adopt the Concept-Oriented Model for General Education as described in the working group's final proposal (pages 7 & 8), and endorse sections I-V,(pages 1-6), of the proposal.”
- III. Professor M. Hale was recognized and called for a straw poll to determine if there was enough interest in the Open Model to offer a substitute motion. Due to the low interest in discussing this option, she did not offer the motion.
- IV. Professor T.J. Farrell expressed concern that the Culture & Beliefs area overlaps with other knowledge areas, such as the Historical Inquiry or the Individuals, Societies, & Social Systems area? Can we/should we assure they don't?
Professors Lucas, Branton, Kaivola, and McFarland, replied to this concern, pointing out that:
 - a. The FWG discussed this overlap extensively and they see the distinction as a matter of emphasis within a course, rather than content matter alone.
 - b. Rubrics will be built, via the committee structure outlined in the proposal. In addition, every course will be submitted to the Curriculum Committee.
 - c. It is possible to view the overlap as a strength of the plan, rather than a weakness.
 - d. If we want to specify whether or not courses can meet more than one area, we can do so via the Curriculum Committee.
- V. Professor Mieras suggested that the global emphasis of the proposal caused her concern that we ought to consider a U.S. culture requirement. Given the general lack of knowledge students have about their own culture, she suggested adding it as a 7th area. Professor Huskey noted that the U.S. is already privileged, but that a U.S. requirement could be addressed by adding a statement that at least one of the 5 courses for the Knowledge areas should be U.S. Professors Maris and Khader noted that faculty interests at Stetson naturally privilege U.S. Culture in many ways. Professors Witek, Peppers-Bates, and Ballenger, among others, responded by acknowledging that lack of U.S. knowledge is a legitimate concern, but not enough to warrant an additional requirement. Many faculty, including FWG members, were concerned that this type of change would move away from the intent of the model and more toward a disciplinary one. Professor Branton asked for a motion. Professor Mieras declined to offer an official amendment.
- VI. Professor D. Everett asked how this new curriculum would impact the Stetson University Honors Program. Professors Blum and Branton acknowledged that the Honors Program Council would need to separately review the Honors Program

curriculum, once the College system was agreed upon, to determine how/if it would need to change to interface with that College curriculum.

- VII. Professor McCoy asked about the part of the plan that indicates the only type of course units available should be $\frac{1}{2}$ units and total units. How would currently designed 1-hr workshops fit into such a system? Members of the FWG suggest that 2 semesters may accumulate to $\frac{1}{2}$ unit or 4 semesters may accumulate to 1 unit, as an example. Evaluation could occur each semester, but the grade would be offered in the 2nd or 4th. The reason for this recommendation is to focus students on the depth of experience, rather than contact hours.
- VIII. Professor Croce returned to the discussion of Professor Mieras' concern regarding American culture, suggesting that, though it was not a disciplinary issue, it does raise the issue of disciplinary knowledge about which many departments may be concerned. He proposed that a conceptual way of presenting these disciplinary boundaries may be to see disciplines as different ways of solving problems.
- IX. Professor Indralingam asked if departments would indeed be restricted to creating a 10-12 course major, particularly in light of accreditation bodies in specific disciplines (such as the ACS certification in Chemistry). Members of the FWG acknowledged that this guideline would need to be flexible in the case of programs with certification requirements, such as Teacher Education or Chemistry.
- X. Professor Huskey raised a concern that we need to carefully consider the impact of our decision upon both teaching load and tenure/promotion issues. Members of the FWG agreed, pointing out that they endorse reviews of load as part of the document. In addition, the proposal requests Senate review of Tenure and Promotion policies and procedures. Several faculty expressed similar concern that we need to be aware of the possibility that this plan could affect workload in many ways.
 - a. Members of the FWG responded by reminding us that the intent of "enhanced" courses is not an increase workload, but a change in the engagement of the students in the courses. Other faculty suggested that enhancing a course could actually make the workload more enjoyable, presuming that the engagement of the students might bring them into more collaborative work with faculty and other students.
 - b. Professor M. Hale expressed concern that taking three years away from research to implement curriculum change would be especially damaging in some fields of work. FWG members acknowledge that course development and change takes time, but point out that these are issues that we face all the time, as we revisit and update our own courses or create new courses.
 - c. Neal Long and others suggested that special concern should be given to junior faculty within the system, as they work toward tenure and promotion. Professor McFarland acknowledged that junior faculty need mentorship, but pointed out that course development and redevelopment is always an issue for a new faculty member at any institution. The nature of the course being developed may be different, but the need to work on course development or enhancement will not be significantly different.

- d. Two natural science professors, Professor Schultheis and Professor Abbott, as junior faculty, argued that expectations should NOT be different for scholarship/release time for junior faculty, just because they will be reconceiving courses. They point out that, because they teach lab courses, they have experience with the “enhanced” courses, yet they did not receive any special treatment within the system.
 - e. Professor Schultheis remarked that she was inspired by the presentation of Briggs from the College of New Jersey, who encouraged his colleagues to use the course-unit transition as a way to make transparent the faculty and student workload issues. She further pointed out that she views this change as an exciting opportunity to bring students into scholarly projects with professors. Professor Abbott endorsed this view, noting that re-conceiving courses will be work for everyone, but in a positive way.
 - f. Dean Ballenger asserted strong support for finding better ways to mentor junior faculty during and after this transition process.
 - g. While all acknowledged that this discussion needs to continue, several expressed concern that we need to decide on model first, before ironing out all of the implementation details. Discussion on this workload issue closed.
- XI. Professors Indralingam and Grubbs returned to discussion of transforming current 1-hour elective opportunities, proposing that we consider allowing such opportunities as Pass/Fail courses or partial units. The FWG suggested that this would be an issue for the College Curriculum Committee to consider. Professor Indralingam also wondered if every course would now have to be submitted anew to the College Curriculum Committee. The FWG responded that the implementation plan does indeed call for this review, but we would need to find a reasonable way to make that happen.
- XII. Professor Mieras inquires about the absence of any statement about gender in the Personal, Social, and Environmental Responsibility portion of the curriculum plan. The FWG responded that gender issues were subsumed under the more general category label “Human Diversity.”
- XIII. Professor T.J. Farrell questioned the lengthy timeline on page 9 of the proposal, urging a quicker transition. Professor Branton agreed, noting that the appendix was not included in the motion. He hopes that the steering committee will create a more streamlined plan.
- XIV. Professor R. Kindred pointed out that the nature of the Faculty Working Group – that it was a small group of highly respected faculty who kept in constant communication with departments and programs - was crucial to making this process so successful. As such, he expressed concern that the committee structure proposed on page 5 would be burdensome and less effective. He suggests we change that part, before endorsing it.
- XV. Professor Glander called for the question. It was seconded by Professor T.J. Farrell. Vote to close discussion and call the question was greater than 2/3’s (only two objections).
- XVI. 12:58 PM - **Vote on Conceptual Model proposal carried with no objections!**

- XVII. Professor Maris congratulated the Faculty Working Group on spearheading an effort that he called “historic.” In his forty years, he has never seen a curriculum proposal (or perhaps any proposal) endorsed with such an enthusiastic majority. We are taking on an exciting challenge.
- XVIII. The faculty of the College responded by giving a standing ovation to the FWG. The FWG members, in turn, thanked the other faculty in the College.
- XIX. Meeting adjourned at 1:08 pm