**Liberal Learning Program Council**

**Minutes from February 19th Meeting**

*Present:* Connie Hall, Rita King, John Laughton, Nina Ringer, Nelson Rodriguez, John Sisko, Nicole Ferrito, Ann Peel, Christopher Murphy, Lynn Tang, Rich Blumberg, Monisha Pulimood, Marla Jaksch

*Excused:* Sharon Byrne

*Absent*: David McGee, Chung Chak

1. The minutes from December 4, 2013 were approved (7-0- 5 abstaining due to non-attendance at the Dec 4th meeting) with two revisions:
   1. Addition of attendance list
   2. Addition to concerns raised by John Sisko to item 2ai as noted in \*italics\*.
      1. John Sisko expressed his concern regarding the continuance of the November 20th meeting for 20 minutes following the specified meeting grid (1:30-2:50 pm). *\* and 15 minutes after a number of faculty members had left to attend other meetings. He also argued that, since the motion to reconsider was made by a member who voted on the non-prevailing side in the original vote, the motion was in violation of the Rules of Order (Robert, Henry M. (2000). Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 10th ed., 304-5).\**
2. Christopher (Kit) Murphy, new Associate Provost for Curriculum and Liberal Learning introduced himself and gave an introductory remarks regarding liberal learning at TCNJ . He is impressed by the program as it exists but is aware that some discussions regarding changes and possible concerns with the existing program are ongoing. The Council will be engaged in and lead many of these conversations. He will give a more detailed presentation at a later date on his vision of liberal learning. He then provided brief synopsis of his background in liberal learning.
3. Nelson (LLPC Chair) introduced the current charge from Steering Committee to the Council regarding the decoupling of FSP from the liberal learning domains. He reviewed the history of the LLPC recommendation regarding the FSP in Fall 2012 and the subsequent actions from CAP to approve and the recommendation and then to rescind the approval based on the findings of a subcommittee of CAP. He then outlined the current charge to the Council in November 2013.
4. Monisha Pulimood further explained the rationale behind the original recommendation. The current domain categories restrict the topics of FSP’s, or more significantly lead to categorizations that do not strictly adhere to the disciplinary categories. For example, this may lead to students obtaining credit for a BSCP course that may, in fact, not be a solid BSCP course, but was shoehorned into that category because it did not fit into any of the other current categories. This seems to be a particular problem with FSP courses. Additionally, the concept that students should select FSP’s based on intellectual interest and exploration regardless of topic/discipline is being lost.
5. The subcommittee (note that the current LLPC Chair is also chairing this subcommittee) finding resulted CAP rescinding approval. The concern outlined by the subcommittee primarily was that there were not sufficient data to show what effect this change would have college wide.
   1. Discussion followed:
      1. How extensive is the issue that faculty do not teach FSPs because they do not fit into the categories. Will students primarily elect to ‘skip a science or quantitative reasoning course if the FSP serves as a ‘wildcard’.
      2. Further discussion from the Council queried how would we collect the data? It may not be possible to obtain the data requested.
      3. Liberal learning should be open to integrative learning experiences that do not fit into clean categories.
      4. As we work on the new charge of LLPC is to consider the issue again, the previous LLPC recommendation was sought and had not yet been found. CAP did not have it or their revised version. Perhaps it is a good thing to have a clean slate.
6. Discussion regarding the pros and cons of the original proposal:
   1. The FSP category students can take is limited in some programs; engineering programs students need to take BSCP course and have a civic responsibility to best meet all LL requirements within the constraints of the disciplinary curriculum.
   2. FSPs are the first writing intensive course and this is a concern for many faculty. They are not comfortable with this aspect because of lack of training, experience and the time commitment. This likely contributes to the low number of offerings by full time faculty.
   3. Removing domains removes some constraints that are on faculty to offer FSP within the set domains. This may improve the number of offerings from faculty.
   4. There are broader issues in play as well.
      1. Young faculty are discouraged from teaching as FSP because of the time and effort involved and the absence of recognition for the effort in the current tenure and promotions processes.
      2. Students need to recognize the importance of a ‘liberal’ education and what the benefits are and the openness of FSP offerings can support this
      3. Decoupling FSP from LL domains supports the mission and role of liberal learning.
   5. Faculty should not feel that they need to be an expert in the topic that they teach in order to offer FSP or teach writing.
7. Nelson Rodriguez proposed that the Council review the main discussion points from this meeting and use them as a basis for drafting the recommendation at the March 5th meeting.
8. Rich Blumberg proposed that having a meeting facilitator for the ongoing discussion would be useful to document and manage the process.
9. This logistical problem to ease issue of limited fsp offerings are a sign or symptom of larger issues that need to be discussed with respect to the larger liberal learning program and liberal learning environment at TCNJ. Kip can possibly propose a framework to start this broader discussion.
10. Is there a rush to complete this; we don’t know the extent of the problem with FSP offerings.
11. John Laughton reiterated the intent of the Council at the time of the original recommendation. The Council just wanted to loosen up the requirements a bit and let students and faculty be more open and relaxed about learning. This was the spirit of the initial recommendation.
12. The subcommittee was given charge not knowing where this came from previously. This proposed change is being overthought.
13. Some discussion occurred regarding the implementation of the “wildcard” in PAWS.

Adjourned at 2:44 pm