

Faculty Senate Minutes 2017-12-01

Minutes accepted with revisions accepted

President Wendler, guest, remarks:

Trying to understand nature of core curriculum. Understands O'Brien wanted one form that would satisfy all cases. Now are a lot of substitutions. State statute 42 hr requirements, would be worthwhile to look at purpose of core curriculum. Original Columbia curriculum was intended to be single set of requirements. Would like to have clearly articulated idea of what core curriculum should be. Many changes are made without asking what cc should be about. Does it really teach critical thinking?

Did some research on what opinions outside academia are. One example is writing skills, often felt inadequate. We have (higher ed) added thing that don't do enough in basics such as critical thinking, communications, writing, etc. Should we add courses, etc.?

Would like to have colleges determine a core that could be used for all students in that college. Ease transition between majors without retaking core, etc.

When did senate last act on core curriculum? Ambrose: never that we know. (Discussed with Wendler that senate does not do this: have University Curriculum committee, and a Core Curriculum committee. -goes up to THECB, etc.)

Wendler: Will talk to Jessica Mallard about Core Curriculum Committee.

Babb: (described committee process a bit.)

Hears from people that higher ed is falling down on the basics on such things as writing ability, reasoning, etc. Corporate execs very desirous of people that have these skills.

Blanton: dual credit is one of the problems here. Students should be required to take a core course here. Students end up in higher level classes needing remediation. Graduate students are even needing remediation.

Wendler: have noticed this in his own teaching career, in professional master's program. Dual credit thing is interesting, but don't think it is going away. Have we had a writing across the curriculum program?

Lust: yes, in 1990s, did have one. Effectiveness and application varied among faculty.

Wendler: would hope FS would exert some influence about these basic skills. Would be interesting to have joint meeting of Senate with Core Curriculum Committee.

Ambrose: but what can we do about it? for example in math we have students coming that have two calculus classes and know very little calculus.

Wendler: heard from Shaffer that for example that Frank Phillips faculty were willing to make changes based on WT faculty input.

Ambrose: friends that work in CC's are sometimes told to pass everyone.

Klaehn: Students can come in to writing center early, and be taught fundamentals, then come in with senior level classes and have lost skill. Introduced to skill, but then not using it for a long time, so they lose basics. Communication among disciplines is important.

Wendler: grading writing carefully is time consuming.

Klaehn: have set up system where if student can show that they have had writing center correct basic grammar etc. then discipline professor can grade more oriented to content.

(Discussion of numbers visiting writing center.)

Klaehn: couldn't handle if every professor sent. Meredith: do get introduction during orientation (but brief).

Wendler: we spend a lot of time on easily measured competencies, but harder to measure such as writing, critical thinking, etc. is hit-and-miss. Transferability issues are going to get worse.

Pinkham: state legislature has lowered standards, so more are arriving being told they are prepared.

Pinkham: also want to clarify where you stand on more core requirements or less?

Wendler: very interested in basic skills, want to know how we are falling short.

Pinkham: if we eliminate core, can't trust that students will for example take core, whereas with more core courses you could ensure some level of math.

Wendler: looking at horizontally integrated approach. Legislatures want to draw down number of courses. Remediation implicitly condemns secondary education etc.

Blanton: eliminate crappy secondary education.

Wendler: don't like to blame down. Have to deal with "feed stock" we have.

Blaming down doesn't fix the problem, would like more rigor in secondary ed and parent participation, etc, but can't influence much.

Babb: we are in an open system, a lot of dual-credit is just shortcutting. We need to emanate a narrative that gets a dialogue in our society. If problem is over the wall, outreach has to be over the wall. With these pressures we need to give a little pushback. Can't blame down, but you have to push back.

Wendler: if you do regression on state funding we become private in 2038.

(?): Odd that basic logic/philosophy courses not introduced early in core curriculum. Ethics?

Pinkham: there are options but not required.

Wendler: everybody should have to take a free-hand drawing course. Problems have been around, won't solve in afternoon. Need a sustained conversation on how to confront students with this.

Pinkham: we also have to think about what we require/privilege and what we have to drop.

Ingrassia: how much control do we have over core re the system and legislature?

Babb: there are eight dimensions that have to fit. Game is to pitch a course to fit the categories. You do have to go up and change it at THECB etc, so a lot of inertia.

Wendler: at least need be able to be thoughtful in dealing with students.

Babb: do you feel if we developed core thru thoughtful deliberative process we could achieve changes?

Wendler: would be willing to strenuously support it. But politicization issues,

ownerships, etc. Would be good to have something to hold up something and say this is what's important.

Babb: if we had a process including senate and cc committee and president, it would go a long way.

Wendler: will also talk to undergraduate academics theme group in WT 125.

(?): if dual credit is having an effect, ought to be data. But a lot of claims are made without empirical backing.

Hindman: can't blanket condemn all dual-credit courses and students. Some are very good.

(?): need to look at data.

Wendler: have data on this and transfer, it is interesting data. Maybe we are getting distracted from teaching excellence here.

Will figure out how to look at undergraduate academic education theme group to memorialize this.

(end of discussion with President Wendler)

Ambrose:

Meetings will begin in 2018 on January 19 and alternate weeks thereafter.

Passed on TP proposal to Shaffer

Will talk to Rikel about parking

Old Business

IT: follow up early spring, based on what Webb said, check implementation, etc.

Instructor promotions committee: haven't heard back on proposal, no other report.

Merit survey committee: Planning to formulate questions by early Jan.

New Business:

Picking of lots for post-tenure review, done by paper picks from a hat:

Post-tenure Committees picked:

ANS: Lance Baker
Marty Rhoades
Carolyn Bouma
Jean Stuntz
Pat Tyrer

Bus: Syen Anwar
Darlene Pulliam
Turkan Dursan-Killic
Bryan Vizzini
Benjamin Brooks

ECSM: Randy Combs
Roy Issa
Robert DeOtte
Cloyce Kuhnert
Byron Pearson

ESS: Jennifer Kunz
Reed Welch
Harry Hueston
David Hart
Marcus Melton

FAH: Robert James Krause
Douglas Storey
Bruce Brasington
Keith Price
Deborah Davenport

Alternates:
Leslie Williams-Meek
Denise Parr-Scanlin
Bill Takacs
Nicholas Scales
Tanner Robertson

Faculty Leave:
(3 semester's available.) Applications will be due Jan 16 for Jan 19 meeting of faculty senate. Will send out rules and application to senate and faculty as whole.

University T&P:
Deans asked for minor revisions to T&P committee:
Adjustment of "Outstanding" category which is written with national prominence. Will discuss in meetings in January+, University T&P committee meets again in March, would like changes by then.

Deborah Blanton's last meeting. (remove from email)

Adjourned

Respectfully Submitted,
David Craig
Senate Secretary