

Faculty Senate Minutes October 26, 1998

Present: K. Bartanen, M. Birnbaum, N. Bristow, T. Cooney, D. Droge (visitor), R. Gomez (student), W. Haltom (chair), D. Hulbert, K. Hummel-Berry, H. Ostrom, S. Owen (visitor), R. Preiss (visitor), S. Rubio (student), R. Steiner, G. Tomlin.

Haltom called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

1. Minutes from October 12, 1998 were approved without objection.
2. There were no announcements
3. The chair had no report other than to comment on his uncharacteristic succinctness.
4. Cooney brought forth a suggestion arising from a meeting with new faculty, echoed by Bartanen from the Curriculum Committee, and Birnbaum from the Faculty Diversity Committee, that it would be helpful to coordinate an informational meeting to help bring new faculty up to speed on the Core deliberations. Such a meeting would be open to all interested faculty.
5. 1999-2000 Academic Calendar: Haltom asked for input or other discussion regarding the academic calendar and guidelines which had been distributed to senators in advance by Carrie Washburn. Steiner questions whether at any time in the future the Thanksgiving break might be a whole week, wondering aloud whether students from distant states might prefer such a schedule. Bartanen explained that the Curriculum Committee had chosen to approve the calendar in the short term in order not to hold up process, but had agreed to bring guidelines back for discussion in the spring when there would be more time for careful consideration of issues. Cooney reminded the group that any significant changes in guidelines would ultimately be an issue that would require full faculty discussion. Her input solicited, Rubio indicated that out of state students might appreciate at least the Wednesday before Thanksgiving as a travel day. Gomez added that he would appreciate a longer interval between the end of spring semester and the beginning of the first summer term.

M/S/P approve calendar as distributed. (Unanimous)

6. Haltom opened the continuing discussion on processes for revising the core curriculum. Ostrom distributed a proposed draft motion concerning the seminar in writing and rhetoric, with an accompanying document to be distributed to the full faculty reviewing the background behind discussions of this particular core revision, and excerpting descriptive language about it from the Barry/Lind/Owen/Sandler proposal of 29 January 1997. Ostrom explained that the document was intended to provide something concrete to facilitate the process of considering this core modification in full faculty meeting, and invited input.

Lengthy informal discussion of the explanatory document ensued, focusing on suggestions for clarifications. Major points of suggested clarification included the following:

-Birnbaum asked for clarification of the meaning of "emphases" in the context of the line from the Barry/Lind/Owen/Sandler proposal reading "Different series ..of Seminars in Writing and Rhetoric will be offered with different emphases..." Ostrom indicated that his understanding was that "emphases" referred to matters such as types of readings used in the courses.

-Cooney directed attention to a line in the explanatory document indicating a possible enrollment limit of 15 for each section, indicating that faculty as a group cannot legislate course enrollment limitations. Bristow and Haltom suggested retaining language which recommended rather than mandated a small enrollment limit for a seminar course, acknowledging that we are unable to dictate any particular number.

-Bartanen suggested clarifying the distinction between the writing/rhetoric seminar and the topic seminar. Specifically she suggested that in the writing/rhetoric seminar readings are a vehicle for learning the process of writing and articulation, where in the topic seminar (which she suggested be retitled "scholarly inquiry") writing and oral communication are vehicles to learn about the process of scholarly inquiry into a given topic. Cooney suggested that the faculty's attention be drawn to the growing number of example course syllabi now posted on the WEB. Hulbert questioned whether there would be a problem with having a course that could conceivably fit in either category. Cooney indicated that this was not a problem in that even under the current core guidelines there are courses which, cast a different way, could fit into different core categories. The decision to cast the course a different way ultimately makes it a distinct course.

-Hulbert questioned whether the term "writing intensive" refers to extensive writing in terms of quantity, or intensive focus on process in the context of this discussion. Numerous senators voiced divergent opinions on this, indicating that clarification of this terminology and intent with regard to the nature of the writing experience in these courses would be a worthy focus of discussion. Owen suggested that the term "oral expression" would merit similar discussion.

Senators expressed approval of a plan for Ostrom to revise this explanatory document, incorporating input from the discussion, and solicit further input via electronic communication on the draft revisions. The plan then would be to distribute it to the full faculty with ample time to review it prior to the November 11 full faculty meeting.

M/S/P: To approve a Seminar in Writing and Rhetoric, to be taken by all freshmen at the University of Puget Sound as a part of a general-education curriculum; passage of this motion shall have the effect of including the Seminar in Writing and Rhetoric in the omnibus motion to be brought before the faculty according to the process adopted on 10/20/98.

Discussion then turned to the seminars formerly known as "topic seminars" now being referred to by senators as "scholarly inquiry seminars." The sense of the senate was that it would be best if a similar written motion with accompanying explanatory document could also be provided to the faculty prior to the November 11 meeting in order to facilitate moving forward on that portion of the revised core. Birnbaum agreed to draft this document, working with Anne Wood, who was nominated for this service in absentia. Senators made suggestions for important clarifications to be included in this document, including the following:

Bartanen stated that it would be useful to first define the goal of this seminar. Various senators supported a broad definition of what might constitute a "passion seminar," borrowing language from existing documents in a manner similar to how the explanatory document for the Writing/Rhetoric seminar was written. It may or may not be appropriate for such a seminar to be text based, and it should be organized around a major set of ideas or themes. Cooney cautioned that it would not be a good idea for faculty members to organize such seminars around their dissertation topics in the early years of teaching because it is often difficult to identify how to pitch those topics appropriately to freshmen. Bristow suggested defining the purpose of these seminars in specific language, getting at how questions are asked, types of sources used in inquiry, how to ask and explore, encouraging depth in at least part of the study while maintaining an overall breadth of focus in the course. Cooney brought up the fact that there are different types of breadth, giving as examples breadth in chronology within the subject versus breadth resulting from multidisciplinary perspectives. He repeated that the charge from the faculty was to bring forth explanation of this seminar in the form of examples, to give them something to chew on rather than do the chewing in advance.

M/S/P: To approve a Seminar in Scholarly and Creative Inquiry, to be taken by all freshmen at the University of Puget Sound as a part of a general-education curriculum; passage of this motion shall have the effect of including the Seminar in Scholarly and

Creative Inquiry in the omnibus motion to be brought before the faculty according to the process adopted on 10/20/98.

7. New business: The hour growing late, senators hastily agreed to entrust the Faculty Diversity Committee to work with appropriate individuals in organizing a meeting to bring new faculty up to speed on the core revision process. (See item #4 above.)

8. M/S/P: Adjourn, 5:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kathie Hummel-Berry, PT, MEd