

Educational Policies Committee

Minutes

4/14/05

Present: Elaine McDonald (chair), Mary Halavais, Perry Marker, Lynne Morrow, Ben Pugno, Vincent Richman, Rick Robison, Greta Vollmer, Marci Sanchez, Carmen Works, Art Warmoth (recorder)

Guests: Paul Draper, Miriam Hutchins, Bob Karlsrud, Roger Bell (proxy for Robert Coleman-Senghor), Wanda Boda, Joyce Chong, Bill Crowley, Sandra Feldman, Mark Kearley, Dave McCuen, Andy Merrifield, Provost Eduardo Ochoa, Teed Rockwell, Elizabeth Stanny, Scott Miller, Susan Moulton, Andy Wallace, Tim Wandling,

Reports;

Chair (E. McDonald): Status report on university planning process; ten top priority issues.

APC (A. Warmoth): Position on FYE is attached to the agenda

Grad Studies (M. Halavais): No report

Teacher Ed Council (P. Marker): Commended the hard work of the committee

1. FYE Proposal from GE subcommittee

Note: In addition to the attachments to the agenda, the following documents regarding the First Class Proposal were distributed at the meeting:

- Statement from Paul Draper< Chair GE Subcommittee (attached)
- FAQ on FYE
- Sandra Feldman, Chair, School of Social Sciences Curriculum Committee: GE AREA E for *First Class*/FYE
- Andy Merrifield, President, CFA Sonoma Chapter: GE Proposal at EPC
- Scott Miller, Director, SSU Writing Center: My Support for FYE
- Statement by Teed Rockwell, Lecturer in Philosophy

EMcD. We are on a tight time schedule. I will give Paul Draper ten minutes to make a presentation, followed by questions and comments from committee members. We will then hear comments from others present. We need to reach a conclusion of some sort in time for our next time certain at 12:25.

Draper. We are asking for approval of a one year pilot project. The structure is:

- a multidisciplinary problem-based lecture
- a seminar focused on academic skill building: seminar, reading, writing, research, critical analysis, and developing a personal voice
- addressing the co-curricular and social needs of freshmen: academic advising, career counseling, transition support

Seminar sections will meet on Monday-Friday or Tuesday-Thursday. There will be a lecture on Wednesday at noon and a built in advising office hour as the second hour of the Thursday or Friday section meeting..

There will be a program coordinator. Assessment will be developed by the program faculty and the coordinator and evaluator from the Sonoma State faculty not otherwise involved with the program.. The Office of Institutional Research will support evaluation studies. Staffing will include:

- 5-10 faculty
- 5-10 SSPs
- 30 speakers in the lecture series over two semesters
- 10 peer mentors
- Program Coordinator
- Faculty Evaluator to oversee assessment

The recommended faculty workload is 8 WTUs (6 WTUs has also been discussed. 150 students taking 9 units will generate 90 FTES (50 FTES for fall, 40 FTES for spring).

The First Class demonstration pilot is:

- An experimental course
- An interdisciplinary 2 semester lecture/seminar course
- An integrated learning experience
- A common experience for freshmen

Academic content will include: reading, writing, critical thinking, information literacy, research methodology, listening skills, learning skills (note-taking, study strategies, time management), communication skills, ethical behavior, and faculty feedback.

Assessment: First Class coordinator and instructional faculty will develop learning objectives and assessment protocols.. An outside evaluator drawn from the SSU faculty will analyze assessment results and provide feedback to the pilot coordinator and faculty, the GE Subcommittee, and EPC.

Based on the outcome evaluation, the program will come back to the GE Subcommittee, EPC, and the Senate in February 2006 to consider three possible options:

1. Major problems have been resolved, the design theory is shown to be substantially correct. Expand *First Class* in 2006-2007
2. Significant problems remain, but First Class is showing real promise. Mount a second demonstration pilot in 2006-07 at the 2005-06 level and continue working through issues.
3. Problems are insurmountable problems or the design is fatally flawed; go back to the drawing board in 2006-2007.

I am aware of the controversial nature of the *First Class* experiment. Staffing, funding, pedagogy, content, process.

I have done my level best to connect with anyone who wanted to participate in this process, and am also aware that what is before you is not fully satisfactory to all who have contributed to its generation, nor less to those who did not participate in its development

However, since the GE Fair (February 2005), through the formal process of readings in GE and EPC, and the pressure of putting schedules to bed for the fall-- the attention needed for such a pilot to be fully considered, and for the opportunity to test it, seems to have galvanized. This is a good consequence. There is nothing like a deadline to focus attention.

Now that we have collectively come so far in this discussion, it seems to me that to go forward and endorse a 1-year demonstration pilot that will teach us about our assumptions—those assumptions that the idea *First Class* is sound, as well as those suggesting that it is not.

Attempt, and learn.

The alternative is stasis. I don't believe that another year of discussion will quell fear, nor prove the proponents correct. I believe the proof—one way or another-- will be in the doing. For this reason, I support this experimental pilot.

AW. In the interest of full disclosure, I need to acknowledge that I have applied for the program coordinator position. I will therefore abstain from voting on the proposal, partly because a favorable vote could be construed as a conflict of interest, and partly because of one vote will make a difference, I do not believe that represents adequate support for the program to go forward. There are three substantive issues I am concerned with:

- As per the APC recommendation, I believe that there should be a comparative evaluation of various aspects of the educational experience of our freshmen, as well as an assessment of the First Class.
- The program should include faculty with qualifications in Areas A2, A3, and E, and schools and departments involved in all three areas, including Area E, should be involved in the discussion of outcome goals and objectives.
- Resources for First Year should be charged to the EMT program, not to Area E, since virtually all Area E classes are upper division and students in First Class will not be taking Freshman Seminar.

MH. First, it does not make sense to evaluate a one year pilot project mid year. Second, in the light of the scarcity of resources for our regular teaching responsibilities, resources for an experimental pilot project should come from outside sources.

Draper: Unless EPC would accept recommendations in May of 2006, or approves a two year pilot, evaluation and assessment cannot be made in a longer timeline. Some form of assessment must be made as is normal for any experimental course.

LM. In-process evaluation is quite possible.

Ochoa. This is an experimental course much like special topics courses that are mounted on a trial basis in any area. The pilot will generate FTES within the aggregate target of SSU. Therefore the funding is essentially a wash.

MH. Where are the funds coming from? We need a clearer explanation. The one thing that is proven is that smaller classes and a lower SFR provide a good education. We are moving away from this for an untested pilot project. The committee has asked for a detailed analysis of the budget.

Ochoa. The FTES figures are on paper.

EMcD. Figures are on page 3 of the attachment to the agenda.

EmcD. What is the downside of waiting a year to implement the pilot in order to deal with the various issues that have been raised.

Draper. Nothing moves things forward like a deadline. When there is a deadline, things get attention. Examination of the GE issue goes back to 1992. If we put it off a year, will we be come back in April of next year with the same problems and questions? I am not interested in bad GE, no one is. But students do not understand the purpose of GE; they come from a different demographic and have different needs than earlier Sonoma State students. So change of some kind is in order. We have made a consistent effort to respond to all of the issues that have been raised.

PM. I want to thank all who have been involved in this process. Paul's leadership has been incredible. The process has been unlike anything I have seen at SSU: open, honest, a true exercise in democratic process. There is no question that we have a problem in our GE curriculum. This is an important step in the right direction. The current system is fundamentally broken, decades out of step. SSU has a reputation for trying new programs. We need a curriculum to take us into the 21st century. We should give it a try.

EMcD. I did not mean to imply that we should wait until this time next year. We should begin addressing these issues in the fall.

Roger Bell (for Bob Coleman-Senghor; there was a discussion as to whether Roger or Susan Moulton was Bob Coleman's proxy). Philosophy does not have defined outcomes now, and these need to be developed for comparability. Will we be able to teach sections of Philosophy 101 for comparability?

Moulton. APC has stressed that the revision of the GE curriculum should be consistent with the Long Range Academic Plan. This includes ongoing assessment across the GE curriculum, as well as an assessment of the impact of GE reform on the upper division curriculum.

LM. I also want to commend the openness of the process, the GE Fair, etc. We need to go forward with this process.

Draper. We encourage faculty, particularly from English and Philosophy to continue to apply to participate in the pilot.

CW. What is the role of faculty from disciplines outside areas A and E?

Draper. We encourage faculty from a variety of disciplines to apply. Working together with faculty from other disciplines is an important faculty development experience.

CE. I would like to know how academic advising will happen.

Draper. I would like to refer this to Joyce Chong from the Advising Center.

Chong. We always refer students to departments for information on their career and major interests. Student affairs faculty will be involved in developing the advising structures. Faculty advising “goes deeper.” Responsibility will be shared by academic and student affairs faculty. The goal is for each student to have a mentor on the faculty. The teams will have to work out roles.

Draper. One hour a week of advising is built into the program. This comes out to four advising sessions a semester per student. These sections are structured into the schedule, which is a big shift from having students drop in during office hours—we must reach out if advising is to be successful. Faculty can get advising training by participating for a stipend in the SOAR program this summer.

Chong. There will be a variety of developmentally appropriate approaches.

EMcD. Are there other forms of professional development?

Draper. Faculty will be mentored by other experienced faculty in areas outside their primary area of expertise. The program should draw on a wide range of faculty knowledge.

MH. Does this imply the elimination of remedial English?

Wandling. There is no plan to eliminate remedial classes.

EMcD. This is the time for brief comments from other community constituencies.

Feldman (Chair of Social Sciences Curriculum Committee). Our primary concern is the inclusion of credit in Area E. We are particularly concerned about the impact on WGS 280 and 285, which are lower division Area E classes. Dean Leeder has indicated that she is willing to go along with shifting target FTES from Area E. We are also concerned about the lack of curricular consultation with our faculty on the inclusion of Area E

credit. We did not become aware of the redirection of resources from Area E until April 7. We want to be clear about funding before the proposal goes forward.

Wallace (Philosophy). There is a consensus among the line faculty and perhaps lecturers with three year contracts. As we understand the pilot, the proposal is to devise curriculum this summer, and implement it in the fall. Since 60% of our current operating budget is generated by critical thinking classes, we are also concerned about the impact on the major. The faculty is willing to endorse the pilot under certain conditions, which include addressing our legitimate concerns:

1. It is likely that the FYE will increase the workload for faculty teaching in it.
2. It is likely that the program will decrease the quality of instruction in writing and critical thinking.
3. If it is scaled up, this model would have a major impact on the operating budget of the Philosophy Department.

The first two concerns could be addressed through assessment. The Philosophy Department should be involved in developing learning goals and assessment for critical thinking. No permanent faculty are available to participate in this during the coming summer. However, curricular assessment cannot address the third concern, which is that the reallocation of resources could impair our ability to maintain a strong and vibrant philosophy major. The department needs written assurance that this concern will be addressed.

Ochoa. I cannot conceive of a liberal arts university without a “strong and vibrant philosophy department.”

Wandling (English). I have been involved with GE and the question of basic composition for seven of the eight years I have been here. A majority of the faculty in English support the pilot project. The resource issues are complex and challenging. Change is difficult, but it is also an opportunity. We believe that faculty should be funded at 4 WTU in view of the workload involved. We need to make a positive first step now.

Boda (EMT Program). We share concerns in the areas of assessment and Area E credit. I compare this process to the B.A. in Engineering Science, where all of the issues were hashed out among the interested faculty ahead of time and the proposal went through the Senate very smoothly.

Merrifiend (President, CFA). We have three main concerns:

1. Anywhere for 12 1/2 to 20 units are to be given by SSPs. It is not clear whether all of these are to be academically related (unit 3) or could involve non-academically related (unit 4) SSPs. This could mean taking work away from faculty.
2. There are several issues related to lecturers beyond the statement that lecturers will be paid directly. It is not clear how they will be selected or what department they will receive service credit in. This raises issues of accrual of time,

- preference for work, etc. CFA would like to have a written agreement as to how these issues will be handled.
3. The workload appears to be in excess of six units. Eight units may be adequate, although this needs to be examined closely. Even the chancellor and Ruben acknowledge that the burden of overwork. A new program should not add to that burden.

Rockwell (lecturer–read prepared statement).

- “Funding for direct instruction will come from a target reduction in FTES prorated across Areas A2, A3, and E to offset the reduced need for general education sections. This means. . . cutting currently scheduled GE classes—My classes for the Fall, among many others.” Failure to provide replacement funds for eliminated sections will cripple the philosophy department. There is no “reduced need” for GE classes. The cuts are being made because that is the only way to fund this pilot . . . I urge you not to participate in a feeding-frenzy in which various departments fight each other for funds. . . .Someday you may encounter an administrator. . . who wants to sacrifice your department. Do you want your colleagues in other departments to stand by you in that time, or do you want them to join the feeding frenzy? Your vote today will set the precedent.” I acknowledge the good intentions of those who have developed this proposal. But alternative sources of funding are needed, not taking funds from the current GE program.

BP. Motion: Approve a pilot project for 06-07 with further planning during the 05-06 academic year, with a clear, complete and open budget in place before further work on the pilot goes forward. [Language about the budget was a friendly amendment by MH. Second by EMcD.]

Students are concerned about dissention and conflict among the faculty over this issue. Students would like to see more collaboration and cooperation.

MH. The first piece of business is that a budget is in place. The budget should be complete and open.

CW. What will the process be? Who will be involved? Paul’s committee? Philosophy? English?

Draper. Should this resolution be passed, EPC and its GE Subcommittee would. We need to get together on protocol and strategy. The GE Subcommittee needs direction on process and its authority.

GV. There are four major issues:

1. Budget
2. Personnel
3. Curriculum
4. Assessment.

Ochoa. We have an explicit budget based on established formulae

Motion passed 5-4-2.

AW. In addition to further development of the FYE, faculty need to be involved in the rest of GE reform.

2. History Subject Matter Preparation Program, 1st reading.

Karlsrud. We have to revise this program every few years. This is my fifth since 1970. Miriam [Hutchins] has developed an extensive proposal. Because of new requirements, we have had to add courses in history and delete courses in sociology, psychology, and anthropology. An advantage is that the new program now includes the history major. Students can now do it in 66 units:

12 GE

40 History major

14 additional required units

Hutchins. Narrowing the social sciences program parallels narrowing of the social sciences curriculum in high schools.

PM. I am absolutely delighted to see this proposal go through. Students can pass a standardized exam without taking this program I find this appalling. This program rings a high degree of quality and integrity into the teaching of history. It also helps increase our diversity by offering an option for students for whom the exam is a barrier. Move to waive first reading. [Second AW; no objection.]

RR. Standard 3 is about technology. How is it met?

Hutchins. People use technology in classes. We have conducted a survey on technology use. One of the key classes that addresses this issue is Bob Karlsrud's 410.

Karlsrud. Students learn how to use computers, PowerPoint, etc.

PM. They also get technology in Education courses.

GV. How is the final assessment made?

Karlsrud. There is a final advising session to review meeting all of the standards. This is also covered in 409 and 410.

Hutchins. There is an advising sheet. Students are required to have a B average, and there is a final portfolio review in 410.

LM. Are there other course options?

Karlsrud. We are going to try to meet with all students in the fall. Now they come as juniors, and they are missing two years of advising.

EMcD requested motion to extend meeting 5 minutes. Moved by MS, second MH, no objection.

PM. Call the question.

Passed on a unanimous voice vote.

3. Chemistry: Change from B.A. to B.S. in Biochemistry.

CW. History of the proposal: Chemistry has a B.A. and B.S. with various advising paths. We now have a concentration in biochemistry passed 2-3 years ago. It is very unit heavy, and students are not interested in it because it is a B.A. and not a B.S. It has been passed by the School of Science and Technology.

AW. Will this require changes in the SSU Master Plan?

CW: [Read memo from Elaine Sundberg explaining the process. Requires Chancellor's Office approval of change in master plan. Implementation for fall '06 required that all campus approvals take place for December '05.]

PM. Has it been approved by the School?

CW. It was generally OK with other departments. Physics recommended calculus-based physics, but the curriculum committee voted to approve a choice.

PM. Why is it a good move from a student's perspective?

CW. Most chemistry departments are becoming departments of chemistry and biochemistry because of the boom in genetic engineering. Another approach is to go through a biology department. Chemistry departments deal with what is happening at the level of chemical bonds. Biology departments take a more macro approach.

PM. Biochemistry gives students a better position in the work force.

CW. Also in applying to medical and dental schools.

PM. Does this proposal impact GE courses.

CW. There is not impact on GE requirements. The difference between this and the B.S. in Chemistry is a one year biochemistry lab.

VR. What is the current class size for 400 level classes.

CW. It depends on the semester. Last semester there were 45 students in 445. This semester there are 25 in 446.

VR. These must be courses taken by other students also, since you only project 8 or less students a year.

CW. Courses are also taken by pre-health professionals.

VR. The only small class is the biochemistry lab.

BP. It is a great plan.

AW. Since approvals are not needed until fall, should the proposal come back early in the fall?

EMcD. We have time to complete the second reading this semester, and then we can send it to the Senate early in the fall. It needs a cover letter for the Senate. Also supporting letters from other departments.

PM. For the good of the order, I would like to make it clear that we don't have a problem with reforming GE. The First Class plan should go forward with its loose ends tied up. This was not a vote against the proposal. This vote sets a precedent for an unreasonably high bar for an experimental program.