Members present: Millie Abel, Brent Kinser, Windy Gordon, Jeanne Kaufman, Peter Nieckarz, Tracy Zontek, Brian Dinklemeyer, Charles Wallis, Jim DeConinck.  
Also attending: Kari Hensley, Fred Hinson.

The minutes of the November 29 meeting were approved.

The meeting schedule for the spring semester was discussed.  The tentative spring meeting time is Tuesday morning from 8:30-9:45, pending Beth’s ability to fit it in her schedule.  The Rogers Room has been reserved at that time, beginning January 17.

Kari mentioned that the L.S. website has been updated.  Committee members are urged to review the website.

The committee discussed the draft of the SACS report statement regarding section 3.5.1, the setting and assessment of “general education” competencies.  First, the assessment section of the Liberal Studies document was reviewed, and the committee agreed that we are generally “on track” with establishing an appropriate assessment strategy as discussed in the first 3 paragraphs of that section of the L.S. document.  (The one exception is the reference to academic learning communities; in later discussion, it was decided to remove all references to learning communities from the L.S. document.  See later discussion.)  The committee had difficulty interpreting the fourth paragraph in the assessment section of the Liberal Studies document.  (The first sentence of the paragraph suggests that it is referring to students who have completed the L.S. program, while later sentences contradict that interpretation.)  The committee will need to revisit that paragraph.

The committee then returned to the draft of the SACS report statement.  In light of the assessment that is planned for ENGL101, 102, and Wellness this year, the committee decided that this year’s assessment report will be able to address all bulleted items on page 3 [of the draft of the SACS report] with the exception of “comparison of course evaluations, projects, etc. with appropriate liberal studies objectives.”  Charles will report back to Carol Burton and Terry Kinnear.

Next, Fred Hinson and the committee carefully reviewed the entire L.S. document and discussed amendments that are needed in order to reflect administrative and programmatic changes that have occurred in the past couple of years.  Issues of primary consideration included:

1) The student advisory group has not existed for several years.  Fred shared information on early attempts to maintain the student advisory group, which were ineffective due to waning student interest.  The committee agreed that it might be more effective to try to get student representation on the L.S. Committee.  An SGA representative might be the best option for getting a vocal, participatory student voice on the committee; however, if SGA officers would find this additional service overwhelming (in addition to their current responsibilities), then it will be acceptable to have a designee who is not officially a member of SGA.
2) While academic learning communities play an important role on campus, student participation in a learning community is no longer mandatory, and thus cannot be considered to be an integral part of Liberal Studies. Thus, the committee agreed to remove reference to learning communities as a formal part of the L.S. program.

3) The committee agreed that “Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs responsible for Liberal Studies” is an appropriate title for the administrator in the Provost’s office who handles L.S. responsibilities (currently Beth’s position). The committee also agreed to continue referring to itself as the “Liberal Studies Oversight Committee,” as this name has been well established.

4) In discussion of the various “Functions of the Administrative Component (L.S. document, page 14),” it was suggested that the committee initiate discussion with Anna McFadden (Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence) regarding ongoing faculty development (4th bullet on page 14) and the Liberal Studies Teaching Award (6th bullet on page 14). Perhaps the L.S. Committee should offer to be more involved in some Faculty Center initiatives, such as Faculty Center workshops on teaching first-year students.

5) It was also suggested that the incoming Director of Assessment be involved in ongoing assessment of the L.S. program.

6) Beth Huber and Marsha Lee Baker might be of assistance in setting up focus group discussions with students and faculty this spring when the committee assesses the English core component of Liberal Studies.

7) Numerous other editorial changes to the L.S. document were suggested.

Kari agreed to send a WORD version of the L.S. document to Millie and Charles, so that a first draft of these edits can be made prior to the first meeting of the spring semester.

The committee adjourned for the semester.