Minutes of the Liberal Studies Committee (LSC)  
November 22, 2013  
University Center, Dogwood Room

Members Present: Brent Kinser (chair), Elizabeth McRae, Gary Jones, Jim Deconinck, Michelle Scifers, Niall Michelsen, Travis Bennett, Carol Burton, Steve Baxley

Members Absent: Debby Singleton, Erin Myers, Martin Tanaka, Paromita Biswas

Guests: Erin McNelis

Recorder: Ricky Lanning

1. Approval of minutes from the November 1, 2013 meeting:
   - The first agenda item was the approval of the minutes from the November 1, 2013 LSC meeting. Brent brought the minutes from the meeting before the committee and they were subsequently approved. The minutes are now available on the LSC website for viewing. (http://www.wcu.edu/10946.asp).

2. Discuss new Comprehensive Articulation Agreement draft with guest Erin McNelis:
   - The committee reviewed the various documents provided to them concerning the new Comprehensive Articulation Agreement that is currently being discussed by the UNC General Administration and to be voted on in February 2014. The Provost has asked for the LSC to provide feedback to her concerning the draft. The LSC response is attached to these minutes. Please review the attachment for the specific concerns raised by the committee.

3. Old/New Business:
   - The committee has been informed that they need to have updated Outlook calendars so Ricky can work on scheduling a recurring meeting during the Spring 2014 semester.

Time of Meeting Adjournment: 5:00pm
ATTACHMENT

Subject: LSC Response Concerning CAA
Date: November 26, 2013

Dear Beth:

The Liberal Studies Committee met on Friday, 22 November, and discussed the draft of the Comprehensive Articulation agreement to be discussed at GA in January, and to be voted on in February 2014.

The main concern expressed by the LSC is the rather nebulous quality of both the 15 hours of coursework that extend beyond the 30-hour universal core and the 15 hours that comprise the work needed to complete a 60-61-hour AA or AS degree.

The authors of the document simply inform students that they will take 30 hours from the common core, and then 13-15 additional hours with no guidelines for what these hours should be. Are these 15 hours to be directed by some kind of tracking mechanism, i.e. students who wish to become a History major would take a certain 15 hours, Engineers a different set, etc.? Are these related to the pre-major advising pathways we are supplying to NCCCS, or will those pathways be directed to the 15 hours beyond the 45 required in general education?

Another concern the committee discussed was the distinction between AA and AS degree general education programs. Students pursuing an AA degree will take 9 hours of humanities/fine arts classes, 9 hours of Social/Behavioral Sciences, 4 hours of Natural Sciences, and 3-4 hours of Math. Students pursuing an AS degree will take 6 hours of humanities/fine arts classes, 6 hours of Social/Behavioral Sciences, 8 hours of Natural Sciences, and 4 hours of Math. AA students will have 1-2 fewer elective hours, since students who pursue an AA degree will have to take 13-14 hours of additional gen ed to reach 45, and AS candidates will take 15.

One assumes that these sequences are distinguished to meet the needs of those who want to pursue fields other than STEM-dominant (AA), and those who do (AS). The justification for this distinction does not seem apparent in the document. I suppose it is structured that so STEM people can take more science, and non-STEM people less. The approach seems illogical in the context of that portion of education intended to broaden educational experiences instead of confine them.

In the context of this distinction, the LSC also discussed the problem of what will happen as students change their minds during their courses of study. Under the current LS Program at WCU, students who wish to transfer in with an AA degree under this agreement will have one less science course than we require, for one example.

Another issue in the CAA draft is the absence of a foreign language, in particularly in the AA sequence. Students in English at WCU, for example, need to complete MFL at the intermediate level (231, 232). The distinction between BS and BA are centered on MFL, and this proposal does not include any direction on that issue.
This proposal will have significant impact on the current discussion related to WCU’s general education proposal. So, more clarity in terms of what the extra 15 hours of general education will look like at the CC level, as well as more clarity in what the final 15 hours of an AA or AS degree look like will be imperative before those discussions can move towards completion.

Just let me know if anything in this note requires clarification.

For now, with very best wishes for a safe and joyous Thanksgiving,

Brent