

Liberal Studies Oversight Committee
April 11, 2006

Present: Brent Kinser, Windy Gordon, Jim DeConinck, Peter Nieckarz, Tracy Zontek, Brian Dinklemeyer, Charles Wallis, Will Poynter, Beth Tyson-Lofquist, Terry Michelsen, and guest Scott Philyaw.

Scott Philyaw discussed the work of the Computer Requirement Committee, which is trying to shift the computer requirement away from being simply a computer ownership requirement. The Computer Requirement Committee is working on a test to assure that students have minimum competencies prior to enrollment in classes. (The intent is to develop modules so that students can receive remediation if they fail certain portions of the competency test.) Furthermore, the committee has been in communication with the English and CTD departments and faculty in the Wellness area to incorporate additional computer competency learning goals in the context of particular course content. Word processing/document design will be addressed in ENGL102, presentation software (e.g., Powerpoint) in the C3 course, and spreadsheet usage in Wellness (C4) classes.

There was discussion about the need for stand-alone modules to be developed for these instructional areas. Pre-designed modules will be useful for faculty who are not currently advanced users of the various packages, and will aid in consistency of instruction. Scott shared that departments involved in the discussion were invited to respond to 1) what they can contribute to computer competency instruction, 2) potential roadblocks, and 3) resources/training needed to help overcome the roadblocks.

In further discussion, questions were raised as to whether the university would move to a single platform requirement or to move to a laptop requirement. (Answer: Not at this time, but a laptop requirement might be a good eventual goal for solving some resource problems, i.e., limited computer classroom space.) The question was raised as to whether database development (such as Access) would be one of the competencies. (Answer: no.) The comment was made that many students, being comfortable with the use of gadgets/technology, perceive themselves as having a higher level of computer competencies than they actually have.

Others on campus have initiated some preliminary discussion about a “certificate” program for those students who master certain computer skills beyond the basic competency level.

In closing discussion, Scott wanted to make sure that the LSOC supported the Computer Requirement Committee’s goal of embedding computer competencies in the Liberal Studies program. The motion was made to endorse the LSOC’s moving forward with the exploration of connecting the computer requirement with Liberal Studies courses in Wellness, English, and Communication, and further collaboration with the Computer Requirement Committee next year. The motion passed unanimously.

It was suggested that the LSOC would find it helpful if it received a formal charge from the Faculty Senate to collaborate with the Computer Requirement Committee next year in the

exploration of embedding computer competency learning goals into the Liberal Studies program. Scott will share that comment with the Faculty Senate.

Beth shared a draft of the memo inviting 6 potential faculty to participate in this summer's assessment teams. The committee approved the memo.

The committee discussed the memo to faculty requesting additional sections of ULP courses. Beth shared the concern that the current draft might wrongfully suggest that the university has additional faculty positions for departments which offer new ULP courses. It was suggested that Beth revise the memo as she sees appropriate. Having faith in Beth's editorial changes, the committee agreed that Beth could revise the memo and send it to faculty without getting further approval from the committee.

The committee briefly discussed the membership of next year's committee. Next year's chair needs to be established (Beth will be in conversation with faculty candidates), and an additional faculty member recruited. It was suggested that a faculty member in the CTD department or Fine and Performing Arts would be an ideal addition to the committee if a new person is recruited.

Members were requested to bring their fall '06 teaching schedules (including all times they cannot meet) to next week's meeting.