**FHSU Liberal Education Committee**

**Minutes**

Meeting Called by

Shala Mills, Chair

Date: Thursday 1/26/2017

Time: 3:00-4:00

Location: Rarick 312

Members

Douglas Drabkin (AHSS)

Bradley Will (AHSS)

Dmitry Gimon (BE)

Jessica Heronemus (BE)

Kevin Splichal (Ed)

Teresa Woods (Ed)

Glen McNeil (HBS)

Tanya Smith (HBS)

William Weber (STM)

Tom Schafer (STM)

Robyn Hartman (Lib)

Helen Miles (Senate)

Megan Garcia (SGA)

Cody Scheck (SGA)

Cheryl Duffy (Goss Engl)

Kenton Russell (Provost)

Chapman Rackaway (Grad Sch)

3:04 (2 minutes) Meeting began. All members were present except for Garcia, Gimon, Heronemus, Rackaway, Russell, Splichal, and Weber. Will was proxy for Rackaway, and Hartman was proxy for Gimon and Heronemus. Established that a quorum was met. Chair recognized three guests, observers from Shenyang Normal University.

3:06 (1 minute) Chair drew attention to a 45 hour general education program that some of our students complete as an alternative the full 55 hour program. It may be viewed [here](https://www.fhsu.edu/registrar/transfer-agreement-articulation/).

3:07 (3 minutes) Chair recommended that committee members pair up for brainstorming sessions outside of our weekly committee meetings. The point would be to come up with new ideas to stir innovative thinking in the committee-at-large.

3:10 (16 minutes) As an example of this, she floated the idea of zero credit mini-courses that would be required of all students, that would be administered online, and for which a passing grade would be required to graduate. These would focus on important bodies of basic factual knowledge, not skills requiring supervised practice to master, things like basic information literacy, basic geography, and the sorts of things on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services [civics test](https://my.uscis.gov/prep/test/civics). A lively discussion of this idea followed which led eventually to questions of implementation details. Discussion was cut off, the point having been made: fresh ideas can get us thinking.

3:26 (1 minute) Chair encouraged the committee to try to think if there are any topics besides critical thinking and writing for which the committee needs to come up with different levels of development (lower-level, mid-level, and upper-level) in our revised liberal education program.

3:27 (2 minutes) Chair shared her findings having reviewed both the December 2015 faculty survey and the deans and chairs S.W.O.T. analysis of our current general education program. She thinks that if we manage to significantly improve critical thinking and writing at the university, and if we do this while shrinking the program’s overall hours, we will have done much towards remedying the concerns of faculty and administrators and enhancing student learning at FHSU.

3:29 (39 minutes) The rest of the meeting was spent proposing, discussing, and eventually voting on setting up an “FHSU Writing Advisory Group.” The Becky and Mike Goss Distinguished Professor of Excellence in Teaching – committee member Cheryl Duffy, at present – would serve as chair of this group. The other nine members would be: one member of each of the five colleges, the director of composition, the director of the writing center, a representative from the library, and a student representative. The writing advisory group would be charged: (1) to explore best practices for fostering competence in writing among FHSU students, (2) to explore best practices for assessing competence in writing among FHSU students, and (3) to report and make recommendations to the liberal education committee. The motion setting up this group passed unanimously. There was brief discussion, but no decision, regarding a timeline for the advisory group to report to the committee. The consensus was that progress on revising the general education program should be informed by, but not delayed by, insights from the advisory group, the purposes of this advisory group being broader than program revision in that it would be an on-going group that informs the campus community about best practices in this area. There was brief talk that the committee may need to set up a similar critical thinking advisory group with a similar charge; no motion was made along these lines.

4:10 Meeting ended. The next meeting will be 3:00 PM on Tuesday January 31. Sangki Min, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement, will be in attendance.

**Submitted by D. Drabkin, Recording Secretary**