

FHSU Liberal Education Committee

Minutes

Meeting Called by

Shala Mills, Chair

Date: 9/1/2016

Time: 3:30 – 4:30

Location: RH 312

Members Present

Brad Will
Chap Rackaway
Cheryl Duffy
Dmitry Gimon
Glen McNeil
Jessica Heronemus
Robyn Hartman
Tanya Smith
Teresa Woods
Tom Schafer
Bill Weber
Cody Scheck
Doug Drabkin
Kenton Russell
Kevin Splichal

All members appointed to the committee were present. Still not appointed to the committee are a second representative from the Student Government Association and a representative from the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate.

3:00 Meeting began. Determined that quorum was achieved. Brief introductions all around.

3:04 Updated website (www.fhsu.edu/liberaleducation) introduced. Noteworthy changes include a glossary from AAC&U of commonly mistaken terms (including “liberal education” and “general education”), an updated list of committee members, a list of the dates and times of future committee meetings, files of past minutes (to be posted each Friday), and a posting of the next week’s agenda (again, to go up each Friday). There was some discussion of minutes missing from last year’s work and secretaries Woods and Splichal may wish to compare the posted minutes with those they took to determine if additional minutes are available to be posted in order to capture the full historical record from last year. Rackaway noted that minutes were not taken during the spring 2016 meetings since those sessions were exclusively devoted to wordsmithing.

3:11 Request from the chair that committee members representing the five colleges (Gimon and Heronemus from BE, Splichal and Woods from Ed, McNeil and Smith from HBS, Shafer and Weber from STM, and Drabkin and Will from AHSS) serve as *active* liaisons between the committee and the deans, chairs, and faculty of each of the colleges and that SGA representative (Scheck and the soon to be appointed second SGA appointee) serve as *active* liaisons between the committee and SGA. People

need to know what we are doing, and we need to listen to what our colleagues and students are thinking.

3:16 Chair reminded the committee of the distinction between goals (most general), objectives (more specific), and outcomes (assessable). The chair shared her understanding that the Provost expects all objectives selected by the committee be regularly assessed (not necessarily annually, but at least on some regular basis or rotation). Question arose whether assessment will occur within courses or outside of courses. Answer, that this will have to be decided when we take up the assessment portion of the committee's work. Woods and Splichal offered assessment insights from COE's work aligning goals/outcomes/curricula/assessment.

3:24 Will announced that members of the committee are invited to meet a candidate for the university-level position in curriculum development and assessment. This opportunity will be at 2:00 PM on Thursday 9/8 (next Thursday). Woods noted that there might be value in inviting the person hired to attend this committee's meetings to advise the work.

3:26 Chair recommended that the committee consider "tightening" the list of goals and objectives from last year with an eye to greater clarity and manageability, particularly in terms of facilitating the development of assessable outcomes. Rackaway concurred, and strongly advised that the committee cut back on the number of objectives.

3:38 17-minute presentation/discussion: Chair set out one proposal (from Drabkin) for focusing the work from last year, by merging and rephrasing last year's 4 goals and 16 objectives in terms of 3 goals and 10 objectives. See appendix below. Drabkin suggested that the proposal results in something clearer, more manageable, and more inspiring. Heronemus observed that reducing the number of goals and objectives will not necessarily produce a manageable number of assessable outcomes unless the committee is careful to keep the number of outcomes reasonable as well. Heronemus approvingly noted, regarding the proposal's objective 3.3, that a liberal education program should successfully prepare students to take on "wicked problems" (a reference to one of the takeaways from this past summer's AAC&U workshop). Chair recommended that the committee give the proposal consideration, weighing the intentions of the goals/objectives developed last year against this condensed version to determine if the condensed version accomplishes the same intentions in a clearer and more concise manner.

3:55 Chair conveyed that our colleagues in academic advising are concerned that many of our most at risk students are not able to be academically successful because they lack the knowledge and skills to make good personal choices. McNeil noted that neither last year's work nor Drabkin's proposal makes explicit mention of personal responsibility and self-care (physical, mental, and social). Heronemus added that it may also be valuable to make explicit mention somewhere of financial responsibility. Chair suggested that it may be good to work this up into a "personal efficacy" objective, and further questioned whether such an objective would fit best in the foundation area (as a set of core knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the rest of the program) or in program goal 3 [proposal] or 4 [original] as more of a personal and career skills objective.)

3:58 Woods requested that the committee's homework assignment be clarified. Chair charged the committee to consider the Drabkin and McNeil/Heronemus proposals and come prepared with recommendations in preparation for next week's meeting. It was decided that the committee conduct a

pre-meeting discussion of these matters in a Wiki. Rackaway offered to add a wiki to the committee's Bb site to facilitate that discussion.

4:02 Meeting ended.

Submitted by D. Drabkin, Recording Secretary

APPENDIX TO THE MINUTES – see 3:38 above:

Program Goal 1: FOUNDATION SKILLS

Objective 1.1: Written and oral communication

Students will be able to effectively develop, express, and exchange ideas in the English language, both in writing and speaking, with clarity and coherence.

Objective 1.2: Mathematical competence

Students will be able to recognize quantitative relationships and think mathematically at a level of proficiency appropriate to the problems that they may be expected to have to deal with in their studies and their lives outside the university.

Objective 1.3: Information literacy

Students will be able to use appropriate technology to gather and filter available information and participate effectively in communities of learning.

Objective 1.4: Critical reasoning

Students will be able to effectively recognize, analyze, criticize, evaluate, and formulate arguments.

Program Goal 2: BROAD AND INTEGRATED KNOWLEDGE

Objective 2.1: Multi-disciplinary knowledge

Students will possess a broad understanding of the world's complexity by studying the achievements of diverse academic disciplines and the ways of knowing characteristic of these disciplines.

Objective 2.2: Integrative and cross-disciplinary thinking

Students will be able to make connections among ideas and experiences across the curriculum, synthesizing and transferring learning from different disciplines.

Objective 2.3: Synthesis with the major

Students will be able, in particular, to make connections between the specialized knowledge and skills of their major and other fields of study.

Program Goal 3: LIVING RESPONSIBLY

Objective 3.1: Intercultural engagement

Students will understand their own and others' cultures and be able to engage constructively with people across a range of races, ethnicities, genders, identities, abilities, histories, religions, traditions, and languages.

Objective 3.2: Ethical reasoning

Students will be able to describe situations where reasonable, well-informed people disagree about what the right thing to do is, explain the underlying values that are in apparent tension, bringing to bear relevant ethical principles and approaches, and respond intelligently to these situations.

Objective 3.3: Cooperative, creative problem-solving

Students will appreciate the world's complexity, the interdependence of natural, social, economic, and political factors, and the deep challenges to justice and happiness that can arise both on a local and a global scale. Students will be willing and able to engage civically and work in cooperation with others toward creative solutions to these problems.