

University of Denver
Faculty Senate
Minutes
March 6, 2009
International House

Senators (or proxies) present: Bill Anderson, Don Bacon, Arthur Best, Rodney Buxton, Victor Castellani, Frederique Chevillot, Bonnie Clark, Sandy Dixon, Judith Fox, Katherine Freeman, Sylvia Hall-Ellis, Michele Hanna, Jennifer Hoffman, Peggy Keeran, Ray Kireilis, Brian Kiteley, Maciej Kumosa, Frank Laird, Tiffani Lennon, Scott Leutenegger, Michael Levine-Clark (President), Chris Malloy, Don McCubbrey, Keith Miller, Sarah Morelli, Mia Mulvey, Rahul Nair, Kim Newman, Paul Novak, Maik Nwosu, Linda Olson, Colleen Reed, Charles Reichardt, Dean Saitta, Linda Tate, David Thomson, Gordon von Stroh, and Kate Willink.

Call to Order

Michael Levine-Clark, Faculty Senate President, called the meeting to order at noon and welcomed everyone present. A motion to approve the minutes from February 13, 2009 was seconded and approved.

General Education Review–Luc Beaudoin and Linda Tate

Dean Saitta

I appreciate the time and effort that the Review Committee invested in creating its proposal. The counter-proposal is intended as a contribution to the broader discussion about General Education at the university. The following concerns and criticisms have been shared with the committee and there's been no substantive response. This lack of response is troubling, since Gen Ed reform is arguably the most important and controversial issue we consider as a faculty collective.

The committee proposal *might* be a good proposal for General Education at DU, but it's not a good proposal for Liberal Education. There's a difference. General Education is easy; Liberal Education is hard. We need to decide as a faculty which way we want to go. Not only as a matter of principle, but because the choice has implications for how we use our professional schools, and whether we're serious about "synergizing" liberal and professional learning—something that DU is uniquely positioned to do. I'm for liberal education not general education, and that's why I took the time to produce an alternative set of ideas for organizing a common undergraduate curriculum.

My issues transcend the specific proposal at hand, but the basic concerns are these:

- The proposal is inconsistent with the university's Learning Goal as articulated by the UPAC Mission and Goals Task Force. The counter-proposal explains why. The Goal

calls for significant expansion, not contraction, of interdisciplinary work on campus. The Learning Goal should significantly shape what we do with the common curriculum.

- The proposal doesn't consider some wonderful environmental scanning research conducted by another UPAC task force, work that has significant implications for the project of general education. The scanning research supports the interdisciplinary project embedded in the Learning Goal. The Environmental Scanning research is available in "white papers" that are available to the campus community.
- The proposal doesn't respect its own background literature that's posted on Portfolio, especially the AACU material. This material reinforces UPAC recommendations for doing more rather than less interdisciplinary teaching and research. There's lots more literature that could have been consulted beyond the executive summaries of AACU reports and a couple of YouTube videos. I sent the committee some recommendations, including references to some good analyses that have been produced by the Teagle Foundation.
- The wisdom of the proposal is debatable not only at the high end, but also at the low end. The proposed "matrix" is conceptually problematic. Its language and structure do not harmonize with our mission and values. I explained why in the online *Faculty Forum* weblog.

In summary, the official proposal is not a recipe for educating liberally; it's a recipe for educating vocationally. It's not research based, its agenda- and self-interest based—meaning the agendas and self-interests of divisions and departments. The proposal is about making the *entire* undergraduate experience at DU safe for majors and minors, when we should have at least one robust piece that *tests* what's being learned in the disciplines and that challenges students to move beyond disciplinary ways of thinking to ways that are genuinely *transdisciplinary*. This is the essence of liberal education. The existing Core is the best mechanism we have for strengthening liberal learning, a claim that's substantiated by evidence. It's shameful that we're gutting Core without a conversation about what it's accomplished and what it can still achieve as concerns building student capacities for critical and creative thought. We need *multiple* high end contexts and opportunities for building these capacities. A single "Advanced Seminar" is insufficient.

An anecdote from the recent AHSS meeting to discuss the proposal suggests the depth of the challenge we face to overcoming unit self-interest in the cause of educating liberally. When an AHSS colleague asked why the year-long NATS Foundations sequence once again remains unchanged he was pacified by a chorus of others saying it doesn't matter, because the elimination of Core requirements means that "now we have our majors and minors back." This response is disturbing, because it puts the territorial interests of academic units above the long-term interests of students. It ignores the "best practices" for Gen Ed recommended by pretty much all the professional experts, and with what's happening in the world of ideas. It's shameful that we once again—for the third round of curriculum revision in a row—hold science constant while we tinker with everything else, as if there were no alternative views of what it means to teach scientific literacy.

To conclude: the Senate should do everything in its power to make sure that we do right by our students by taking time with the process of proposal review. It should sponsor more and better

debates of *any* and *all* ideas that faculty have about the philosophy and the structure of the common curriculum. These debates should include the important discussion of whether we want our students to be educated liberally, or just “generally.”

Luc Beaudoin

We have documents on the proposed structure and the governance structure; these were distributed to the Senate prior to the meeting.

We are not here to vote on these as a Senate, but rather to determine how the Senate will conduct a faculty vote on the proposal. While we will not vote directly on Dean’s proposal, the faculty can reject the current proposal and request incorporation of Dean’s suggestions. I have visited with representatives from all departments and received much favorable feedback. There have been some changes in wording from the previous version.

Discussion

- We have read two documents and have three curricula to compare. How are any of these better than what we already have? Is something wrong with the current core?
- The proposal takes strengths and divides them by outcomes to make the course significant for overall education. This puts the courses together to provide transferable skills – the crux of liberal education.
- Departments provide the content but the skills are transferable. The writing core at the high end is important because it engages students in a larger way than simply a disciplinary sense.
- This proposal offers outcomes from across the curriculum, and was vetted by the faculty. Many voices were heard including Dean’s. The courses that may be problematic are those from the study abroad program. Do they meet the core?
- Provost: We have a cap of 100 students for all general education courses; this comes for the Chancellor. This is 20 fewer than the current cap. Even at 30 students many core courses are difficult to handle well. We tell our students you will get to know your professors. We expect very few classes to reach 100.
- How many students do we need to seat in each requirement? Luc Beaudoin--How to relate these courses to undergraduate majors and graduate courses? Given the number of general education seats we must meet, we can offer enough seats currently. Departments will determine how to distribute those seats. Will choose how many seats are for majors and how many are for general education students. The obligation is set by the departments of how many general education courses each faculty will teach. Maybe the department can choose to open current courses to non-majors and boost enrollments.
- Dean—it is good to specify learning outcomes, but this is not a novel idea. It's something that we should have been doing with the current curriculum; i.e., having faculty within Divisions talk to each other about what makes a good common experience in AHUM, SOCS, etc.
- Need to explain to students why they need a well-rounded education. Employers want people with many ways of knowing. Parents and students need to know why we offer these classes.
- Matt Taylor—I realize each department has a representative, and that we were involved in discussions. I would still like more information, and would like a campus wide discussion.

- Michael/Luc—the content of the proposals does not need a vote from the Faculty Senate, but we must pass a motion on whether or not Faculty Senate will conduct the vote among the campus faculty.
- Linda Tate provided a handout comprising the following motion:
 1. The Faculty Senate will facilitate a vote of the faculty to consider ratification of the proposal to restructure the General Education curriculum being submitted to faculty by the General Education Review Committee.
 2. The vote will ratify both the proposed curriculum structure and its governance simultaneously.
 3. In the consideration of this proposal the voting constituency will be composed of those individuals in the Departments, Units or Schools in AHUM, SOCS, NSM, and SECS, those in DCB & JKIS, those in The Women’s College, and those in the Writing Program with full-time continuing appointments as undergraduate faculty.
 4. At the meeting designated for the vote, one Senator from each of the units comprising the voting constituency will submit a ballot (provided by the Senate office) indicating the number of members of their voting constituency who, as a result of a formal vote in her/his unit, favor the proposal, oppose it, or abstain from voting on it. These votes will be tallied by the Executive Secretary of the Senate and the Chair of NCR who will report to the Senate. Reporting will reflect the aggregate votes cast by all undergraduate faculty eligible as defined in section two above.
 5. The proposal will pass if a majority in each of the eight divisions, units, or schools listed in section three above vote in favor.
 6. The votes of the faculty concerning the General Education curriculum proposal will be forwarded in a timely fashion as a recommendation to the Provost and to the Undergraduate Council.
- The motion was seconded and approved. The motion passed:
 - In Favor—19
 - Against—11
 - Abstain—7

A revised version of the motion was approved by an email vote concluded on Thursday March 26, 2009. The revised motions and the results of the email vote are presented in the Supplement to these minutes.

Provost’s Report

Undergraduate enrollments for fall 2009 still look good. We have 8338 completed applications versus 7057 (fall 2008) and 4086 (fall 2007).

We have accepted larger proportion of applicants this year: 2609 versus 1584 (fall 2008) and 1396 (fall 2007). We have received 154 deposits versus 150 at this time last year, despite 1100 more admitted students; there is not (yet) reason to be concerned about this.

We have attracted a larger number of students of color, 2536 versus 1431 (fall 2008); 18 have made deposits versus 10 last year. We have more women than men applicants in about the same ratio as recent years. We have more out of state applicants this year. Our applicant pool is approximating the national profile.

Student behavior is different from past years. Almost no university will have a meaningful wait list; almost all students within academic profile will be admitted. The logic of students (and their parents) has changed. Students will delay deposits, get admitted, and seek to maximize their financial aid package. On Monday 120 admitted students visited campus, 60 of them made appointments with financial aid. Financial aid awards have not gone out yet.

In recent years our yield was 31-32%; if that happens this year the Provost will be teaching. It is not likely such a high acceptance rate will obtain. No one knows exactly what the game is this year. Tom Willoughby has over 30 years experience and does a good job of bringing in the right numbers, and the right students.

Students' expectations about financial aid cannot be fulfilled. We have an extra \$3 million over last year. We hope to offer this as grants, rather than as loans, to continuing students. Some situations have changed due to employment, wealth, etc. We are trying to pull funds from several sources, but we don't know if it will be enough. Hence, it is good that applications are up significantly. Some private schools are experiencing declines in both applications and operating budgets.

It is too early to tell about graduate admissions, but things look robust. For all units we have 7958 applications versus 7294 last year. Applications are evenly distributed. AHSS is roughly the same as last year. There is an increase in GSSW applications; these have tended to be counter cyclical trend in years past. Daniels has 841 applications versus 565 last year. Daniels international applications are up from 61% to 66%. Questions regarding visa, financial aid, and admission for international students will be discussed with the deans.

Questions:

Question: Were financial aid visits for need basis or for merit?---Our distinction is not about that. Students want grants not loans. We first select the class, and then we apply financial aid to that class. Aid packages are being put together now. Families who met were hedging pending financial aid information. This is not an alarming indicator, but money matters a great deal this year.

Undergraduate international student applications are at 855 versus 497 (2008) and 394 (2007).

An evaluation of transcript requests does not indicate an increase in students who may be seeking to transfer from DU to another institution.

Question: How do financial aid amounts compare between this year and last year?---Increased merit based for categories 1, 2, 3, and 4: incoming students this year pay less this year than they would have paid last year. Aid has increased more than expenses (not by much). We are

committed to meeting a certain percentage of students' needs, this percentage will not change, but we will review financial aid based on changed circumstances for students and their families. Increases for seniors, juniors, and sophomores are still in the budget. For students with changed circumstances we have an additional \$700K this year versus \$300K last year; we are working to have \$2-3 million available for such purposes next year.

Question: When will the final decisions and notifications for financial aid be made?----This is an iterative process. The initial aid packages are sent out in April; graduate packages are usually sent out on April 15th. Iterations continue through the day before Labor Day.

Question: Financial aid offers seem late; students are getting offers from other schools.----Some places have formulaic aid packages. We don't have resources for that.

Question: Website update status?----We have retained a consultant in website design, communication, and branding. We are now getting feedback; the consultant is a friend of the University and this is a low cost project. There may be some dramatic website changes. The Chancellor will have the site reviewed by some focus groups.

The Provost stated he is not a participant in the General Education Review discussions, but he did note that under some voting schemes a very small number of faculty could stop any changes.

Graduate Program Student Learning Outcomes–Don Bacon and Janette Benson

Janette Benson

There is a committee in place to work on outcomes for graduate programs. There are representatives from all graduate units. In May 2007, the Undergraduate Council approved outcomes for all undergraduate students. We need this for graduate students too, particularly in view of the upcoming accreditation review.

The committee has been doing a careful job of establishing set of outcomes that covered graduate programs. It is not clear whether it is possible to have unified document. We hope to have a document to Graduate Council by May 13, 2009, otherwise it will be fall 2009. There is a Portfolio site where interested parties can self-register.

There has been much discussion about how to handle ethics. Some units explicitly address ethics as a course, others include it within courses.

Michael Levine Clark–Submit comments or questions to Janette Benson at jbenson@du.edu, or Don Bacon at dbacon@du.edu (Don is the Senate representative to the Graduate Student Learning Outcomes Committee).

Senate Reapportionment (NCR)— Sylvia Hall-Ellis

We have reviewed who else needs representatives and the current allocation of representatives.

The current allocation does not appear equitable any longer. Units such as GSSW, Korbel, and Morgridge should probably have additional representation. The number of Senators will likely increase to 64 from the current 47. Changes will need to be approved by the Board of Trustees. The current plan is to offer additional appointments in spring 2010.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was introduced, seconded, and passed. President Levine-Clark adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

John Hill
Faculty Senate Executive Secretary

Attachments:

These two documents were distributed by email prior to the March 6, 2009 Senate meeting, and are included as attachments to these minutes:

**GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM AT DU:
Governance and Additional Comments
February 20, 2009**

**GENERAL EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER
February 20, 2009**

Supplement to March 6, 2209 Minutes Motion to Conduct a Vote on the General Education Proposal

On Wednesday March 18, 2009, President Michael Levine-Clack distributed the following email message to all Senators:

Senators,

I have attached a revised motion for the general education vote. This has been introduced by Linda Tate, the Senate representative to the General Education Committee, and was endorsed by the committee. The new motion will strike down the motion that we approved at the March 6 Senate meeting, and replace it with the language in the attached document. We will need a second to this motion (please email me). Once we have a second, we will conduct a vote. If you wish to have discussion about the motion, please email faculty-senate@du.edu. Once we have seconded the motion and had any discussion, we will conduct the vote on the motion. We will plan to complete the vote by 5:00 PM, Wednesday, March 25, but I'll hold off on opening that vote until we've had discussion.

There are several changes from the last motion:

1. The Senate will collect votes by May 8 (had been April 10).
2. The electorate is redefined as "all individuals with full-time continuing faculty appointments in departments, programs, or schools that offer undergraduate courses."
3. The language requiring approval by each division has been replaced with a statement that "the proposal will pass if a plurality of the votes cast by the electorate . . . are in favor."

The General Education Review Committee has scheduled a meeting for March 27, 12-1:30 in Sturm 286, which will be open to the entire faculty. Please consider attending to provide feedback about the proposal. The Senate will have further discussion on April 10. Assuming that this motion passes, we will then administer the vote of the undergraduate faculty, with votes to be tallied at the May 8 Senate meeting. The Undergraduate Council is rescheduling its May 1 meeting to May 22 to allow it to consider the proposal after the faculty vote. If the faculty and Undergraduate Council approve the proposal, it will go the Board of Trustees for final approval in September. The May 22 approval date would allow departments to begin planning for any changes over the summer, while the September Board vote would give enough time for the Registrar to produce the Bulletin in the fall.

The committee states that "In addition to visiting the Faculty Senate, the General Education Review Committee has been visiting units across campus since late January, and the result has been an engaging conversation both about its proposal for General Education at the University and about the role and structure of the University's undergraduate requirements in a broader sense. The Committee is happy to give more time for a campus discussion both in the Faculty Senate and at open meetings for all

faculty, such as the one the Committee is holding March 27. Delaying the tally of a faculty vote until May is a positive step in encouraging faculty to join us in discussing our proposal and future of General Education at DU."

The proposal and supporting documents are on the portfolio site (you'll need to log in): https://portfolio.du.edu/pc/port?portfolio=gen_ed

You can see two entries about the General Education Proposal on the Faculty Forum blog: <http://cockatiel.campus.du.edu/>

Thanks.

Michael

Motion

March 12, 2009

I move to strike the motion passed March 6, 2009, and replace it with the language that follows (changes are in bold):

1. The Faculty Senate will facilitate a vote of the faculty to consider ratification of the proposal to restructure the General Education curriculum being submitted to faculty by the General Education Review Committee.
2. The vote will ratify both the proposed curriculum structure and its governance simultaneously.
3. In the consideration of this proposal the voting constituency will be composed of **all individuals with full-time continuing faculty appointments in departments, programs, or schools that offer undergraduate courses.**
4. **At the May 8, 2009 meeting of the Faculty Senate,** one Senator from each of the units comprising the voting constituency will submit a ballot (provided by the Senate office) indicating the number of members of their voting constituency who, as a result of a formal vote in her/his unit, favor the proposal, oppose it, or abstain from voting on it. These votes will be tallied by the Executive Secretary of the Senate and the Chair of NCR who will report to the Senate. Reporting will reflect the aggregate votes cast by all voters eligible as defined in section two above.
5. **The proposal will pass if a plurality of the votes cast by the electorate identified in section three above are in favor.**
6. The votes of the faculty concerning the General Education curriculum proposal will be forwarded in a timely fashion as a recommendation to the Provost and to the Undergraduate Council.

On Thursday March 19, 2009, President Michael Levine-Clack distributed the following email message to all Senators:

Senators,

Dean Saitta has seconded the motion. Thanks, Dean.

Please reply to this message if you wish to discuss the motion (discussion about the proposal itself will take place at the April 10 Senate meeting). Thanks.

Michael

On Sunday March 22, 2009, President Michael Levine-Clack distributed the following email message to all Senators:

Senators,

Since there doesn't seem to be any discussion about this, I'll open up the vote. Please send your vote, of "yes," "no," or "abstain" to Sylvia Hall-Ellis (shellis@du.edu) by 5:00 PM on Wednesday, March 25.

Thank you.

Michael

On Wednesday March 25, 2009, President Michael Levine-Clack distributed the following email message to all Senators:

Senators,

Please be sure to vote on the revised general education motion by 5:00 PM today. Send your vote of "yes," "no," or "abstain" to Sylvia Hall-Ellis (shellis@du.edu). Thank you.

Michael

On Thursday March 26 2009, President Michael Levine-Clack distributed the following email message to all Senators:

Senators,

The motion on the general education vote has passed 22-1, with 7 abstentions. We will be in touch soon with details about the voting process.

Michael