

Academic Affair Committee, 15 October 2007

In attendance: Jorge Nobo (chair), Bill Roach, Tom Prasch, Frank Chorba, Karen Camarda, David Pownell, Patricia Renn-Scanlan

Minutes of the September 17 meeting were approved.

Jorge Nobo shared with the committee responses from the various schools on the suggestion that course numbers and pre-requisites be made to reflect the course toward the degree. The School of Nursing responded that it supports the idea and is consistent with it. The School of Applied Studies reported that it was “okay with the suggestion” and follows the pattern, although noting that for professional programs the first course is sometimes at the 300 level. Nobo received a 7-page email attachment from the School of Business, but was uncertain whether it answered the question.

Nobo asked for authorization from the committee for further questioning of some units, looking to ensure a consistent university-wide policy. So moved and approved.

Nobo then moved to consider a plan of attack on general education, beginning with the designated skills set, for which the faculty survey on general education suggested that the committee had a broad mandate to revise the existing system. A wide-ranging discussion of the existing skill set and possible alternatives followed, during which it was noted: that definitions were never enacted for the existing skills; that the faculty survey suggested that “listening sensitively” and “assessing human values” were the skills with least faculty support; that NCATE reviews looked for general education to address knowledge, skills, and values; that it was critical to make any revised skill set relatively simple and accommodating to transfer students; that there was some debate over whether students in the existing system got all nine listed skills, although there was also a lack of empirical data to make claims in any direction; that a number of the skills were interrelated, which suggested the possibility of consolidating a number of them; that distinctions should be maintained between empirical and normative forms of reasoning in developing skill sets; that there should be a place within the skills for creativity.

Prasch volunteered to develop a tentative framework for a revised and consolidated set of skills before the next meeting; Nobo and Roach volunteered to further fiddle with whatever Prasch proposed.

It was noted that SAS program changes would be taken up at the next meeting, which it was agreed would be scheduled on October 29 (the fifth Monday of the month) rather than November 5.

Meeting was adjourned.