

Academic Affairs Committee, October 29 2007

All committee members were present, as well as Willie Dunlap, Jera Roberts, and Linda Croucher to handle questions on SAS proposals.

The minutes of October 14 were approved.

The proposal for a new program in Computed Tomography and Magnetic Resonance was introduced by the guests from SAS. After a range of questions concerning the adequacy of library holdings (which are being addressed in current buying), online course offerings, budget issues, and likely demand for the program, the proposal passed unanimously.

The proposal to expand the Sonography program to a two-year certificate was then taken up, again introduced by guests from SAS, who noted that the change was being made to fit current accreditation standards and would add five courses (15 hours) to the program. The proposal passed unanimously.

Changes to the music program, involving revised performance and course requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Music and Bachelor of Music in Performance degrees, were passed.

Tom Prasch, with some contributions from Dave Pownell, then briefly summarized salient results from the General Education conference in Portland, Maine to which the two had been sent by the VPAA. He noted that the issues being faced here at Washburn, including how to define skill sets, how to assess outcomes, how to connect general education with capstone experiences like WTE, and how to deal with transfer students, were being struggled with by colleges focused on liberal education across the nation. He noted that at least one of the keynote speakers, Stephen Spangehi, underlined that grades needed to be considered as a form of assessment (which we have, Prasch noted, known all along). And he pointed out that the most clear broad trend in general education seemed to be away from smorgasbord approaches that saw general-coursework as something to be completed in the first two years, and toward approaches that in one way or another shaped general-education programs along developmental models that worked throughout the curriculum (through core courses, thematically organized general-education offerings throughout the curriculum, and direct linkages with capstone experiences, for instance).

This discussion provided an easy segue to Prasch's proposals for three changes in general education: a revision of the skill set; a proposed set of criteria for upper-level general-education courses; and a proposal for thematically organized general education linked to WTE experiences. Initial discussion focused on the limited flexibility some departments and professional programs faced in considering changes to general education; viable models for core courses (such as Jorge Nobo's proposal for nine hours of core general education oriented around three spheres of knowledge: cosmological; social/historical; and arts/humanities); balancing campus initiatives with accreditation oversight; concerns about transfer students and the 2+2 program; and the mechanics involved with the

existing system. Further consideration of the proposals was then postponed to our next meeting.