

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 20, 2006

Jorge Nobo, chair, convened the Academic Affairs Committee at 3:35 pm in the Boswell Room of the Memorial Union. Members present were: Pat Munzer, Jane Carpenter, David Pownell, Bill Roach, Steven Elisha, Patricia Renn-Scanlan, and Loran Smith. Invited guests present were: Bill Sparks and Roy Wohl

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The committee voted to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2006 meeting.

AGENDA 1. Approval of New Programs and Program Changes

- A. The committee voted to approve the new major of Biochemistry in the B.A. degree.
- B. The committee voted to approve the new major of Biochemistry in the B.S. degree.
- C. The committee voted to approve the revision of the major requirements in the Department of Theatre.

AGENDA: 2. Discussion of University General Education Physical Education Requirement PE 198). No Action Taken.

Bill Sparks and Roy Wohl said that the PE requirement aims at about the same objectives today as when it originated. When the PE requirement was changed some years ago, PE 198 was created to focus on wellness, hence its title, "Lifetime Wellness" which is broader in scope than the old requirement and addressed all the dimensions of health. The course consists of 1 lecture class and 2 activity classes per week in a MWF schedule and 1 lecture, 1 activity in the TR format.

Bill noted that courses offered by other institutions are accepted or given partial acceptance. The decision is based on an institution's syllabus for any particular course and how that syllabus compares with what we are trying to do. For example, an institution may offer a fitness course but that is not a wellness course. So in transferring, we may accept one hour for activity credit but a student will need to take a lecture credit at Washburn, or vice versa. One key difference with Washburn's requirement is that a Behavior Change Project and a Wellness Essay are a critical part of Washburn's course. (Roy Wohl explained the purposes of both requirements and distributed

copies of some Wellness Essays which indicated that the course had a positive impact upon students.)

Bill Sparks noted that all sections of PE 198 are the same in their theoretical component: the General Education skills (reading intelligently, writing effectively, and listening sensitively), the fitness/wellness objectives, the grading system, the textbook, and the lab manual are the same for all sections. In addition, students are required to sign an informed consent form for participation in physical activity.

In response to the question of whether Washburn still needs a PE requirement, Roy Wohl said that PE is more relevant now than ever before. With the increased levels of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, etc the course addresses behavior change and it has helped develop a wellness culture on campus. While some students object to the course, the topics it covers are essential to a healthy life. For example, controlling and managing stress is a justification for the course by itself. There is evidence that some students have made great changes in their lives as a result of the course as reflected in the Behavior Change essays.

Pat Munzer indicated that she had a concern with transfer credit from community college because students are overburdened with so many requirements when they get here. She was also concerned with students taking programs on-line as part of the 2 + 2 Plan. Many of the Plan students are out of state and need to complete this requirement via on-line. Bill Sparks said the department is aware of the problem and on-line courses are offered but these are designed to be an accommodation to "placement bound" students who are "on campus." It is difficult to offer legitimate, consistent exercise experiences with an on-line course.

Steve Elisha inquired about the nature of the activities included in the lab assignments. Roy Wohl indicated that among the assignments were a Wellness Lifestyle Assessment, Substance Abuse, Muscle Strength, Cardiovascular, Stress Lab, Nutritional Assignment, Sexual Activity, Cancer Warnings, etc. Some of the labs are surveys, some are "hands-on" experiential learning. There is a reason for every element of the course, nothing is done at random.

Bill Sparks indicated that the department is continually assessing the course. In the past, they administered Student Satisfaction Surveys every year and the results were positive.

They haven't done that in a while but every semester, Bill and Roy meet with the adjuncts who teach the course. They do a sort of in-service training, we explore what worked and what didn't work from previous semester, what problems they encountered, etc. Every few years we change to a new lab manual. They have also tried to assist faculty through on-line grading and on-line quizzes.

Jorge Nobo asked about the grading of PE 198. Bill Sparks noted that the course can be taken either P/F or for a grade. The criterion for A is that all assignments have points assigned. Points are subtracted after a student has missed the fourth (and subsequent) classes. At the end of the semester, points are added and final grade is based on normal percentage distribution (90-100% = a, 80-89% = B, etc) Both Roy and Bill said that, for the most part, students who get D and F grades do so because they fail to turn in assignments or because of absences.

Pat Munzer asked why this is the only University Requirement that allowed P/F grades and accepted a D grade as passing? The answer was that when PE 198 was created, the General Faculty insisted on this status. It was suggested that the Academic Affairs Committee, as part of its report, might recommend that the P/F designation be removed and that a C grade be required to pass PE 198.

Pat suggested to Bill and Roy that they ask Institutional Research and the Registrar's Office for data from a number of years to answer these questions:

1. How many students take PE 198 on a P/F basis?
2. How many students earn a D in PE 198?
3. How many students earned a Pass but actually earned a D?

Jane Carpenter indicated that her daughter is enrolled in a PE 198 course this semester and is pleased with the course. She said that the course allows students to internalize some of the key concepts. Of course, to be really effective, the course requires students to exercise personal responsibility; students will learn if they want to.

Jorge asked Bill Sparks if there was sufficient resources and support for the PE 198 program, especially in regard to facilities? Bill responded that one big area of difficulty is a field area; sometimes it is difficult to find a field area. The department works with athletics to be able to prevent

scheduling problems. Some facilities are used year-round by athletic teams and scheduling can become a problem, for example, the tennis courts and field areas are used by both the department and athletics.. There is a need for activity space and the Wellness Center is closed to the department even though there would seem to be plenty of space there in the early morning hours.

Asked for his "wish list" for the future, Bill Sparks focused on two items:

1. Keeping qualified adjuncts. Department has been fortunate so far in getting Ph.D. candidates from KU.
2. Space - both inside and outside. Given the number of sections, they need classroom space but they also need activity space. In addition, Bill indicated that the department wants to save the swimming pool. If we eliminated it, we would be the only major 4-year public institution in Kansas without a pool.

Asked if there would be an unreasonable burden on the PE 198 if the University required that all General Education requirements be completed in the first three years, both Bill and Roy thought there might be difficulty because space limits the multiple sections of LTW to only 25 students. In some sections that are scheduled in areas with more space, a larger number of students could be scheduled in those areas. Jane Carpenter noted that the burden would probably ease after the first couple of years.

Having no additional questions, Chairman Nobo thanked Bill Sparks and Roy Wohl for coming to the meeting and informing the committee about PE 198.

Jorge Nobo said that our next task is to look the recommendations from the various curriculum committees regarding the English, Math, and Physical Education requirements. If there is time, the Committee might want to revisit the faculty survey with respect to the general education skills promoted by the three requirements.

Next meeting is scheduled for 3:30 pm on December 4, 2006.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:50 pm.