

Curriculum Committee

Minutes of the February 10, 2017 Meeting

Present: Rob Beezer (Secretary), Peggy Burge, Kent Hooper, Martin Jackson, Chris Kendall, Alan Krause, Carson Nies, Elise Richman (Chair), Leslie Saucedo, Jason Struna, Brad Tomhave, Bryan Thines, Justin Tiehen, Benjamin Tromly, Nila Wiese.

Visitors: Robin Jacobson, Seth Weinberger.

RICHMAN called the meeting to order at 3:00 in the McCormick Room. The minutes of the February 3, 2017 meeting were approved with no changes.

Liberal Studies Major, Freedom Education Project Puget Sound Professors Robin Jacobson and Seth Weinberger visited the committee to discuss aspects of the curriculum for the proposed Liberal Studies major as part of the Freedom Education Project Puget Sound (FEPPS).

- Weinberger spoke first, providing some background about the goals of the project, and similar initiatives at Bard, Wesleyan, Stanford, Notre Dame, and Grinnell. In Washington, the state is forbidden to finance education in prisons, and Weinberger asserted that having liberal arts colleges fill this role was entirely consistent with their character, such as Puget Sound's desire to "[prepare] the university's graduates to meet the highest tests of democratic citizenship." The inmates are very interested in transforming themselves, and so providing a transformative experience is desirable. Further, a study from Grinnell suggests such programs have effects on the wider campus community, even on those not directly involved. (The committee was later promised a copy of this study.)
- Jacobson recounted some of the history of their curricular proposal and present discussions with various parts of the campus. Discussions continue with the President, Academic Vice President, Academic Standards Committee, Professional Standards Committee, Library Director, Associate Dean of Experiential Learning and Civic Scholarship, and Registrar. The full proposal will need to go before the full faculty and the Board of Trustees. They are seeking input and approval for the curricular aspects early, since it will be important for other discussions.
- JACKSON asked about what the student experience would look like. Presently, about seven courses are offered each of the three semesters (fall, spring, summer). On average, a student in this program could take two courses a semester, and so complete eighteen courses in

three full years. This would add to the Associate's Degree to provide enough courses for a Bachelor's.

- BEEZER asked what fraction of the faculty would be Puget Sound Faculty? Presently it is about one-third, but the amount in the future could be greatly influenced by institutional decisions about resources. Faculty teaching in the program would be limited to those holding a Ph.D. or currently pursuing one.
- TROMLY inquired about the nature of the interdisciplinary major, being dissimilar to other degrees with a more disciplinary focus. Jacobson and Weinberger described the evolution of the curricular aspects of the proposal that led to core courses, a bridge course, and student-initiated themes.
- THINES asked about the possibility of teaching science classes. There have already been science classes offered, with laboratory exercises. Is there Internet? No.
- TROMLY asked about advising. Each student is assigned a faculty adviser.
- RICHMAN inquired further about the "themes." Jacobson provided more explanation of how they would be developed.
- WIESE brought up ensuring standards and learning outcomes. Weinberger responded that there would be an active Advisory Board with representatives from areas like the Curriculum Committee, Academic Standards Committee, Professional Standards Committee, and the Academic Vice President and Associate Deans' offices.
- A question from RICHMAN revealed that Puget Sound core courses in Connections, Artistic Approaches, and Seminar in Scholarly Inquiry II would be needed beyond the Associate's Degree and so those syllabi would come to this committee for approval.
- TOMHAVE was interested in how similar programs are structured. Jacobson said that the program at Bard was "well-resourced", while a Notre Dame/Holy Cross program had a very broadly construed liberal studies program.
- WIESE brought up prior discussion about students needing accommodations. Weinberger mentioned that the prison had doctors and psychologists there to provide diagnosis. Jacobson said that the less-complicated situations had been handled easily.
- JACKSON returned to trying to imagine what the student experience would look like. Jacobson promised to provide a sample outline of what a student's academic program might be.
- HOOPER offered that he was enthusiastic about the proposal, and would like to see it move forward, with the Registrar and other offices sorting out the logistical questions.
- Weinberger remarked (here and on other occasions) that these were some of the best students he has had.

- Jacobson brought up the proposal's requested waiver of the university's "three upper-division courses" graduation requirement. Weinberger mentioned that with no disciplinary focus, it would be hard to decide what lay "outside" the major.
- TOMHAVE asked if this program would be unavailable to other students. Yes. Jacobson went on to explain that this would be a *program* distinct from the university's other activities. Weinberger described a separate admission procedure, and that the students would not automatically be eligible to enroll at Puget Sound upon leaving prison.

The visitors departed at approximately 3:40 P.M. in order to attend another meeting. Discussion of the nature of a new degree and/or new major continued up until 3:57 P.M. and a lightning round of Working Group reports.

- TOMHAVE suggested that a new degree, a Bachelor of Liberal Arts, might be preferable to a Bachelor of Arts with a Liberal Studies major.
- RICHMAN suggested that many of these questions might be best for the Academic Standards Committee when they were not directly related to curricular questions. BEEZER felt that broader questions of executing the delivery of the curriculum were still relevant for the committee.
- STRUNA asked how a mooted Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree would be accepted externally, say in an application for graduate studies.
- TOMHAVE returned to the question of how we would make a major available only to certain students. What if a residential student wanted to pursue a Liberal Studies major? NIES reminded the committee that we have Special Interdisciplinary Majors (SIM) already.
- JACKSON summarized three (independent) questions: (1) Will these courses look like Puget Sound courses?, (2) What constitutes a Puget Sound degree?, (3) Who has access to various courses and programs?
- HOOPER opined that he would be happy to see various rules re-written to accommodate this program.

Working Group 1 Report TIEHEN reported that their group had met just prior to the meeting to continue discussions of the Biology curriculum review.

Working Group 2 Report TROMLY reported nothing to report.

Working Group 3 Report WIESE reported that their group will be meeting Monday.

Working Group 4 Report HOOPER presented three items for approval.

LAS 399, *Latin American Travel Seminar*, as proposed by Brendan Lanctot (Hispanic Studies) and Ariela Tubert (Philosophy) for the Connections core requirement. Limited discussion was aimed to unearth that the travel component is a required aspect of the course. **Action:** Approved.

The Politics and Government curriculum review has been completed to the group's satisfaction. There had been questions sent back to the department, with responses received. Syllabi were edited and revised, and expectations for when courses would be offered have been included. There are no new major elements, and no new courses. **Action:** Approved.

The group has completed their review of a proposal for an Asian Studies minor. After some presentation and discussion, JACKSON suggested this important item be considered at our next meeting, rather than while running overtime . HOOPER promised to bring something "coherent" to the next meeting. **Action:** Tabled.

RICHMAN, Professor of Art, adjourned the meeting at 4:04 P.M. The next meeting will be on February 17 at 3 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Beezer