

Curriculum Committee Minutes for January 24, 2005

Members in attendance: Joyce Tamashiro, Ken Rousslang, Christine Smith, Sam Armocido, Michael Nanfito, Brad Tomhave, Suzanne Barnett, Jim Jansinski, Lori Ricigliano, Beckie Bailey, David Lupher, Bill Barry, Carrie Washburn, Richard Anderson-Connolly (Chair), Carlo Bonura (Secretary).

Call to order: 2pm

Announcements

The Chair announced that there were pressing issues regarding first-year seminars that needed to be addressed by the Committee and that today's focus would delay the discussion of the academic calendar and other agenda items originally set for the meeting. The academic calendar would be taken up during the January 31st meeting.

Barry presented the questions related to first year seminars. The reason for bringing these issues before the Committee was to review the "administration's interpretation of faculty will" regarding the seminars. He outlined three areas of concern:

1) The cross over of students between freshman sections and transfer students sections.

Seminars are set aside specifically for incoming Puget Sound first years and for sophomore transfer students to Puget Sound in their first year.

Barry's recollection of the full faculty meeting in which seminars were discussed was that these sections were to remain pure, even when there is a first year student that wants to join a transfer section (no crossover is allowed).

2) The "freshman experience" of seminars cannot be postponed. The only exception that has been allowed is for students who know they will be transferring from the University. The question remains of whether to allow any students to postpone.

3) Size of seminars: some seminars currently have 18 or 19 students. It is possible to recommend that OIS cap classes and not allow instructors to overload classes.

Rousslang asked if there was a recommendation from the administration as to how to the Committee should proceed. He suggested that this issue could possibly be addressed by the academic standards committee. Barry responded that these issues are in fact the responsibility of the Committee.

Barnett argued that the Committee should hold fast on all three issues. Anderson-Connolly narrowed the debate by reminding the Committee that the issue is to review the Administration's interpretation of the enforcement of certain standards.

Jansinski said that he believed that students should not be able to postpone seminars and asked if there was a real consequence for students who do not take seminars in their first year. Barry responded that some students who did not register were tracked down by the Registrars' office in order to manage students' entry into a seminar. Jansinski then suggested that maybe students that have not taken a seminar by their second year should be forced to register last.

Barnett raised the issue of transfer students dropping seminars. She said that opting out of second semester seminars is a big mistake and that there is no basis to deny a drop. The student would have to take another seminar.

Rousslang asked if Jansinski meant that all students who have not received credit for seminars would be penalized for not having two full seminars after their first year. Barry responded that there are provisions

for students who fail their seminars. Barnett said that if there were a study abroad application from a student who has not taken a seminar, she would suggest rejection of the application.

Washburn stated that Jack Roundy's office is crucial in making the importance of registering and completing seminars clearer to students through advising.

Anderson-Connolly restated the Committee's consensus that students should take seminars in their first two semesters.

Jansinski urged that penalties against students who do not have two semesters should not go into effect immediately. Rather the University should proceed for one more year to tell advisors how exactly to advise on seminars and make sure that all faculty know of the standards related to the seminars.

Armocido suggested that students be denied drop codes until they register for a similar class. Tomhave responded that the registration system is designed to facilitate student registration into new classes without having to deny them drop codes. Although it is technically possible for a student to drop from the newly registered seminar and still end up without being registered in a seminar.

Barnett expressed her hope that freshman are not allowed to take transfer sections. There is a commonality between students and different levels, she argued and that students would not have the same first year experience if they would be allowed to cross register for classes.

Anderson-Connolly raised the issue of the tension between academic interest and placement restrictions. Washburn reminded the Committee that seminars can not be part of any "course system" (major or minor), and that therefore students should not be thinking of seminars as intrinsically part of their major field of study. Tomhave suggested that if academic interest was the sole basis rejecting entry this could be interpreted by the student as saying: "now that I'm interested in it I can't take it."

Barry gave the example of a student who had taken four years of Greek and wanted to get into a seminar on Homer that was a transfer section closed to freshmen. The official answer would be no.

Rousslang asked if students had been petitioning these courses. Tomhave responded that students being contacted by registrar at this point have had a conversation about such issues that takes place with faculty advisors and advising rather than formal petitioning. Anderson-Connolly then asked if this was a decision a student could petition. Tomhave's response was that there had been no petitions and this issue has been avoided.

Barnett provided another example of a student who only wants to study Japan. She argued that maybe it's a good thing that a student should have to study other things in light of a liberal arts experience.

Jansinski suggested that with the selection process built into the application students are given the assumption that they can always "get the classes they want."

SCIS evaluation

Barry then raised the second issue needed to be addressed in today's meeting, namely a discussion of emailed evaluation questions for SCIS seminars. This process was important in that it produced information about the instruction of seminars from evaluation results that instructors were to have administered.

Anderson-Connolly suggested that instructors turn the seminar guidelines into evaluation questions. Barry agreed that this was a possibility but that the Subcommittee did not want standardized surveys.

Barnett reminded the Committee that Connections is already in effect and there are courses that are designated as Connections courses but are not listed on Cascade. Washburn informed the Committee that Asia 344 has in fact been listed as a Connections course.

[Washburn announced that the Committee's next meeting would be held on January 31, 2005.]

Smith agreed with Barnett regarding her earlier point on the importance of liberal arts education and stressed that perhaps the emphasis on diversity of coursework could be made to the students through this process.

Washburn suggested that the problem with regards to allowing students to petition this issue was related to timing. Tomhave explained that the schedule of 10th day as the final day to drop classes makes it difficult for students to petition courses.

Barnett, Anderson-Connolly, and Jasinski discussed whether entry into seminars should be petitionable based on the student's commitment to the subject matter of the course. Barry said that the answer to the problem lies in the diversity of courses available to a student and the fact that students will have other opportunities to take classes in fields that interest them.

Rousslang argued that petitions are made for things that cannot be imagined ahead of time and that the Committee should allow this issue to be petitioned because it will not be able to foresee all the possibilities related to why a student might need to gain entrance into a class. Barry reiterated that even if students were allowed to petition the basis for petitioning should not be student interest.

Tamshiro suggested that petitions should be based on course excessive course loads that a student may experience early on. Barry said that exceptions are made for students whose course loads interfere with their ability to register for seminars.

Meeting adjourned: 2:50pm.