

Faculty Senate Minutes October 12, 1998

Present: W. Beardsley, M. Birnbaum, N. Bristow, B. Browning (student visitor from *The Trail*), T. Cooney, D. Droge (visitor), R. Gomez (student), C. Hale, W. Haltom (chair), D. Hulbert, K. Hummel-Berry, R. Matthews (visitor), H. Ostrom, S. Owen (visitor), S. Rubio (student), R. Steiner, G. Tomlin, M. Veseth (visitor).

Haltom called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM.

1. There were no announcements
2. Haltom reported on his enjoyable participation in the Trustee retreat.
3. Birnbaum announced the availability of the Faculty Diversity Committee report for faculty perusal. It focuses ways to incorporate diversity into the curriculum and how peer institutions implement diversity.
4. Haltom opened the discussion on processes for revising the core curriculum. Materials distributed were a Birnbaum/Haltom/Hulbert/Steiner model proposal and an Ostrom/Bristow/Hale/Wood model proposal.

The Ostrom proposal included four core classes with a central theme of citizenship. A Writing/Rhetoric Freshman course, a special topics ("Passion") freshman course, an international studies core with a focus on global citizenship and a senior seminar on Modern Dilemmas. The remaining classes would be distribution requirements. Current cores could be adapted to fit this model. Bristow asked that core classes not be counted in the major in this proposal; however the "Passion" seminar could count as a distribution requirement, lowering the total number of cores to seven if this option was exercised. Cooney sought a clarification on the Foreign Language requirement (two classes at the 100 level). The present FL requirement (two classes fulfilling one core requirement) would be maintained. Beardsley questioned the issue of whether the "seminar-sized" classes (17 or less) would create too many new classes. Birnbaum asked why the capstone seminar couldn't be taken in the junior year rather than in the senior year. In her response Bristow emphasized the importance of having a class at the senior level to prepare students to find a place for themselves in the world outside of the campus community. Ostrom pointed out the shift from the plan A and B proposals of requiring cores every year. Steiner asked whether the senior year could be reserved for departmental courses and wanted to know how many departments have a senior thesis/seminar. Cooney said it was difficult to define because of the varying thesis writing requirements from department to department. Hummel-Berry thought that since students need to take three other classes besides the seminar, the senior core class wouldn't be a problem.

Birnbaum presented the proposal from her "team." It combined the elements of each of the other proposals (Plans A through E). She stressed the importance of including the "Global Societies" core as a sophomore seminar that emphasizes the "Citizenship Theme" and could include courses on diversity. Birnbaum's committee suggested a specific process through which the new proposals could be considered. In this process the first vote would be on the acceptance of a smaller core, the next would be to approve the freshman seminars. This committee also recommended a redesign of the Curriculum Committee so it could focus more on core course performance. Four distribution requirements would be spread across, but not necessarily represent every discipline. Rather, the "ways of seeing" that define current core categories might define new "Natural World" or "Modern Dilemmas" cores. Cooney raised the question: can Mathematical Reasoning cores be taught outside of the Math/CS department? If not, would not Mathematical Reasoning be the only core class exclusive to a specific department? Birnbaum suggested her proposal would allow the Math core to be offered outside of the department. Steiner felt students don't get the type of science course they need in the core, although he thought the SCXT core courses do give the

students at least a broader view of science. Matthews thought it would be too constraining to teach a Math course attached to a citizenship theme. Haltom didn't find it necessary for a Math course to have such an attachment, but pointed out that a course in statistics could fit in the citizenship theme. Matthews seemed concerned that Math and Science were being pushed off into the periphery. Bristow offered the possibility of a Math core being a "Passion" seminar. Beardsley suggested working on a clarification of the Citizenship theme. Bristow thought students should be more aware of the world around them and to be aware of other cultures outside of UPS. Ostrom felt students need to be better prepared to solve different world problems, and offered the possibility that another theme could surface in the deliberations, as long as the courses were distinctive. Haltom was confident a coherent theme could be developed from the plans being considered. Owen stressed the importance of one word: deliberation. Bristow found the Birnbaum proposal attractive because it prioritized the existing plans.

A copy of the Beardsley proposal was not available but the members of the subcommittee described it. The proposal is structurally similar to the Bristow's: two freshman seminars (Writing/Rhetoric and "Passion"), the difference being the option to allow the "Passion" seminar to fulfill one of the distribution requirements. The junior seminar would combine the Humanities and History to form "Modern Dilemmas." Five courses could be offered as distribution requirements: Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural World, Mathematical Reasoning and the Fine Arts. Among the courses with the Citizenship theme, one would cover global issues and another US issues. Bristow questioned the need to separate cores and distribution requirements. Cooney stressed the importance of distinguishing core classes from departmental offerings. Bristow thought the departments should be allowed to decide this issue. Birnbaum noted the lack of a thematic connection in the Beardsley proposal. Beardsley thought certain "meta-constraints" add structure to courses. Haltom returned the discussion to the process, notably: should we agree on the number of cores before the content is specified? Steiner thought the ideas agreed upon in the Senate could be passed on to the full faculty. Ostrom suggested following the process in the Birnbaum proposal. Steiner asked about the relationship between the three "distinctive" cores; after that was clarified, the exact number of breadth cores could be determined. Cooney said that of the proposals on the table, a range of 7-9 core classes seemed to be the norm. Bristow asked to have the proposed "Core-Lite" voted upon as the first step. Beardsley suggested the "old" terms from last year's deliberations be dropped (e.g., "Core-Lite") Ostrom asked whether the "Citizenship" theme and the "Passion" seminar ideas would allow for Foreign Language course to be included in the core. Birnbaum thought her team's proposal would allow for the inclusion of FL.

Haltom moved to the blackboard to outline the substance of the proposals:

- 1.) Smaller core 7-9 courses
- 2.) Distinctive courses
 - A. May not count in the major
 - B. Thematic connection (not necessarily for "Passion" seminar)
 - C. not mere "distribution"
- 3.) Distribution
 - A. department could decide if they could count toward the major or the core

Cooney preferred having 4 seminars, three linked with a "theme" and one "Passion." Neel questioned which of the cores would be considered seminars as opposed to courses. Haltom thought the seminars should be the "spine." He also felt that if the core is shrunk, more faculty could be "freed-up" to teach seminars. Cooney commented on the fact that the total units would not be changed, only that some classes would be larger and some smaller. Bristow said the number of courses a faculty member teaches is not as important as which of their distinctive non-major classes should be included in the core. Neel thought a junior seminar would be preferable to a senior one. Veseth stressed the importance of including newer faculty in the discussion because they could provide input in answering the questions "what do we need, what do we want?" Haltom suggested the ready-made answers to these questions could be found in the reigning proposals. After they answered, the questions surrounding the theme and the "Passion"

seminars could be addressed. Regarding the Citizenship issue: Neel asked if American Multicultural issue could be offered as a sub-theme to Citizenship. Haltom suggested the use of thematic coherence by dividing Citizenship into two categories: Global and US.

As the discussion moved to the subject of Distribution courses, Beardsley reiterated the “what do we need, what do we want” questions. Bristow suggested courses should be seen either as having a relationship to the major or to the core. Birnbaum felt the exposure students need is one that is a comprehensive representation of many subjects. Cooney suggested keeping Foreign Language as a core option. He also mentioned the option students have in using AP credit to fulfill the distribution requirement. Beardsley cautioned the Senate not to tie this report to any previous proposals. Bristow commented on the similarity of the three reports, and how they resulted nearly the same model. Tomlin asked if this “hybrid” model would be put up top a full faculty vote. Haltom answered in the affirmative but asked that the term “hybrid” not be used in the present model. Hulbert commented on the consideration in the Birnbaum proposal of including studio art in the Fine Arts core. Cooney said the issue was debated in the 1976 core deliberations, but thought it was a non-issue because since that time no core courses had been proposed in this area.

Haltom reminded the Senate that the motions on the previous proposals have been tabled, so they are still available. He also said the Ad Hoc Core Committee no longer existed.” Beardsley asked whether we should go back into the committee as a whole. Cooney suggested asking the faculty to allow the Senate to make a motion on their proposal. After deliberations in the full Faculty meeting, Ostrom suggested bringing the results back to the Senate, even if the discussion fails to bring a consensus. Cooney urged the Senate to compare the revised document on the core curriculum to the individual requirements in the major and to graduation requirements, so as to avoid any conflict.

Beardsley MSC a motion to allow the Faculty Senate chair to summarize the above-mentioned procedures with corrections/additions/comments from Senators with the intent that this motion would have the full support of the Faculty Senate.

Cooney reminded the Senate of the time needed to copy the proposals for distribution. Haltom said he would write a cover letter along with the summary and urged the Senators to reply in an expeditious manner.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane Hulbert