

**Faculty Meeting Minutes
December 9, 1996**

President Pierce called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. in room 103 of McIntyre Hall. Sixty-seven voting members of the faculty were present by 4:25 p.m., and 74 by 4:53 p.m.

Minutes of the December 3, 1996 faculty meeting were approved as distributed.

There were no announcements.

Dean Potts offered two observations, based on his experience with the faculty here and at three other very strong colleges. First, he said that we have a better faculty of teacher-scholars than almost anyone here fully understands. Second, he said that, collectively, we are as a faculty in a position of great strength as we discuss the core. He said the discussions are an extraordinary opportunity to redesign curricular opportunities for students.

At 4:05 p.m. we moved to a committee of the whole to continue discussion of the core. Discussion focused primarily on the idea of freshman seminars. The attached document contains informal notes on the discussion, and are provided for our temporary use during deliberations. They are not part of the official record of faculty business.

We adjourned at 5:25 p.m. with no report from the committee of the whole.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Finney
Secretary of the Faculty

Informal Notes of Faculty Discussion in a Committee of the Whole December 9, 1996

Theodore Taranovski M/S/F "to discontinue the consideration of freshman seminars as a part of the revision of the Core curriculum." In discussion, some argued that the freshman year as currently constituted works fine, and that we should therefore move on to discuss other areas of the core that are perhaps in greater need of attention. Others argued that faculty have been discussing and interested in freshman seminars for a long time, and that it was therefore illogical to vote to discontinue discussing them. A paper ballot was taken, yielding a 33-33 tie vote. President Pierce cast the deciding "no" vote, and the motion failed.

James Evans M/S/F "that the faculty, meeting in committee-of-the-whole, adopts the following resolution:

In the freshman year, each student should take two seminar courses (one each semester) devoted to two different themes or disciplines. These courses shall be small (15 to 17 students), shall introduce students to challenging ideas and significant texts, and shall be writing- and discussion- intensive.

The university should retain some already existing alternative paths through the freshman core requirements. In particular the existing Honors and Humanities Programs should continue to provide two-semester sequences that will satisfy the freshman requirement.

To meet the needs of students with many different interests and academic backgrounds, the university should retain some of the present process-oriented freshman courses. In particular, each student should be free to replace one of the seminar courses by either a freshman writing course or by a freshman course in oral communications.

Finally, it should be noted that nothing precludes faculty who are now participating the freshman core (sic) from participating in the revised core. Indeed, we shall all need their expertise, creativity and cooperation to make the new freshman program a success."

Taranovski M/S/F "to amend the Evans motion by striking the second sentence of the second paragraph, 'In particular the existing Honors and Humanities Programs should continue to provide two-semester sequences that will satisfy the freshman requirement.'"

He argued that the Honors and Humanities programs should not have to bear such a burden. Others countered that existing Honors and Humanities courses already provide positive experiences for freshmen consistent with current discussions about freshman seminars, and that the sentence should not be stricken. Taranovski's motion failed on a voice vote.

David Tinsley M/S/F "to amend the Evans resolution by reducing the number of required freshman seminars from two to one." Discussion seemed to turn on the likely impact of one or two seminars on existing written and oral communication courses. Some faculty feared that seminars would take students away from the skills training they so badly need, while others welcomed the opportunity to work to build skills training into the freshman seminars themselves. A voice vote was too close to call, and a hand count yielded a tie vote, 29-29. President Pierce cast the deciding "no" vote, and Tinsley's motion to amend the Evans motion failed.

The Evans motion then failed on a hand vote, with 26 in favor and 34 opposed. In discussion leading up to the vote, the issue of staffing received some attention. Some argued we do not have enough faculty to staff up to 80 sections of a freshman seminar, while others worried that not enough faculty can provide quality instruction in written and oral skills in these seminars. President Pierce said that we should discuss the ideal curriculum, and that we would then seek a way to staff what we most believe in.

We adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

(Notes by John Finney, Faculty Secretary)