

Minutes – Faculty Council Meeting

February 8, 2011 – 8:30 a.m.

CSR Conference Room, Bldg. 373, Room 206

Present: Greg Crawford (Chair), Doug Corrin, Duane Friesen, Debbie Hearn, Greg Klimes, Gara Pruesse (Recording), Tim Stokes, Eric Demers, Dave Bigelow, Mark Noyon, Liz Gillis (S&T Working Group on Breadth Requirements), Todd Barsby (Curriculum Committee)

Regrets: Michael Girard, Jim Wilkinson, Rosemarie Ganassin

Approval of Agenda:

Motion to approve: Greg Klimes

Seconded: Mark Noyon

All in favour. **CARRIED.**

Minutes of January 25, 2011:

Motion to approve: Greg Klimes

Seconded: Debbie Hearn

All in favour. **CARRIED.**

Report from Liz Gillis, Chair, S&T Working Group on Breadth Requirements:

Liz gave an overview of the Working Group's findings on English and breadth requirements: the result of the Group's proceedings is an information document and recommendations to bring to the next full Faculty meeting. The Committee was formed at a S&T Faculty meeting in May 2010 to review breadth and English requirements at VIU and at other institutions with the object of being proactive as a Faculty, as the institution reviews and possibly reformulates these requirements.

Liz summarized the findings of the study of 17 comparable institutions, as well as the current requirements at VUI. English VIU requires two English courses; in a few programs a B+ in the first is sufficient to waive the second. (See Attachment 1 for more details.)

Discussion of the English requirement ensued. Greg noted that the model is changing at some American universities: "Writing Across the Curriculum" is one new approach; requiring courses identified as writing-intensive is another. A course for writing in the sciences was suggested.

The Working Group's recommendation is expected to be: "If English requirement is reviewed by the institution, our recommendation will be that there needs to be one across-the-board requirement for

Bachelor degrees: two English courses, one of which is composition.” The Working Group will meet soon and actual recommendations will emerge then.

Liz reviewed breadth requirements at VIU: the university-wide requirement is six credits in each of three disciplines from three Faculties. There are six Faculties; however, breadth is not in the VIU calendar as a requirement and there is no enforcement.

Other institutions encompass a variety of breadth requirements, sometimes called distribution requirements. Trends: some institutions have no distribution requirements. Mainly, six credits from each of three areas: Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities; Science & Math. An interesting example is Lethbridge: 12 from each of three areas; liberal studies counts in several. (See Attachment 1, Table 2: Summary of Distribution Requirements.)

Recommendation: when VIU reviews breadth, Science and Technology supports six credits from each of those three Faculties.

Most science students already do this; impact will be students from outside our Faculty taking Science courses. Liz said the Committee acknowledged the demand that would be created could not be met with the resources we currently have, and it would not recommend implementing the recommendation at the cost of current resources dedicated to science students and their programs, but it was outside the scope of the Committee to execute an impact study.

The Committee will take this to the Faculty as a whole; the document including the information and the recommendations will be made available in the near future.

Discussion ensued as to: did other institutions offer special courses directed at satisfying breadth for non-major? Greg Crawford noted that it was good to identify learning outcomes for “breadth in science.” He noted that for S&T to be able to support a breadth in science requirement, the Faculty will need more resources; given the current course enrollment situation (science students get breadth in other Faculties, but not so much the other way around), such a move to breadth might involve a net financial gain for Science and Technology.

Liz said the Committee will recommend that our Faculty start to seriously investigate the implications. Before we, as a Faculty, take a stance, we need impact analysis.

The other Faculties are Management, Education, Trades and Tech. Liz said some departments may be classified as “Social Science” etc., even if they are not in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Breadth only for the BA and BSc is what is being considered by the Committee.

There was discussion on what breadth achieves, with reference to a Mt. Alison study, considered by the committee. Leaving breadth till third or fourth year may obviate its purpose. VIU policy on breadth is not well motivated. Exposure to options? Other reasons? Goals as stated in VIU policy could be met within one discipline.

ACTION: Greg asked that the Committee include a draft list of considerations regarding a science breadth requirement: What should the learning experience be about? Gara Pruesse will carry this to the Committee.

Teaching/Service Award – Erik Krogh:

Erik noted that Debbie has been working at the institutional level for some time to recognize teaching. The following summary was provided by Erik.

Purpose: To recognize and celebrate excellence in the practice of teaching and the impact this has on student success.

- Annual selection open to all teaching faculty
- Needs a credible and transparent process
- Press release and free lunch?

Proposed process: Nomination initiated by students and supplemented by supporting statement from one peer and one former student. (Consultation with Liesel Knaak in the IEL@viu team?) Generally expected that the recipient will have demonstrated some of the following attributes;

- Effective and clear communicator
- Use of innovative and effective teaching methods
- Dedication to appropriate disciplinary content and rigour
- Enthusiasm and depth of knowledge in the subject
- Inspire students to learn material
- Interest in student success

It was mentioned that a similar campus wide initiative that was being developed in the VP's office and that considerable work was done on this some years ago.

Make it clear that we are not trying to identify the best, but rather recognize excellence Ensure that the process is more than popularity contest Keep process administratively light Maybe choose top three

Discussion ensued: that the awards celebrate excellence, but not about who is best; discussion of awards that are independent of the University-wide awards being developed. Eric Demers noted that the Academic Plan (Sections 11, 12, 13) mentions these, and the institution is expected to come up with some within the next two years.

ACTION: Greg Crawford will talk to Dave Witty about establishing a separate award.

Award may be once a year; winner may not be re-nominated for two more years. Award should highlight excellence, not identifying someone as “best.” Erik said criteria were explored with students as to what makes a good teacher.

MOTION: *That the Faculty of Science and Technology create a Subcommittee to work with IEL (Innovation and Excellence in Learning @ VIU) to develop criteria and a process for an annual S&T Teaching award to recognize outstanding teaching in the area of Science and Technology.*

Motion to approve: Doug Corrin

Seconded: Gara Pruesse

All in favour. **CARRIED.**

ACTION: Christine Couture will put this on the agenda for the next Faculty meeting; a call for volunteers for the Committee will be made at the February 22 Faculty Meeting.

Dean's Report:

This is the end of the fiscal year; if there are further expenditures, department Chairs should communicate with Leslie Szeler and Greg Crawford. Workload Reports are mostly in and Greg will be discussing workloads within the next two weeks. Impacts of budgets have yet to fall out – end of February/beginning of March is when they are expected. Open forums on the budget are to be held by Dave Witty. Greg will pass on information about the process as it comes to him. Patrick Ng is aware that things may change regarding scheduling.

Senators' Report:

Senate met on February 3. Greg Crawford reported that the issue of non-instructional faculty representation in the governance structure at VIU has been discussed at Senate and at P&P. In December, Senate revoked a previous resolution (from December 2008) that non-instructional faculty be represented at Senate; therefore, S&T is to make recommendations for the representation of its non-instructional faculty. It was observed that “non-instructional” covers several employee categories: Laboratory Demonstrators, Co-op Instructors, and Elders were offered as examples of faculty not named in the University Act definition of Faculty Member, but who should have Faculty Member status with respect to the University Act definition. (Other faculty categories will be represented by other means.) Greg reported that he will be going back to Senate to propose this.

Rob Wager's proposal will be to amend the bylaws of S&T, to more clearly identify lab demonstrators as Faculty Members.

ACTION: Greg to follow up with Rob.

Greg reported that Senate considered a draft policy recommended by P&P, including a procedure for program review, and for program elimination and suspension. These also need to be vetted by the Senate Bylaws Committee before they can be passed by Senate. Greg reported that the Framework Document (attachment to the P&P meeting of January 10, 2011) was discussed at Senate, including an issue raised by this Faculty Council, i.e., the definition of “program” and the exclusion of block transfers from the definition, and therefore, from an established procedure for formative and summative review. Senate was of mixed opinion on the topic; it was sent back to P&P who were asked to consider the issue and make recommendations.

GBET: Dave Witty proposed suspension of GBET for another year at Senate, to deal with the students in a timely manner, and to allow summative assessment results to be released. Senate recommended suspension of the GBET program to the Board.

Curriculum Committee Submissions:

SCIE Curriculum Development:

Greg Crawford briefed Council on Western Science/Indigenous Knowledge courses. We will have a special meeting on February 22 on this topic, at which time Suzie Nilson will make a presentation.

There are two courses: a 100-level course and a 300-level course, to be jointly taught by a Science faculty member and an Elder. Greg said we need to vet, ensure they are science courses and uphold our usual standards, if they are to be offered as such; it is the University and the First Nations Community who requested that these courses be created. They are for Aboriginal students to connect their cultural heritage with science, and for science students to gain cultural perspective and sensitivity to the First Nations People.

There was discussion as to how it would satisfy a student's elective needs.

Greg noted that in the absence of a "home" departmental, Steve Earle and Erick Groot stood in for a department in formulating the courses.

Todd Barsby presented possible issues that Curriculum Committee might have: one is that there is much overlap with First Nations Studies courses. Greg suggested they run them through FNAC; perhaps cross-listing is a solution.

Discussion ensued of whether these courses should receive base funding in times of cuts and program suspensions; and discussion of where they fit in the "Future Directions of S&T."

Earth Science:

Tim Stokes reported that Earth Science proposes three new courses and some course changes:

New lab course GEOL 115: lab and field studies to better prepare students for second year courses. Tim explained they will simultaneously reduce the number of labs in GEOL 111 and 112. Students can take GEOL 111 and 112 as lab experience, but it will not be so overwhelming for those who are taking it without the intention of completing the Minor. Those who wish to complete the Minor can take GEOL 115 as well. Motivation: some students who are taking Earth Science as electives get driven away by the large number of labs.

Corrections to contact hours in the new matrix: (3:0:1.5) for GEOL 111; (3:0:1.5) for GEOL 112. GEOL 305 changes were discussed. GEOL 491: number of weeks should be 26; number of students to be fixed in consultation with Todd Barsby.

Motion to approve: Doug Corrin
Seconded: Greg Klimes

All in favour. **CARRIED.**

Bus Replacement: Tabled

Motion to adjourn: Doug Corrin
Seconded: Greg Klimes

All in favour. **CARRIED.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:04 a.m.