Minutes of meeting held Wednesday 12 March 2003
4-5 pm, 261 Gardner Hall

Present: (Members) Christina Curras, Beth Frieders, Julie McDonald
(Ex Officio) David VanBuren
Absent: (Members) Rosalyn Broussard, Dennis Ciesielski, Machelle Schroeder
(Ex Officio) David Boyles, Dick Schumacher

Meeting agenda

1. Approve minutes of 26 February 2003 meeting (on S-drive and distributed by email from Beth)  OK as distributed
   Old Business (related to Item 2): Julie had nothing new to report since the February meeting of the ASC. She had already met with each member of the Math Department.

2. Create draft of report to give to UUCC
   Items that I can think of:
   1) Overview of what we have done last year and this – 5 yr review, examples of evaluation forms. OK to include as background info at beginning of report to UUCC.
   2) If there is no Director of General Education next year (or ever), who will do the job as it pertains to this committee?
      -- The consensus was that the current committee could not take over David Boyles’ job as it relates to the ASC.
      -- One possible solution: Increase the committee membership to 9 (3 from each college). The Chair of the ASC could take over Dave’s administrative role (collecting portfolios, Xeroxing, liaison to UUCC) and then not be responsible for actually reviewing any of the portfolios. Two other faculty could serve as “coordinator” (to put agendas together, deal with questions from faculty, send out letters, etc.) and as secretary. This would still leave six faculty members to continue to review portfolios.
      -- It was not clear to the committee how Dave’s release time was divided between the dual roles for Assessment and General Education. The Committee hoped the administration would continue to fund the aspect of the position that related to support for the ASC.
      -- This issue should be the last item in the committee report to the UUCC
   3) General feeling on campus that this review is a waste of time, an imposition. What will UUCC do to help with this?
      a. Portfolios were submitted for only ~50% of the courses. Will UUCC enforce their submission and how?
      b. Portfolio quality was poor for some – incomplete, insufficient, or no time spent (garbage dump of irrelevant info). A few faculty did not consider this an important endeavor and gave us meaningless information, wasted our time.
c. We are working to improve by:
   i. Earlier communication with programs
   ii. Revised letter, more clearly stating our goal and requirement
      Could there also be a letter (perhaps from UUCC) indicating that
      the ASC has been charged by the UUCC to conduct the review of
      the general education courses and that this review is being
      conducted in preparation for the next NCA visit?
   iii. Meetings with programs to answer questions
   iv. Providing examples of good narrative and portfolio
      Teams should be collecting samples of good and bad submissions.
      (David VanBuren recommended looking up a previous UUCC
      document submitted by David Krugler for a history course.  David
      felt it provided a good justification for inclusion as a liberal arts
      course.)

4) Econ 4930 and 4940 should not be listed as Lib Art - Social Science electives.  
   All of the pre-requisites for these courses count in this area, why are they here?
   This course is identified only as an example of a course that UUCC should
   consider removing from the list of courses meeting general education
   requirements.

5) Is looking at “what is taught” rather than “what is learned” an appropriate
   assessment strategy? If not, what should we do?

   It is appropriate IF it is one form of assessment in conjunction with other forms.  
   ASC can look at the “input” and the Assessment Committee can look at the
   “output.”  The ASC was charged with looking at “what is taught.”  It is not our
   purview to judge “what is learned.”

6) Most of the competency courses seem to do a great job of fulfilling the listed
   standards.

7) Some of the liberal arts courses also do a great job of fulfilling the listed
   standards.  However, some do not.  Questions and concerns that were raised
   during this review process:
   a. Should a course fulfill all of the standards in any particular area?
      Example:  Should research projects be required in all liberal arts courses?
   b. Should a “2nd course only” course be held to the same level as other
      electives in fulfilling all of the standards in that area?  Yes!  Is it possible
      that the 2nd course (which is to be for depth) may be too narrow?
      Consider, for example, using POSC 3340 Modern Japan to fulfill the
      Historical Perspective requirement and then using SPCH 3750 Rhetoric of
      Western Thought (second course only)?  Where is the depth?
   c. If a course can be used as an “either/or”, why can it not count as “both”
      since standards for both areas must be taught in that course?  The issue is
      to not double-count courses.  It also allows for tailoring for students
      transferring in courses.
   d. Some competency standards are outdated and confusing, do not mesh with
      current requirements:
i. “Communication” mixes Speech, English Comp I and II, and Foreign language.

ii. Critical thinking and information literacy seem to be merged into the basic liberal arts standards.

e. Some standards in the basic liberal arts, and in particular sub-categories of liberal arts, need to be reviewed by faculty in those areas:
   i. Can they be stated better?
   ii. Are they still appropriate?
   iii. Examples of specific issues that came up this year:
      1. what is the “western ethical tradition of justice”?
      2. does gender studies = ethnic studies = racism?
      3. does women studies = gender studies = sexism?
      4. can “racism” and “sexism” be examined by means other than through literature, such as through art or music? We propose term “media” rather than literature.
      5. what does “significant writing component” mean and does it need to be the same for all liberal arts courses?
      6. The standards for ethnic and gender studies need to be separated.
      7. There needs to be discussion of the standard for a research project. (See 7.a above.)
      8. What is the validity of counting a 2nd semester foreign language course as a Humanities course?

3. Other?

   We, as reviewers, are pointing out areas of concern, sometimes in very vague terms. We then forward our concerns to the UUCC and other administrative personnel (such as David VanBuren and David Boyles) to provide a beginning point for the review of the current standards. We acknowledge that this process will take several years.

Next Meeting is scheduled for March 26.

Our goal is to get a report to the UUCC in early April.