

COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE FACULTY SENATE MEETING
3:30 p.m., Monday, 23 April 2007
165 Bascom Hall

1. Announcements and Questions.

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. by the chair, Chuck Halaby, Associate Dean for Social Sciences. He indicated that Dean Sandefur had designated him, as Senior Associate Dean, to chair the meeting, and conveyed Dean Sandefur's apologies.

Associate Dean Halaby announced that nominations were being sought for seats on the L&S Academic Planning Council (one faculty seat in the Humanities, and one member of the instructional academic staff).

2. A motion to approve minutes of the L&S Faculty Senate meeting held 10 April 2006 was approved.

3. Annual Report of the Curriculum Committee, 2005-2006, 2006-March 26 2007.

Professor John Coleman (Political Science), Chair of the L&S Curriculum Committee presented the report. In addition to the usual business, the Committee has been engaged in implementation of revisions to the L&S baccalaureate degree requirements (known colloquially as "BABS07") approved in April 2006 and due for implementation in May 2007. Policy matters and technical issues have been addressed by the Committee, which has worked with offices, units, and staff across the university to ensure smooth implementation. Issues of particular interest to L&S faculty and departments were highlighted:

- a. BABS07 allows L&S students to take a limited number of credits (12) in any course approved for credit at the university level. Students may therefore reach broadly across the whole university curriculum, which they could not do under prior rules.
- b. Elimination of the "Eighty-Credit Rule" allows students to earn more credits in their major department, if they wish to probe their subject more deeply. (Departments continue to be limited in the number of credits they may require in the major.) Departments may impose department-level restrictions if they wish.
- c. Undergraduate students who enroll in and pass graduate courses may now count those credits toward completion of their undergraduate degrees. They must meet course prerequisites to enroll in graduate courses; for most, those prerequisites are "Graduate standing or consent of instructor". Instructors are encouraged to consider the student's preparation for and capacity to complete these courses before granting

permission to enroll.

Additional information can be located online, at <http://www.lssaa.wisc.edu/babs07/>. Professor Coleman concluded that the revisions are intended to streamline and clarify the requirements, while also providing them with more intellectual opportunities.

There were no questions. A motion to accept the Report was unanimously approved.

4. A motion to file the Annual Report of the Academic Planning Council, 2005-2006, 2006-April 2007 was approved.
5. Annual Report of the Faculty Honors Committee, 2005-2006.

Jeff Shokler, Associate Director of the L&S Honors Program presented the report. He noted that some time in 2009, the program will be housed in the Washburn Observatory, following a historic renovation that will include upgrades to increase space for offices, confidential advising, events, and student organizations. (The Department of Astronomy will continue to control the telescope and offer observation events.) The Honors Program continues to be active in sponsoring undergraduate journals and to participate in honors-level study-abroad opportunities, and now sponsors the rejuvenated UW-Madison forensics team. Dr. Shokler concluded by encouraging senators and their colleagues to work with the program and to respond to calls for proposals to create new courses.

A motion to accept the report was approved.

6. Discussion Item: UW-Madison Reaccreditation Project

UW-Madison is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and every ten years, the university submits itself to a formal review to ensure that we continue to meet the standards for accreditation. That review consists of completion of a self-study process that culminates in a report, after which the institution is visited by a group of peer-reviewers who submit a report and recommendation to the HLC. In the past, UW-Madison has used the self-study process to pursue topics of interest to the university, for purposes of developing its strategic plan. The reaccreditation project leaders are developing themes to guide the self-study; to that end, two discussion questions had been presented to the Senate, and Professor Nancy Mathews (Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, Chair of the University Reaccreditation Project) and Professor Robert Drechsel (School of Journalism and Mass Communication) joined the discussion. Professor Mathews is the chair of the reaccreditation project, and Professor Drechsel was invited to lead this portion of the Senate's discussion.

Professor Mathews noted two questions were asked to help the university face the future:

“What will it mean to be a great public university in a changing world? How will UW Madison uniquely embody this greatness?” She expressed hope that this discussion and others would help develop themes to organize the self study. She discussed the project structure and goal of developing a workable strategic plan for the university. Professor Drechsel observed that a key part of this process is the “bottom-up” development of a list of issues important to the institution, informed by governance processes and faculty participation, as an expression of what is valued as fundamental to UW-Madison’s excellence. He asked Senators to share their perspectives on what they value most about the university and seek to preserve. Many points were made in the long and engaging discussion that followed. When several “keywords” were proposed as a means of organizing topics raised, one member criticized that strategy as collapsing the complexities of the institution, its history, and its challenges into overly broad ideas. The summary below attempts to categorize comments without oversimplifying comments.

- Preserve academic freedom. A great public university must be able to ask questions on a range of issues without fearing the legislature’s response, or that investigations into particular topics will compromise financial support for the whole university.
- Encourage diversity, in all its forms. A great public university is committed to diversity, which includes diverse intellectual positions, a diverse student body, and a diverse faculty and staff. Recent decisions regarding LGBT issues create a climate that isn’t welcoming to those groups, creating a two-tier economic system and making the university less competitive and less diverse. *Diversity* encompasses also the range of programs available to students, and programs large and small have roles to play at UW-Madison. It includes helping students be literate on a global scale, that they understand international issues and world events, and that they have access to the huge array of languages taught in L&S, the better to connect with people all across the world.
- Use the “Wisconsin Idea” to address pressing issues. Global warming, cited as “the biggest issue before us”, could be addressed by the university as an area of special focus. Others observed that as the university responds to the need to investigate and understand many critical questions, such issues will necessarily be addressed – no particular one should be singled out.
- Maintain research excellence by expanding research. The excellence of the university is in its ability to conduct excellent research across all disciplines, at all academic levels, teaching students to distinguish good information from bad, training citizens to think and to use evidence to draw valid conclusions.
- Maintain academic excellence by promoting the value of high quality liberal education. Undergraduate education that is both broad and deep benefits students and the state by supporting ethical and creative and clear thinking in an era that demands creative problem-solving, when “intellectual skills *are* practical skills”.
- Persist in upholding institutional traditional values, since despite the changing world, the university’s challenges and responsibilities are constant. The university needs to maintain its research strength, quality of undergraduate education, and commitment to untrammelled and free inquiry. The university needs to be careful not to change what

works well and what has created that which is distinctive about UW-Madison.

- Maintain the distinctiveness of a UW-Madison education, and the foundations that support it. Members noted that UW-Madison students study not only the acquired facts but also engage with people who are creating knowledge. But to continue to do both well, the university needs to support its infrastructure (e.g., the library, research labs, and other aspects of the graduate and undergraduate enterprises).
- Continue to recognize – as part of what makes the university distinctive – its expansion into understanding better the world beyond the margins of the state and nation. This means also continuing to develop new ways of understanding and of understanding other traditions that can inform and transform long-held institutional values.
- Integrate institutional values into university processes that support and integrate them. The example cited was that of interdisciplinary research, or public outreach, both of which could be better integrated into processes for tenure and promotion.
- Improve the way the university communicates about its mission with the people of the state, legislators and constituents alike. This includes not just talking with those people, but listening to them as well. One member observed that some people may need to be persuaded that UW-Madison is a great university, and that it should not be allowed to decline into being merely “good enough”. Another member proposed making public service a higher institutional priority.
- Support innovation by developing greater institutional flexibility. Such flexibility might be as complex as fostering connections to other universities to expand program offerings, for example, by pursuing joint degrees with other institutions (like tribal colleges or HBCU’s, within the US and abroad). Or it might be as simple as reducing impediments to team teaching.

Professor Drechsel noted that these comments would be shared with the reaccreditation project leaders, and would contribute to the discussion of what key themes would guide the study.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Submitted by Elaine M. Klein, Ph.D.
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Secretary, L&S Faculty Senate