

BRIEF NOTES

Letters and Science Academic Planning Council

December 2, 2014, 1-2:30 pm, 101 South Hall – *approved January 20, 2015*

Chair: Karl Scholz

Members present: Matt Turner, Jennifer Noyes, Clark Johnson, Brian Hyer, Harry Brighthouse, Anna Gemrich, Dan Kapust, Diane Gooding, Angela Powell, Jan Edwards

Observers present: Devon Wilson, Anne Gunther, Nancy Westphal-Johnson, Eric Wilcots, Greg Downey, James Montgomery, Gery Essenmacher, Kimbrin Cornelius, Susan Ellis-Weismer, Elaine Klein

1. Announcements. KS noted the L&S Faculty Senate recently met, and accepted as submitted the L&S Curriculum Committee and L&S Annual Report. He provided an update on the search to find a new assistant dean for the FIGS position, with Greg Smith retiring. And, in looking to next semester, he noted several programs will be submitting their program review to the APC.

2. Approval of Notes, November 4, 2014. Minutes approved by those present at the meeting. (Name error noted).

3. Action Item: Request to Discontinue a Low Enrollment Academic Program: ACS-Accredited Bachelor of Science - Chemistry (Major Code 157, Department of Chemistry). EW led discussion. Historically, the program was taken by students interested in pursuing a professional career and/or graduate school in Chemistry, and wanting to meet ACS certification requirements. The ACS requirements have changed and the program is no longer consistent with them. And now, students pursuing the regular Chemistry major can easily take courses required to meet the ACS requirements. There has been a dramatic decrease in students graduating from the program (3 in the past 10 years), and currently one student is enrolled. Faculty determined discontinuing the program makes more sense than trying to revive it. The remaining student may finish the program. Members unanimously approved the request to discontinue the ACS-Accredited Bachelor of Science – Chemistry.

4. Discussion items.

(a) L&S Curriculum Committee Recommendation: Mandatory Major Declaration for L&S Undergraduates. DK summarized the L&S Curriculum Committee discussion and approved policy change regarding major declaration. A summer working group discussed the rationale and developed an outline of a potential new policy, and it was discussed several times during the fall in committee meetings. The approved policy will require L&S undergraduates to declare a major by a threshold of 86 credits. If an undeclared student goes beyond this threshold, a hold will be placed on his or her record. This will require undeclared students to meet with an advisor or dean and have a conversation about declaring. DK noted the benefits associated with major declaration: timely graduation, connection to department resources, connection to peers pursuing similar interests, and locking in graduate requirements. He reported an implementation committee will coordinate with campus partners to work on a communications plan and implementation of the technical details. Ultimately, the goal is to change the culture of when major declaration happens. In discussion, members wondered:

- How this might affect students working on major entrance requirements? NWJ noted few L&S programs have entrance requirements. For those few, most students can meet them well before they are a senior. GE advisors and deans plan to work together with students who have 86 credits but have not yet met entrance requirements; plans will be individual to the student. Some may need an exception for one semester and encouragement; others will be unlikely to ever meet those requirements, and need to choose another major to complete their degree. This policy will require students to have those conversations.

- How might this affect students struggling academically, or who may have disabilities that may be affecting their academic progress? GE noted that we have the capacity to specialize or target communications to certain groups of students, one could be students that are struggling academically. Council members agreed that implementation will need to be managed with great sensitivity to these issues, and appreciated that the new policy may create opportunities for struggling students to get connected to resources to help them.
- Why not earlier than 86 credits? DK noted that we didn't want increase exceptions or needless bureaucracy, but also want students to understand major declaration is important; this seems to be the balance.
- Does L&S Dean's services have enough resources for this? GE: We will ramp up as we need to, at first. But ultimately, we expect the number of students that actually hit this threshold to decrease year to year, because of the increased attention to communications.
- Did you look at how this might affect different population groups? DK: We did look at transfer students specifically, but that was the only other group. EMK noted targeted minority groups had also been looked at.

(b) Promoting Curricular and Instructional Innovation in L&S. GD led discussion, and prompted APC members to discuss how L&S might promote curricular/instructional excellence and innovation in the college. In discussion, members had the following ideas

- Try to create an environment where opportunities for teaching feedback is regular, normalized and separate from performance review. Members had several examples where getting feedback from a student, another faculty member/instructor, or going to watch someone else teach was very helpful for their instructional development.
- Academic staff should be regularly included when developing instructional and curriculum innovation opportunities.
- Providing regular structured activities around curricular/instructional excellence, for faculty and staff at a variety of points in their career.
- Finding ways to make the conversation beyond what students need to learn in the major, as the department may actually be providing the majority of instruction to students outside of the major.
- Creating more meaningful ways for students to give feedback than at the end of the course when they are being asked to complete the same survey for all of their courses.

5. Information Items (no action needed): a. Request to Delete Subject Listing, ENGLISH – 350 (replaced by new listings, ENGL 352 and ESL 351). KS provided this update, no discussion. **b. Support offered (on recommendation of Department of Geography) Concerning Proposed BS in Geospatial Analysis and Technology at UW-Eau Claire.** KS provided this update, no discussion.

Meeting adjourned 2:29 pm

Submitted by Kimbrin Cornelius, Curriculum Administration Specialist