

Brief Notes – approved 3/15/2016

Letters and Science Academic Planning Council

Tuesday, February 2, 2016, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m., 101 South Hall

Chair: Karl Scholz

Members present: Angela Powell, Charles Fry, Anna Gemrich, Matt Turner, Katherine Bowie, Ivy Corfis, Clark Landis, Jan Edwards, Harry Brighthouse

Members absent: Steven Kantrowitz

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

1. Announcements and Updates a. L&S projects featured in NEH collection of top projects b. UW-Madison First-year Interest Groups program (FIGs) among USNews Top 20 “stellar examples” of first-year experiences

2. Consent agenda a. Approval of notes – February 2, 2016 Approved by members present at that meeting.

3. Academic Program Review a. Update on reviews in progress. A progress report on L&S program reviews was circulated to the APC prior to being submitted to the Provost. **b. East Asian Languages and Literature.** SZ led discussion. She noted this is a review of programs housed in a department that will change when it is restructured to create the new Asia Culture and Literatures department. Although the review committee raised questions about the Center for East Asian Studies, CEAS is part of the International Division; though APC discussion alluded to issues raised in the CEAS review, APC members agreed that the center and its review are beyond the scope of L&S program review. In discussion of EALL academic programs, members were impressed with the excellence of both their undergraduate and graduate programs. Many of the structural issues identified in the review, (e.g., divisions within the department across language groups) are likely to be addressed when the department is restructured as a more trans-Asia focused department, and future strategic hires are emphasizing transdisciplinary studies. EMK reported that the ALC faculty and staff will be meeting with L&S administration and campus partners to discuss academic and program changes, which will likely be submitted to APC in the coming academic year. As a final note, members agreed the department should be reminded there is no formal Korean Studies credential offered at UW-Madison. Members unanimously approved the motion to accept the report as complete.

c. Molecular Biology. EW led discussion, beginning by reminding the council that when the Institute for Biology Education mission and scope changed, administration of this undergraduate major was moved from that center to Zoology, giving it a secure departmental home. The majors intended audience is high-achieving students, many of whom (70%) go on to graduate school. The program faces several challenges: enrollments and awards conferred have steadily decreased; since courses used to meet requirements are taught across several biology departments, the program does not “own” important components of its curriculum; course requirements are very close to those of the Biology and Biochemistry majors; and the major does not seem to have a program committee that regularly meets for purposes of administering the program. The review committee suggested that either the program should be revitalized with the help of an active and engaged faculty committee

that would revise the requirements to distinguish it from other programs, or admissions should cease and the program should be discontinued as a stand-alone major.

In discussion, members agreed there is a place for a distinct and narrowly-focused major that prepares students for graduate school in Biology. However, they were not convinced this program as currently designed meets that goal. Council members discussed the challenges of maintaining non-department programs and what is required for them to be successful, what would be lost if this major were discontinued, and whether students may still achieve their goals via other programs (Biology or Biochemistry). While members admired the dedication of the faculty member who has led this program, and laudable success of students entering graduate school, the lack of an assessment plan or any record of assessment of student learning suggests that some tasks are particularly challenging to complete without the active engagement of a program committee. Further, the council expressed concern that this program overlaps substantially with other programs, and though rigorous, it may not be sufficiently distinct from programs to justify even the minimal resources required to offer it. APC members approved a motion to (1) *accept this review as complete*, and (2) *instruct EW to work with the program director to undertake program revisions to make the Molecular Biology Major distinct from similar programs in Biology and Biochemistry and re-formulate it as an "option" under the Biology Major, or to suspend admissions and close the program. A plan for action should be submitted to the council by March 1, 2017.*

d. Chemistry. EW led discussion, noting that Chemistry delivers a huge number of credits in service courses to the university, has very clear learning goals for their programs (including how course requirements map into those learning goals), and assesses student learning relative to those goals. Chemistry pays special attention to the ACS standards, and revises requirements to ensure they align with current standards. The external review suggested improvements regarding graduate student climate and to clarify the path through the graduate program, and Chemistry is currently working on this. In discussion, committee members noted how impressed they were by the long tradition of excellence in teaching in the department, their work in improving teaching via assessment, and the focus on closing the achievement gap. Members spent some time asking CL about how this transformation occurred, in the hopes they could learn from Chemistry's example. Members approved the motion to accept the report as complete, and commended the department on the quality of its programs.

4. Consultations of the Dean

a. Tentative: Background on upcoming request for permission to plan restructuring, Urban and Regional Planning (L&S and CALS) and Landscape Architecture (CALC). Postponed to a future meeting.

b. L&S Senate meeting, 3/14/16. Members agreed that with no identified business, this meeting should be canceled.

Meeting adjourned at 2:25

Notes submitted by Kimbrin Cornelius, L&S Administration