

Brief Notes – Approved 9-21-2021

College of Letters & Science Academic Planning Council

May 4, 2021, 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm (virtual meeting)

Chair: Dean Eric Wilcots

Members present: Stephen Gammie, Rebecca Dunn, Louise Mares, Charo D’Etcheverry, Nancy Marshall, Jeanne Hamers, Sue Ridgely, Rebecca Forbes Wank, Cecile Ane, Kris Olds

Observers present: Elaine Klein, Greg Downey, Kimbrin Cornelius, Tina Nielsen, James Montgomery, Shirin Malekpour, Cal Bergman, Sue Zaeske, Devon Wilson, Gloria Mari-Beffa

1. Announcements/Information: EW thanked members rotating of the committee this year, and EMK noted the process for staff and faculty elections are underway. EW also summarized many student and faculty awards that have been recently awarded.

2. Approval of notes – April 6, 2021. Members approved the notes.

3. Academic Program Review a. Biology Core Curriculum (*second discussion*) GB provided some updates from the last meeting, including that enrollments are increasing, and the courses taken in the Biocore Program can meet many majors’ biology requirements and course requisites. GMB recommended the directorship interim term be extended for an additional semester to give the Executive Committee time to create by-laws/operating responsibilities. These will ensure the roles of the leadership and executive committee are clear and durable and will provide a good foundation for a search for the directorship the following term. Members approved the report as complete and asked the program follow GMB recommendation for determining the leadership of the program.

b. L&S Honors Program. CB led discussion. The program will have a new faculty director next Fall, so this program review is very timely. One significant benefit of the L&S Honors program it can provide ways for students to connect with faculty, staff, and other students in the large university setting, something that otherwise might seem difficult to do to prospective students and their families. Students may pursue Honors in the Major, Honors in the Liberal Arts, or both (Comprehensive Honors). Admission is focused on holistic review and student’s interests/goals, rather just on their past experiences. In 2018 two Honors advisors were added, which resolved an issue of having timely access to good and accurate academic information. The review committee was in particular asked to reflect on diversity / inclusion in the program, as well as access to Honors course access. Underrepresented students participate at a rate slightly higher than other programs. In conversation members noted

- Requiring a thesis may emphasize inclusion of students who plan to apply to graduate school. There may be additional ways to meet the goal of getting students excited about in-depth academic study and research.
- Members acknowledged the reality of finite resources. The need to large survey courses may conflict with teaching small high impact courses, such as Honors courses. Departments will need to find the right balance. Could there be existing courses that already meet most of the criteria, that haven’t been included in the curriculum?
- Members wondered about the Honors Optional designation and what are the expectations for these courses. Do the courses create a cohesive (or high impact) experience for students

Members accepted the report as complete. Members agreed with the thoughtful recommendations in the report, and in particular with the need to increase access to Honors courses.

4. Consultations of the Dean: Members had a conversation about updating L&S Academic Planning Council Governance Rules / Operating Procedures. Members agreed the L&S Associate Dean for Associate Dean of Diversity should be appointed as an ex-officio member. Members also agreed the council may be increased to include one or two members from the L&S division of Computer, Statistics and Information Sciences. EMK noted the current practice for nominations is the Associate Dean contacts chairs to ask for nomination suggestions, and the election slate is built from that list. Committee members did not have concerns about the current practice.

Meeting adjourned at 2:10.

Notes submitted by Kimbrin Cornelius, L&S Teaching & Learning