

Meeting of the Villanova University Academic Policy Committee

Tuesday, November 12, 2012
Mendel Science Center, room 103 1:30 pm

MINUTES

Present: Louise Russo (chair), JeanAnn Linney, Lesley Perry, Bob Styer, Fayette Veverka, Mark Doorley, Susan Mackey-Kallis, Craig Wheeland, Edwin Goff, Dennis Kuhn, Randy Weinstein, Adele Lindenmeyr, Ken Kroos, Christine Alizzi

Not in Attendance: Paul Pasles (NIA), Joyce Willens (NIA), Wayne Bremser (NIA), Kelly Welch (NIA), Mary Ann Cantrell (NIA), Jack Chong (NIA), Ali Yousaf (NIA), Chris Marroletti (NIA), Caroline Kemp, Aaron Moore, Sridhar Santhanam, Wenhong Luo, Paul Hanouna, Catherine Warrick

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm.

- I. Minutes from the meeting on October 2, 2012 were reviewed and approved after completion of minor corrections.
- II. The chair provided membership with written comments shared by faculty colleagues in response to the release of the CATS interpretation report which was added to the Academic Affairs website. Craig Wheeland posted an announcement as to its availability on Campus Currents and several APC members contacted their respective constituents to direct attention to the document. These concerns were focused, in large part, on the statistical analysis of the data and the way in which score differentials were portrayed in the interpretation guide. In light of the sensitive nature of CATS score information and the thorough review completed by the APC, the Deans, OPIR, and Academic Affairs, no further changes to the interpretation guide were recommended. However, membership will pursue a discussion of the CATS report which currently includes quartile rankings based upon score data within academic departments. General consensus was to invite representatives from OPIR to join the APC at a future meeting to discuss an alteration in reporting format and language.
- III. The chair asked Susan Mackey-Kallis to provide a summary of activities being undertaken by the Interdisciplinary Teaching Task Force. This committee is a working branch of the APC and Susan generously agreed to service as chair. The Task Force includes faculty members from across all Colleges, many of whom have participated in interdisciplinary course instruction. Minutes from the initial meeting of the Task Force are appended. Members discussed the charges of the Task Force as highlighted by Susan. Adele Lindenmeyr suggested that the name be changed to Task Force on Collaborative Interdisciplinary Teaching to clarify that the structural issues of concern are specific to courses where interdisciplinary content is relayed via faculty colleagues in the form of team-teaching. The Task Force will continue to share information with the APC as work proceeds.
- IV. Susan Mackey-Kallis also reported on the activity of the International Leadership Team (ILT), a new university committee for which she is also serving as chair. This committee includes faculty, administrators, and staff members who were selected either as volunteers or appointees based upon their respective roles in

international-related activities. The ILT will generate subcommittees which will, in turn, be charged to collate information and develop proposals for ways to enhance the international components of courses, research efforts, visiting scholar programs, etc. The respective chairs of these subcommittees will solicit membership participants to begin work by the end of fall 2012 semester.

- V. Bob Styer provided an update on the Faculty Senate decision to add a librarian to the APC per the approved measure to make this change by APC membership last year. At present the request has been approved by the Senate and the APC may now approach Joe Lucia, Director of Falvey Memorial Library, to identify a representative to join the committee. The chair will initiate this process in the near future.
- VI. Membership discussed an academic issue that was previously raised by a former member related to the policy of limiting the number of graduate credits that undergraduates may complete as it affected particular B.S./M.S. programs in Engineering. After a brief discussion the general consensus was not to pursue this issue as an agenda item at this time. Several departments have negotiated changes as necessary to accommodate specific needs and therefore if a program so chooses, it may be able to work with Academic Affairs and the Registrar's Office to produce a compromise solution.
- VII. New agenda items were presented to ascertain which will be pursued by the APC for the current term. The following two issues were discussed and will be action items for the 2012-2013 academic year:
- A. *Identification and naming of the University Core*: this was raised by Craig Wheeland as an issue of interest in the Academic Affairs Office. Members discussed the idea of a University core and the value of establishing a set collection of courses as the academic thread connecting all students to the institutional mission. Membership raised a variety of related issues that plague curricular planning within Colleges and expressed interest in establishing a University Curriculum Committee that would serve as a central authority in academic course offerings, designations, etc. Members are interested in moving this item forward as an action item which may be best accomplished through formation of a sub-committee.
 - B. *Online courses and strategic planning for enhancing cyber education*: this topic was raised by Wayne Bremser. Though discussion time was limited, membership is interested in further pursuing this issue and it will be open to full discussion at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Louise Russo

Members of APC: Louise Russo (chair), Wayne Bremser, Fayette Veverka, Robert Styer, Adele Lindenmeyr, Edwin Goff, Kelly Welch, Mary Ann Cantrell, Louise Fitzpatrick (represented by Lesley Perry), Joyce S. Willens, Wenhong Luo, Paul Pasles, Paul Hanouna, Kail Ellis (represented by Craig Wheeland), Jean Ann Linney, Gary Gabriele (represented by Randy Weinstein), Patrick Maggitti (represented by Dennis Kuhn), Catherine Warrick, Susan Mackey-Kallis, Mark Doorley, Sridhar Santhanam, Kenneth Kroos, Aaron Moore, Jack Chong, Christine Alizzi, Caroline Kemp, Daniel Troiano, Christopher Marroletti (non-voting member), Ali Yousef, Sophie Kagan (ex officio non-voting member)

Interdisciplinary Teaching Committee Meeting Minutes **November 7, 2012 3 pm**

In attendance: Angela DiBenedetto, Biology; Jen Palenchar, Chemistry; Steve Liedtka, Accounting; Lesley Perry, Nursing; Jim O'Brien, Mechanical Engineering; Joyce Willens, Nursing; Lillian "Boots" Cassel, Computer Science; Lael Hoegen, Student Body Vice President; Debra Arvanites, VSB; Bob Styer, Mathematics and Statistics; Susan Mackey-Kallis, Communication (chair)

The meeting began at 3 pm. Susan introduced Lael Hoegen, who will be joining us as a representative of the Student Government Association.

After noting several minor typos, the committee approved the minutes of 3 Oct 2012.

Susan established a Drop box location for committee documents. The site has some relevant articles as well as committee documents.

Susan will forward to committee members the email response from Craig Wheeland concerning the reasons why courses are no longer cross-listed.

The committee needs to write a rationale to explain why the University should support interdisciplinary courses, especially theoretical underpinnings for the value of interdisciplinary research and student learning. Perhaps it should begin with a reference to the President's speech and his recent solicitation of interdisciplinary projects. The document will need to outline the costs involved and discuss the value of interdisciplinary learning using references to the pedagogical literature.

Debra Arvanites presented the research that her committee produced comparing interdisciplinary courses on integrative topics among several business schools. Most of these business schools integrate more disciplines than VSB, and almost all use student projects as the chief vehicle for integrating the disciplinary threads. Committee members liked the grid design and the list of attributes on Debra's handout. One attribute our committee would like to explore is the model for faculty compensation. Debra explained that they only had data on faculty compensation on a subset of the colleges, but she could share with us what they have found, and noted that she will be visiting other colleges in the near future and can gather more data on compensation models.

Everyone agreed that the deans are under increasing pressure for cost accounting, so developing models for faculty compensation is very important. We should stress the need for a long-term stable funding model that will sustain interdisciplinary interactions, not just initiate them

The committee agreed that we need to survey the current interdisciplinary courses offered at Villanova. This could be done via the deans or via the chairs. The consensus is that the chairs are more likely to have the data we want. We lamented the fact that the registration system has no easy flags to mark team-taught or multi- or interdisciplinary courses; however, Boots suggested we could extract the information ourselves from the Attributes section to identify all the interdisciplinary courses being offered.

After some discussion, including a long discussion of team-taught courses in the nursing college and other colleges, we agreed that we would ask for course descriptions for each course with two or more faculty. Then we would use these descriptions to triage which courses seem to be multi- or interdisciplinary, and we can then seek more info on those courses. We decided to disregard interdisciplinary courses taught by one faculty member because courses with two or more faculty require extra resources that single faculty member courses do not.

We need to define multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary courses. Angela tentatively offered the following: Multidisciplinary courses use more than one disciplinary perspective; interdisciplinary courses apply the perspectives and tools of more than one discipline in an integrated manner.

Next, Angela DiBenedetto outlined the Fall 2007 Mendel Genetics Symposium that coincided with the 100th anniversary of Mendel. This interdisciplinary symposium arose from a grassroots faculty committee. It succeeded largely because of extraordinary support from the administration (e.g., Fr. Ellis). A committee of 15 people created a wish list of prominent speakers from law, ethics, history, evolutionary biology, art, and philosophy. Fortunately, most speakers accepted, and the attendance at the symposium exceeded expectations and included people from all over the greater Philadelphia area.

The key to its success was strong grassroots faculty interest plus very generous support from the administration. (The total cost was about \$75000.) There could be a small conference fee though we do not want to inhibit student attendance.

In retrospect, the symposium might have had more impact if it had published a proceedings. On the other hand, for student learning, probably YouTube or other online video postings would be more effective.

The committee sees great potential in this sort of interdisciplinary conference. It can reach far more students than an interdisciplinary course, and serves the greater academic community as well. We envision a yearly symposium, organized by cross-college groups of faculty, possibly including one of the Centers of Excellence.

Before the upcoming December 5 meeting 3pm, we have two action items:

1. To inventory interdisciplinary teaching across campus; Susan will draft something to send to department chairs.
2. To gather information for writing the "apologia" (overall goals) for interdisciplinary courses (all members will brainstorm next meeting based on info they gather from the pedagogical literature and other sources).

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm. Next meeting 3pm on Dec 5.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bob Styer