Liberal Education Program Committee
Thursday, April 11, 2019-ASC 308
Minutes
SPRING meeting dates:
April 25

Present: Barbara Cook, Mike Shea, Joan Kreiger, Khoa Nguyen, Isaiah Yopp, Elu Tu, Helen Marx, Armen Marsoobian (guest), Winnie Yu (guest)

1. Call to Order: 9:41
2. Announcements: Motion to the UCF passed
3. Old Business
   A. Discussion with Coordinators of Technology Fluency and Critical Thinking
      Professors Winnie Yu and Armen Marsoobian engaged in a discussion with the LEPC to help us better understand the roles of these coordinator positions. Their remarks supplemented the documents both had already given the committee.

      Armen provided a summary of the documents he sent to the committee. Indicated that release time for the position had been removed without notification and has not been renewed to date. Previous work included development of a rubric to assess critical thinking competency. Additionally, worked with CSU colleges and universities to adopt common objectives and assessment for critical thinking. Continued to collect material for the assessment developed for the purpose of assessing the critical thinking competency in Tier 1. Concern regarding lack of oversight for critical thinking competency.

      Winnie provided summary regarding history of technology fluency competency and value in the LEP. Developed assessment of instructor feedback for the technology fluency competency. Currently working with the new Director of Assessment and Planning to utilize this survey to develop benchmark. Also stopped receiving reassigned time.

Suggestions on Role of Coordinators moving forward:
   • Ex officio on NMC; available to support new course proposals
   • Assessment development and analysis (Armen spoke of the original intention of ‘gates’ and the potential need to revisit the idea of competency demonstration given that assessment is occurring at the level of a course.)
   • Faculty Development
   • Steering committee: possibly related to currently approved courses and invited to participate in the conversation about
Regarding the qualifications of each coordinator position:
Armen offered that the underpinnings of critical thinking are rooted in philosophy from the 1950s which is why the role had been originally designated to faculty from the Department of Philosophy.
Winnie indicated that prior to LEP, technology was not a requirement. Good to be broad; coordinator would need to be broad and fair minded to consider all facets of technology.

Resulting considerations about keeping status quo, giving coordinating responsibilities to Director of LEP and LEP Assessment Coordinator, or recommending that current coordinator positions be given specified compensation.

Coordinator needed to support and provide understanding of the competency, requirement for assessment, and guide what works for these courses, etc.

Coordinator may be needed to ensure that courses are adhering to the competencies outlined in the LEP Charter.

Tech Fluency and Critical Thinking would each require a steering committee to fulfill role of oversight because there is not a designated department.

How would the LEP Assessment Coordinator accomplish the task of assessment across entire LEP without support from specific area?

What revisions, if any, need to be made in the original LEP charter about identified roles and responsibilities?

ADJOURNMENT: 10:56am

Minutes respectfully submitted by Barbara Cook
Dear SCSU Community,

The Student Government Association is the official representative body and the voice of SCSU’s more than 7000 undergraduate students and is entrusted to represent the best interests of their constituencies. SGA acts as a liaison between students and SCSU’s administration and faculty, while serving as a channel for conveying the communal values and needs of an increasingly broad range of students. For years now, we have consistently heard from students about issues regarding the Liberal Education Program (LEP) and how it impacts their success. We have been working diligently to insert ourselves into conversations with faculty and staff to express those concerns. In talking with students, one issue that is consistently raised is the overreaching world language requirement. After comprehensive research and many in-depth conversations with faculty, staff and students, we have concluded that we are advocating for the world language tier requirement to be modified to: three years of the same language in high school with a grade of C or better; or level 101 at SCSU.

Rationale:

World Language Requirement:

SGA has spent the better part of two years talking about the language requirement, conducting our assessment of its impact on student success, and benchmarking requirements of other institutions. SGA’s boards have completed in-depth research about our sister institutions’ policies regarding the world language requirement, and found that they have similar requirements to each other, which greatly differs from ours.

At our sister CSCU’s, the current policy is a requirement of at least three years of the same language in high school with a C average or better, or 2 semesters of the same language in college.

In the fall of 2017, Southern modified the world language requirement for transfer students, which allowed transfer students coming in with 60 or more transfer credits or an associate's degree, to be exempt from this requirement. We know this is helping transfer students tremendously, but this opens the conversation on why transfer students are not held to the same standards as our native students. We are aware that the New England Commission of Higher Education considers the rationale behind university academic decisions. In light of this, SGA requests a copy of the data and rationale that will be submitted to NECHE to justify the change for transfer students, or any documentation/minutes of the conversations that occurred in the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum (UCF) or Faculty Senate in this regard.

Graduation and Retention:

SGA has significant concerns on how the language requirement may impact our graduation and retention rates. We have heard personal stories of students who chose not to come to Southern, students who have not returned, and students that were forced to extend their time at the university specifically because of the language requirement.

We researched the six-year graduation rates of the three other CSU’s and the results are disheartening:

- Central- 54%
- Eastern- 52%
- Southern- 48%
- Western- 44%
As you can see, we rank third out of the four sister universities, which is not a place that we want to see our university. Since we have heard directly from students that the language requirement is a part of the problem, we ask for a copy of the data or research that shows how the language requirement is working and aiding in student success?

**Student Forum:**

Student Government held a forum on March 6th focused on asking whether students felt like the language requirement and LEP is an issue worth advocating for. Here are highlights of what students said:

- If students aren’t using their language, they are simply losing it
- The requirements are “holding everybody back from graduating”
- The language requirement feels like a “money-making scheme”. If I already know a second language, I have to **pay** to prove that I know it by taking the STAMP test or paying for the classes
- Students don’t need three levels of a language, we just need basic communication- ex: “Hello, how are you?”
- The material doesn’t correlate from the 100, 101, to 200 level courses
- The language requirement is not valuable to my major, mastering a language is only important for certain majors/disciplines
- Our requirements are higher than many other universities, especially other CSUs
- Language courses fill up too quickly
- The class times for language courses are difficult to build a schedule around

We believe that the overall sentiment from the forum is what SGA has been advocating for; the world language requirement is impeding student success the way it stands.

We believe that it is not our responsibility to collect data to show whether a program is working. It is your role as faculty and administrators to do that. Our role is to share stories, advocate for our academic rights, and promote success to graduation. We understand that there are no quick solutions to these issues, but we are discouraged that the conversations around the world language requirement have seemed to stop. We ask that this issue become one of the top priorities for LEPC and UCF to address. SGA prides itself on our great relationship with faculty, staff, and administration and we hope that you will be partners with us to find solutions to ultimately achieve our common goal of making Southern an even better institution.

Thank you very much for listening to your student’s voices and concerns. Please feel free to reach out to Student Government if there are any questions or comments. We appreciate your help as we work to provide the best Southern experience to each one of our students.

Sincerely,

Alexis Zhitomi

The Student Government Association | President

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LEP Director report:

- Advising of new transfer students for Fall 2019 has begun for TAP students and students that deferred from the fall. All other transfer students that have been accepted and have paid the deposit can begin making appointments with advisors; these appointments begin on Monday, April 22.

TAP update:

- The Biochemistry and Geography pathways were approved by the BOR and will be offered at the community colleges starting in the Fall of 2019.
- The Economics B.A. pathway will probably go to the BOR for approval in the fall, since Ken is still waiting on responses from the workgroup regarding revisions.
- An MIS pathway has been proposed, and Ken hopes to submit this to the BOR in the fall for approval. He is still working on getting feedback from the four-year schools. Note that this degree will not be part of the existing TAP Business pathway since not all of the four-year schools have the same business core for the MIS degree.
- TAP-FIRC is continuing discussions about assessment of the Framework 30, in light of the proposed 21-credit general education core that has been proposed for the 12 community colleges.
Faculty Senate and SCSU Administration Curricular Task Force on Social Justice and Human Diversity

Recommendations

The Curricular Task Force on Social Justice and Human Diversity, which was jointly formed by the SCSU Administration and the Faculty Senate in the Fall of 2018, has been meeting monthly and has arrived at a series of recommendations.

It is important to note that the Task Force was formed in large part to respond to concerns raised by students during the Spring 2018 semester. A number of students have been participating as members of the Task Force.

In the end, we do hope that some of our recommendations will be implemented, but even if they are not implemented, it is also important that we all engage in this discussion about the scope of the meaning of social justice for our university community.

Our mission statement indicates that Southern is committed to social justice. We are a "social justice university." We observe the month of November as social justice month, "as an important opportunity to further our learning and understanding to challenge injustice, value diversity, and create a climate of inclusion." It is within this context that we make the following recommendations.

DESIGNATING COURSES THAT ADDRESS SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN DIVERSITY ISSUES

*We recommend that appropriate courses would be designated as Social Justice or Human Diversity courses (SJD). This would, on the one hand, highlight our institutional commitment to Social Justice and Human Diversity, and other hand, would inform our students about specific courses that would address these topics.

SJD courses would be those that fall within a broadly framed description of social justice and human diversity issues. Our framework, which is designed to encourage diverse pedagogical approaches, involves the spectrum of "Awareness-Knowledge-Action." The learning outcomes of a SJD course would be expected to address one or more of these three terms, by encouraging an awareness about social justice and human diversity issues, facilitating a deeper knowledge about the issues, and brainstorming actions that could be taken to support of social justice and diversity. Such increased awareness could involve an introduction to diverse cultures, religions, social identities, disabilities, intersectionalities, values, and perspectives. Such increased awareness and knowledge could also involve the study of historical and contemporary examples of oppression including discrimination, marginalization, human rights violations, and genocide. Such studies could also include historical and contemporary inequities related to "race," gender, economic class, economic inequality, and disability. (This is not an exhaustive enumeration of issues and topics.) The awareness and knowledge to be gained would be important in itself, but it would also allow for discussion of possible successful strategies for action (with historical and
contemporary examples) for addressing and rectifying such injustices and for celebrating diversity.

We recommend that the SJD designation be implemented in two phases.

--In the first phase, for the first 12-18 months (August 2019 - December 2020), the Faculty member would submit the course syllabus, along with a statement of interest in having the course designated as a SJD course. In the first phase, all those who volunteer for the designation will, in principle, be accepted. The designation would be applied to the instructor and to the section of the course being offered, rather than to the course. Departments would have the option of designating courses as SJD courses. The SJD topics or issues could be explicit or implicit in the syllabus or pedagogy of the course. New course proposals involving the SJD designation would follow the regular new course approval process.

--In the second phase of implementation of SJD courses (January 2021 - August 2022), faculty whose courses that were designated in the first phase, would submit a formal application, with the syllabus, to receive a permanent SJD designation. The application would indicate how the course content and pedagogy fall under our broadly framed description of social justice and human diversity. New applications for the SJD-designation, in which the topics or issues are already present in the syllabus or pedagogy, would also submit the formal application. Departments would have the option of designating courses as SJD courses, using the formal application process. New course proposals for the SJD designation in the second phase would follow the regular new course approval process.

Due to the potentially large number of applications in the first and second phases of implementation, the Curricular Task Force on Social Justice and Human Diversity would continue as an ad hoc committee that would assist the UCF in processing the applications for SJD designation. Based on our recent survey we anticipate at least 70 - 100 applications in the first phase of implementation.

Nota Bene: SJD designations in the first and second phases would not involve course revisions. Faculty would be requesting the SJD designation for content and inquiries that are already present in the syllabus and pedagogy.

Members of the Curricular Task Force on Social Justice and Human Diversity would mentor colleagues who would like to develop new or revised courses, courses that would go through the standard review/approval process.

Following the initial implementation process of the first and second phases, the permanent approval process would be the responsibility of the Notifications Management Committee. The Curricular Task Force would continue to assist as appropriate.

MOVING TOWARD A SOCIAL JUSTICE/HUMAN DIVERSITY REQUIREMENT

*We recommend that, as such a time when a sufficient number of courses would be available in our offerings, that our students might be required to take at least one Social
Justice/Human Diversity course. However, we would only recommend this if it did not impede our students' ability to graduate on time.

SOCIAL JUSTICE and HUMAN DIVERSITY CONVERSATIONS in the FIRST YEAR

*We recommend the inclusion of a social justice and human diversity component in our first-year INQ classes so as to involve our students in a discussion of our values as a social justice university, the leading social justice university in the region, in their first year at SCSU.

SOCIAL JUSTICE and HUMAN DIVERSITY PEDAGOGY WORKSHOPS

*We recommend that social/racial justice pedagogy workshops be offered on campus and that our colleagues be encouraged to attend.

SOCIAL JUSTICE and HUMAN DIVERSITY INTERNSHIPS

*We recommend opportunities for student internships, or experiential learning, for our students as a part of a social justice pedagogy

UNIVERSITY-WIDE SOCIAL JUSTICE and HUMAN DIVERSITY FORUMS

*We recommend university-wide events/discussions each year addressing social justice and human diversity issues that would encourage our colleagues to think about ways to include social justice and human diversity issues in their classes.

A COMMITMENT TO HIRING A DIVERSE FACULTY COMMITED TO SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN DIVERSITY

*We recommend recruiting new Faculty who would increase the diversity of our University Faculty, Faculty who would contribute to our course offerings in social justice and human diversity

SUPPORT FOR FACULTY CURRICULAR INITIATIVES AND UNIVERSITY-WIDE EVENTS ADDRESSING ISSUES IN SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN DIVERSITY

*We recommend that the Faculty Development Office prioritize funding support for Faculty interested in developing courses that address topics in the areas of Social Justice and Human Diversity with Faculty Development and Curriculum Grants.

Faculty Senate/Administration Curricular Task Force on Social Justice and Human Diversity Academic Year 2018-2019

Chairperson: David Pettigrew
Laura Bower-Phipps
Siobhan Carter-David
Haroon Chaudhry
Barbara Cook
Shahbaz Farooqui
Rachel Furey
Steven Hoffler
Liz Keenan
Jessica Kenty-Drane
Maria Krol
Cassi Meyerhoffer
Jessica Powell
Muhammed Z. Naeem
Asma Rahimyar
Amal Abdel Raouf
Rachel Schaffer
Meredith Sinclair
Kari Swanson
Stephen M. Tomczak
Tracy Tyree