Undergraduate Curriculum Forum  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, April 23, 2015


Guest: K. Laing (Registrar), W. Hardenberg (Library)

I. Call to order
The meeting was called to order and a quorum was reached at 9:35.

II. Announcements
A. Library space issue regarding OIT call center (see appendix A).
B. Program of music and visual art recognizing the Armenian genocide of 1915, see http://www.southernct.edu/special/armenian-genocide/
C. Documentary on the epidemic of sexual assault on American campuses
   Monday 7 pm in the theater.
D. Yom HaShoah Holocaust Remembrance program tonight.
   Paul Gesco on the architecture of mass murder at Auschwitz.
E. 100 Years of Solitude Conference last Friday was very successful.
F. Tier 2 final essays are needed for assessment of writing ability. Wes O’Brien will resend request via email. Please share with your department/colleagues.
G. Pace Grant program tomorrow on anthropology, environment, and human ancestors
   Engleman 1-1:55 tomorrow

III. Approval of UCF minutes of April 9, 2015
Minutes from last meeting approved unanimously with one change. Plant Sale for Earth Day incorrectly stated April 24 but was in fact yesterday, April 22.

IV. Standing Committee Reports
A. NMC – Notifications Management Committee
   1. Motion to approve Revised Program Proposals
      BA Biology
      Motion passed unanimously
   2. Motion to approve Revised Course Proposals
      a. BIO 401 – Animal Physiology
      b. CSC 207 – Computer Systems
      Motion passed unanimously
   3. NMC minutes for April 16, 2015 were received.

B. UWIC – University Wide Impact Committee
   1. Motion to approve New Program Proposal
      BS in Environmental Systems and Sustainability Studies
Motion passed unanimously

2. Motion to have the IDS director act as the department chair and the IDS committee act as the DCC when new IDS courses are proposed. Motion to have all new IDS course proposals go immediately to NMC after getting signed by the IDS director and IDS committee. Following discussion, the above motions were tabled until such time as UWIC completes its recommendations regarding consideration of which courses are appropriate as IDS courses and what criteria should be met.

3. UWIC minutes for April 16, 2015 were received.

C. PRAC – Program Review and Assessment Committee

1. Motion to continue approval of Physics
   Motion passed unanimously
2. Jeff Webb will chair PRAC next academic year.
3. PRAC minutes for April 16, 2015 were received.

D. WACC – Writing Across the Curriculum Committee

1. Motion to approve writing-intensive courses
   a. MUS 315: Jazz History Since 1945, Chevan
   b. CMD 461: Clinical Practice of Speech/Language, Warner
   c. CHE 260: Organic Chemistry I, Webb
   Motion passed unanimously
2. Richard DeCesare is new WACC chair.
3. Thanks to Marie McDaniel and Sue Clerc for their excellent service.
4. WACC minutes for April 16, 2015 were received.

E. LEPC – Liberal Education Committee

1. LEPC/UWIC proposal to be discussed under New Business.
2. LEPC minutes for April 16 and April 20, 2015 were received.

F. Special Topics courses logged

1. IDS 198 – College Readiness
2. CMD 198 – Fundamentals of Social Communication
3. MDS 298 – Managing Social Media
4. ART 398 – History of Graphic Design

V. New Business

A. LEPC Motion

Reduce the LEP Multilingual Communication requirement in Tier 1 to 3 credits at the 101 levels, and waive the requirement for students entering with Level 4 of high school foreign language. If approved, the motion will be discussed with representatives of the WLL department at the next LEPC meeting prior to moving the proposal to the UCF.

1. The UCF Chair suggested amending the above motion by separating the two issues for clarity. The following amended motions were made and seconded.
   a. The LEP Multilingual Communication requirement in Tier 1 shall be changed from 3 credits at the 200 level to 3 credits at the 101 level.
   b. The LEP Multilingual Communication requirement in Tier 1 shall be waived for students entering with a Level 4 of a high school foreign language.

The motion was amended with all in favor with the exception of one abstention.

2. UCF Chair asked for any objections to a vote on the motions by paper ballot.
   No objections were raised therefore vote will take place through paper ballot.
B. Motion 1a/discussion
   1. Statement by LEPC
      a. The WLL requirement has been an issue of discussion for some time prior to this year's considerations of reducing credits in the LEP.
         i. Many departments and schools have asked what is best for their student regarding the WLL requirement.
         ii. It is an appropriate time now to review the LEP now that it is in its 4th year.
      b. Anecdotal (but consistent) evidence from Community College advisors and colleagues from other CSU's indicate that (transfer) students choose other schools in CT to avoid SCSU's WLL requirement.
         i. CC students are often non-traditional; language courses far in their past; time becomes a more immediate concern for these non-traditional students juggling family and work, thus they may choose to pass over SCSU for a more direct path to their degree.
         ii. Despite the anecdotal nature of this information, it seems intuitively true that regardless of any attempt to market Southern as an institution with high standards, our degree is viewed as substantially similar to the other 4-years, thus where a choice exists many students would opt for a more timely path to their diploma.
         iii. The anecdotal information is from reliable, convincing sources, who are informed by their interaction with hundreds of students each semester. It may be anecdotal, but there is a great deal of it.
      c. Students' path to graduation includes "hidden credits" up to 6 additional credits in LEP in WLL. Many students enroll in 100-level beginning language even when offered the option to take a competency-based waiver exam (STAMP test).
      d. This motion will potentially open up more electives for students. Student choice to explore and experiment has been limited by large credit majors, minors and general education programs.
      e. This motion aligns SCSU more closely with the other CSUs' language requirements as well as with other CT private colleges. At the same time, the motion retains a higher standard than the other CCUs, thus it expresses our endorsement of the value of World Languages since we ask for more HS language study and as an alternative, 2 semesters of college language study.
      f. 200-level WLL courses (level 3) are encouraged to become an option in Global Awareness to keep language study robust in general education.
   2. Statement by Department of World Languages and Literatures (see appendix B)
   3. Open discussion
      a. Logistics and marketing vs. pedagogical concerns
      b. Anecdotal evidence that this requirement is decreasing our enrollment and that the LEP is too big.
      c. Integrity of the LEP and role of language learning in the core education program.
      d. LEP as living curriculum. Things will change over time. Always consider improvements. Discussion of whether it is advisable to consider individual LEP components separately.
      e. Length of bachelor's program.
      f. Benefits and costs of using an external exam to measure proficiency.
      g. Can we consider various ways to reduce the credit load, not just one? Response: we will look at several ways of reducing credits.
      h. Faculty involvement is key to a successful review and modification program (some faculty feel they have not had enough opportunity to
consult with their departments).

i. Concern over reducing language proficiency level: SCSU educates the majority of the state’s teachers, who must have the cultural sensitivity they learn through world language study; maintaining the high standard of our curriculum overall.

j. Discussion of corresponding requirements at other CSUs and whether we should match or compare our programs.

k. In elementary education, prospective teachers are much more likely to get jobs with Spanish proficiency.

l. Concerns about departments fighting each other for students in times of scarcity.

m. Strategic plan stresses prep for global economy, of which linguistic preparation is a key component. It would be in line with strategic plan to maintain current proficiency requirement.

This matter is unfinished business & conversation will resume next meeting

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 am.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Elena Grossman
Appendix A

Yesterday the library faculty were informed that the space designed as a dedicated library instruction classroom that would hold 50 students has been handed over to IT for a call center that would provide office space for 2 to 3 people. We did over 100 instruction sessions in the fall—that’s over 2,000 students. Some sessions had to be held in other buildings because our temporary classroom couldn’t accommodate the number of students or the temporary classroom was booked.

We’ve been magnanimously offered “first dibs” on a study space at the furthest possible point you can go and still be in the building. Every time we hold a class we’d have to evict students who are studying or using the computer stations. The utter disregard for students and faculty alike is breath-taking. We are being told to move from a temporary jury-rigged, inadequate classroom to a permanent, jury-rigged, inadequate classroom. Displacing the educational mission of the university in favor of a support service is not acceptable.

In both the original and revised building plans the space was designed as library instruction space—and just two weeks ago, the Library Instruction Coordinator met with the Academic Computing liaison to discuss outfitting the space with appropriate furniture and equipment to augment the existing whiteboard, screen, ceiling projector hardware and other classroom features designed into the facility.

The literature shows in study after study that Library Instruction has a direct impact on student success. Putting library instruction, a student-centered activity that is scheduled during all class hours including weekends and evenings, in a remote library location while using primary library real estate for a behind-the-scenes call center that could easily be located in other space is unjustifiable.
Appendix B

Statement by WLL UCF representative

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of WLL Department I strongly encourage you to vote against the motion passed by the LEPC and the UWIC to make major changes and reductions to the LEP Multilingual Requirement. The motion is unacceptable for two reasons: a) it destroys the letter and spirit of the LEP by removing the proficiency goal from one of the major competencies that we all agreed to five years ago and b) it was formulated without any constructive discussion with the WLL department.

A bit of history: throughout the year the department has been told that the Multilingual Requirement needs to be reduced because our LEP is too big, because our proficiency requirement is too demanding and pushes students away, and because our sister institutions have a much lower requirement. These are not good reasons to use the Multilingual Communication requirement as a scapegoat. We want to reduce LEP? Let’s discuss collectively where such reductions will not affect our excellence. You claim that the Multilingual requirement pushes students away? Give us some data beyond hearsay and the anecdotal; there is none. In fact, we have just heard that the number of deposits for incoming students is up by 24% as compared to the same time last year. The current Multilingual Requirement is still here, so it must not be the culprit of low enrollments. Our sister institutions promote nothing but mediocrity in world languages and in some other areas. Why are we striving to move from excellence to mediocrity on our campus?

As experts in language acquisition, we would like for you to understand why we are so passionate about keeping the requirement at the 200-level. Please know, that it is not until the end of the third semester of language study or its equivalent that students are able to achieve a level of proficiency that turns learners into language users: this is when they can start speaking and writing in sentences rather than individual words. Achieving the Intermediate Low level of proficiency in language allows students to a) maintain language knowledge throughout their lifespan; b) acquire knowledge of grammatical structure that translates into their understanding of English structures and leads to better writing; d) develop communication skills in the target language at the sentence rather than word level; and e) prepare students for a study of any new language in the future, which is an essential skill in this multilingual world.

The other part of the motion, that four years of high school language would waive students from continuing their language study, goes against the proficiency requirement for the competencies of the LEP. It also contradicts the idea that academic expectations are different in college than they are in high school. Most high schools in Connecticut do not teach languages with proficiency goals in mind. In fact, most classes are conducted in English. However, if a student comes from a solid program, s/he can take the proficiency test and waive the language requirement. Neither Math nor English accept high school courses without evaluating the students’ achievement in their respective academic areas.

We understand that the university is facing important financial shortfalls, but let’s not allow this to create an atmosphere of fear where we rely on the argumentum ad populum: if school X and school Y have a mediocre or nonexistent language requirement, that means we should too.

Moreover, based on the Provost’s remarks made when she came to UCF two weeks ago, “we have to cut Multilingual communication requirement because it’s just too expensive,” let us find ways to reduce expenses while maintaining the proficiency and excellence of our programs.

In the spirit of collaboration and constructive conversation – which thus far has been lacking -- we would like to propose a few ways we can reduce the cost without sacrificing the desired proficiency goal. First, we have already reduced the number of sections of 100-level classes by two thirds. In the Fall of 2014 we offered 16 sections of Spanish 100. This coming fall we are offering five. This not only cuts adjunct costs
by $100,000, but also pushes students who are not absolute beginners to start their language study at a more appropriate level, either 101 or 200, thereby placing them closer to a timely graduation. Interestingly, in the Fall of 2015 only 13% of students will need to take all three semesters of language; 52% will take two semesters; and 25% will take only one semester to fulfill the Multilingual Requirement. The remaining students will have their language requirement waived due to their demonstrated proficiency in the language.

Second, we are more than willing to waive the language requirement for all students who study abroad.

I want to emphasize that the real concern that the department has is that we are asked to move from a proficiency requirement to academically and cognitively meaningless seat time. Proficiency was at the core of the LEP when it was first adopted and we are the only department that uses it as a measure of student achievement. We are very willing to work constructively with the LEPC and administration on preserving the minimal proficiency requirement while diminishing the costs. However, we are deeply disturbed by the motion formulated and passed by LEPC without any input of the WLL department.

We believe that passing the current motion of the LEPC will reduce an excellent program that WLL offers to mediocrity and further undermine the academic value of our university. Therefore I once again strongly encourage you to vote against the motion passed by the LEPC and the UWIC.

Sincerely,

Christine Dombrowski, UCF Representative

On behalf of Department of World Languages and Literatures Faculty Members