

## Winthrop University Faculty Conference

7 March 2014

2:00 pm Kinard Auditorium

Quorum Not Reached

The meeting was commenced by Dr. Bird at 2:00.

I. There was a motion to proceed without a quorum; it passed.

II. Approval of minutes for November 22, 2013 Faculty Conference

The minutes were approved.

III. Report from the Chair, John Bird

- a. The Board of Trustees had their fall retreat and changed their bylaws to be congruent with Faculty Conference bylaws. Dr. Bird noted his thanks to the Board of Trustees, to President Comstock, and to the Rules Committee for helping to bring about this important agreement.
- b. Dr. Bird noted that the Board entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Winthrop Foundation. They also spent all day Saturday brainstorming about enrollment strategies and funding priorities; Sunday morning they received an update on the football question/debate. The retreat concluded with a Board self-evaluation. Dr. Bird was impressed with how seriously the Board takes their role and how hard they work to function effectively.

Jennifer Solomon: What is a Memorandum of Understanding?

John Bird: It's a legal agreement; it was published in *The Johnsonian*.

Debra Boyd: The document may be on the Foundation's webpage for anyone to peruse.

- c. Dr. Bird noted that the next board meeting will be in May (near commencement). There will be opportunities for public comment.

IV. Report from the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost, Debra Boyd

- a. Provost Boyd encouraged faculty members to make their ideas about football known in public conversations.
- b. Provost Boyd thanked faculty for getting their interim grades in on time. Enrollment and retention are so important to the future of the University; it is crucial for us to

- retain students that should be retained. Indeed, it is much less expensive to retain than to recruit new students. Provost Boyd thanked faculty for thinking about this work as part of Winthrop's larger retention efforts; students cannot always gauge their progress on their own.
- c. Provost Boyd encouraged faculty to encourage students to register for courses; direct them to appropriate summer classes. 65 courses will be offered online this summer -- not hybrid, online! Provost Boyd thanked faculty for working to provide summer courses; students prefer to take courses with Winthrop faculty, and it is nice for them to have access to such courses when they are working or away in the summer. The university needs to start thinking about developing a year-long schedule; this could be helpful to students and faculty. We can do more planning when we know what is offered. Please also direct advisees toward services that will help them throughout the semester.
  - d. Provost Boyd noted the upcoming inauguration; programs with lists of activities are available. The week's events are all about academic affairs and student accomplishments; please come to the Lunch and Learn sessions to hear your colleagues discuss interesting topics! There also will be an Arts Crawl, a Peace Pole dedication, a tea for the SC Mother of the Year, a baseball game, and a campus day of service. The day of service is all about reading and literacy; please join us and participate. What is highlighted during inauguration week are academics and academic programs.

#### V. Pat Ballard, University Personnel Committee: Elections

All names of people running are read aloud and present candidates stand; nominations for additional candidates are taken from the floor. No additional nominations were made. Voting was conducted using the curling method.

Colleagues not in attendance can vote in the library (until 12:00 on Monday, March 10).

#### VI. Jo Koster, Academic Council

- a. Old Business: Changing the date for the S/U option; policy wording has now been revised. (At the December meeting, Faculty Conference voted to postpone action on an Academic Council Motion to change the declaration date for the S/U option until Academic Council had also addressed the issue of the catalog language describing the S/U policy,)

Dr. Koster noted that the Council of Student Leaders passed a resolution voicing their position on the issue: they are "unanimously resolved" to support the extension of the deadline to elect the S/U option. The resolution was read to the faculty.

Dr. Koster presented revised language, decided upon by the committee, concerning the S/U option. Dr. Koster also presented a slide illustrating how the new language will appear on the Records and Registration website.

The floor opened for discussion.

Gregg Oakes: Thanks for the work on this. I have a question about the word "rescinding"...

Dr. Koster: The language was changed to address the situations of students who do not want to be penalized for making good grades (taking the A or B grade instead of the S/U).

Irene Bowland: Discussed how students abuse system, specifically in the course Geology 250/251, for education majors. 75% of education majors took it S/U, even though it is required for their major.

Paul Martico: If a student fails and gets a grade of U in one semester, does taking it the next semester as a S/U count as a second S/U?

Jo: Yes. In the actual policy language, that issue is addressed... It may be good to note this on the website. Thank you for the question.

Gina Jones: This has never been an issue. Students seem to understand this.

Dave Pretty: I can understand not wanting to funnel these rescindments through the chair, but I recall that other schools funnel them through an approval process (advisors, chairs, deans). Wouldn't it be good to send students to their advisors before they make these choices?

John Bird: You can drop a course without talking to an advisor... (Voices: that's wrong too!)

Frank Pullano: Regarding LEAP... 130 students just got their midsemester grades. Allowing this to happen could have a huge effect on whether a student who is currently on probation gets off probation, on whether students can keep scholarships, on whether they can come back. I am all for this. I want to keep kids off probation. I urge all LEAP kids to take S/U for math as freshmen. From a practical retention standpoint, this would be great as far as I'm concerned for those kids.

Adolphus Belk: Kids will try to manipulate whatever system we create. I'm not worried about the students who will do this no matter what. I'm worried about the students Frank is talking about. What are we going to do to increase graduation rates? They owe the money, whether they finish the degree or not. This will not change the rigor or integrity of our courses, but it can assist those who might struggle because of more legitimate circumstances.

Marilyn Smith: I'd like to call the question.

Vote: Ayes have it.

We now vote on the question.

The motion passes.

- b. Curricular Actions: Dr. Koster offered thanks to the General Education Committee and the Curriculum Committee who worked very hard, despite snow days.

Seven pages of curriculum actions went forward. Only one needs a vote. Move to drop the BS in Science Communication. No students enrolled; idea that the BS in Individualized Studies can create and house a major like this. Motion approved.

Please review information in the course and program action system; there have been a few hiccups. Also, discussions and decisions of the Curriculum Committee are available for all to see on this site.

General Education Actions: two courses added to Touchstone Program. This was approved.

A list of recertified 200-level courses was circulated by email. Reminder: in 2014-2015, all 200-level courses in categories not certified this year will be up for recertification

- c. Proposed Changes to the General Education Program:

A committee was charged (by Provost Boyd) to examine the current General Education program and first met last May. Dr. Koster outlined the goals of the committee and provided research showing how Winthrop ranks against sister programs. The committee presented seven new principles for General Education. Committee Members: Gloria Jones, Chair (University College), John Bird (CAS, Faculty Conference), Alice Burmeister (CVPA), Gina Jones (Registrar), Malayka Klimchak (College of Business), Jo Koster (CAS, Academic Council/CUI), Frank Pullano (CAS, LEAP), Marilyn Sarow (CAS, Academic Affairs), Gale Teaster-Woods (Library), Will Thacker (COB, GNED), Jonatha Vare (COE)

Four recommendations were brought forward for discussion, not for a vote. (See APPENDIX I below) Four separate proposals will be presented for faculty to vote on at the April 25 meeting.

Don Rogers: I would like to offer my support and approval; however, will there be an appeals process we can go through in case of accreditation issues?

Committee: Yes, accreditation trumps all else.

Can we change HMXP and CRTW designators so students are less confused and can find them online (HUM and CRIT?)

Committee: We can consider this.

Greg Oakes: Must there be two designators in the Social Science and Humanities and the Arts categories?

John Bird: That is a retention of a policy we already have to ensure breadth, but it's a good idea to discuss.

Greg Oakes: My concern is that in an increasingly technological society, the field of Logic, Language, and Semiotics seems especially valuable.

Gloria Jones: This does not mean courses in that designator will not still be required by many majors. Most majors still require foreign language, and a number of the courses captured in the Logic, Language, Semiotics designator, like the foreign language courses, can be moved to other designators/categories.

Jo Koster: Critical thinking and higher order skills are indeed important. Just because we're moving that requirement is not to say that Logic, Language, and Semiotics are not important. The courses under that designator may, however, be able to fit into other categories.

Jennifer Disney: I would like to further and encourage the move to adopt a 120-credit hour degree program. It is realistic to ask students to do 15 hours per semester. Indeed, state funding programs assume students need support for a 120-hour degree. These changes seem like they will help students.

Cliff Calloway: I like the new terminology. Nevertheless, I'm looking at the Technology, Oral, and Writing Intensive requirements. I would prefer experts to teach that rather than students get them within the major. I'm not sure intensive writing and oral components gathered in some fields. Also, why are math and science lumped together? (Committee answer: STEM)

Committee: We agree that oral and written skills can be taught by experts. However, those requirements should be part of "major requirements." What does this mean? *Former General Education requirements will now be part of a major taught outside the department.* We also promote the notion that writing and oral requirements exist across the curriculum, in all sorts of courses.

Jeff Sinn: I have a concern about the 40% reduction in Social Sciences and Humanities requirements. I would like to reference the recent book, *Academically Adrift*. The liberal arts are the only field acknowledged in this book as producing notable educational gains. I don't want to confuse student freedom with a natural choice to take more courses in the liberal arts. Will "freedom" be well-spent, or are students averse to rigor? Also, if we are going to decimate social

sciences, why is history privileged? Why these changes now ... after the sustained discussion we had last time? Well-trained specialists cause terrible global problems – look at the economic downturn, global warming.... We need people to have training across the board and to be well-rounded and challenged in diverse ways.

Jo Koster: Your points are well-taken and worthy of discussion.

John Bird: I'm on your side. I thought we watered it down last time, and even a year ago I would have been suspect. Nevertheless, I have been convinced by the SACS requirement of 30 hours. We require 46! I think we can reduce the hours without violating the principals of General Education. If we stop over-specification of courses, I think it will let students have the freedom to learn a great variety of things they care about, as well.

Padmine Padwarren: Many programs specify foreign languages... how does this fit in?

Committee: Only one foreign language course counts now; the other course must be Logic or Semiotics.

Padmine Padwarren: Language competences seem like they would be crucial to a university that values global learning. I think we are missing an opportunity.

Committee: We are so different from our peers. What is our competition doing, locally? We have to change if we want to attract and retain students.

Siobhan Brownson: These proposals sound positive for our traditional students. Can anyone speak to advantages and disadvantages for transfer students?

Gloria Jones: These changes will be very helpful for transfer students and provide additional flexibility. They will also removes barriers for students transferring from one major to another.

Siobhan Brownson: What about the core?

Gloria Jones: Other courses that meet certain requirements can be substituted for courses in the core; that has always been the case.

Jo Koster: We would like to charge the faculty to go back and discuss this with your departments. Let's think critically about our choices. If we don't have a program to vote on in April we will tell you. Thank you for the great suggestions... Please send additional ones (in written form) to Gloria Jones by April 4.

Debra Boyd: This request started with Academic Council and the Curriculum Committee. This started with faculty concern about the program. Thanks for all the hard work. This is an important attempt on your part to figure out what our students need... and how we are either supporting their goals or erecting barriers to keep them from achieving their goals.

VII. Casey Cothran, Rules Committee: Bylaws Change

Michael Lipscomb discussed the Bylaws change (see Appendix II): The Chair of the University Life committee shall serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Faculty Committee on University Priorities.

Faculty Conference voted to approve this change.

VIII. Unfinished Business

There was none.

IX. New Business

There was none.

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Casey A. Cothran

Next meeting April 25, 2014 -- 2:00

Faculty Conference Membership (329) 35% = 115 20% = 66

## APPENDIX I

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on all our discussions and deliberations, we propose the following:

1. We recommend that we change the name of our general education program from the Touchstone Program back to the General Education Program. Faculty, current students, and incoming students are confused by the current terminology.
2. We recommend that we move to reduce the minimum number of hours required for graduation from 124 to 120, a number that is in line with most of our peer institutions and many institutions nationally.
3. We recommend that Majors and programs re-examine their programs of study in relation to general education.
  - a. Majors and programs should follow the seven general education principles to make changes in requirements.
  - b. We must all work together to provide our students a clear and workable plan.
  - c. While some programs will have to move requirements now met in General Education courses into their majors under the new program, we encourage them not to try to recoup all the hours saved in a reduced General Education program into their majors. Rather they should regard any increased number of hours in the major that results from this revision as a temporary state that may be addressed by further curriculum realignment.
4. We recommend that Winthrop adopt a modified version of our current General Education program that reduces the overall number of hours from 46-58 hours to 35-50 hours. This modified program adds one hour in Physical Activities (which may be waived for certain groups of students), deletes the Logic/Language/Semiotics requirement, moves the Quantitative requirement into a new grouping, and reduces the number of hours in Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, and potentially in Natural Sciences. (NB: SACS minimum is 30 hours)
  - a. Winthrop should allow students to apply two courses (usually 6 hours) from their major designators to General Education (e.g. "double-dipping"), exclusive of Writing Intensive, Oral Intensive, and Technology, which should be met in the major, if possible.
  - b. Winthrop should not restrict the number of hours in a student's minor that can be used to meet General Education requirements.

## APPENDIX II

### University Rules Committee

The University Rules Committee proposes a revision to the Faculty Conference Bylaws, Article VIII, Sections 7 & 8. Any proposed amendment to the bylaws must first be brought to the Faculty Conference for a vote to place it on the agenda of the next meeting; we are therefore asking for a vote to place the amendment on the agenda for the April 25 meeting. The existing wording of Article VIII, Section 7 and Article VIII, Section 8 is given below, followed by the proposed revised wording, with changes in boldface.

#### **Existing wording:**

Section 7. University Life. This committee shall be responsible for examining issues submitted by faculty members that affect the conduct of university life, and shall address these issues by communicating directly with appropriate administrators and members of the University faculty and staff to understand the issue more fully and to facilitate a resolution to the concern as needed. The committee shall report its findings, and the status of issues to Faculty Conference, to the Committee on University Priorities, and to the President at least once each semester.

The committee shall consist of nine members: two members elected from each of the degree-granting colleges and one member elected from the Library faculty. At least one member elected from each of the degree-granting colleges and the member elected from the Library faculty shall be tenured. The Chair of the committee shall attend open meetings of the appropriate committee of the Board of Trustees.

Section 8. University Priorities. This committee shall be responsible for meeting at least once per semester with the President and the other Executive Officers of the University to provide a faculty perspective on admissions policy, planning, objective setting, and resource allocation, as well as other areas that are important to the university's future.

The committee shall consist of eight members: one member elected from each of the degree-granting colleges, one member elected from the Library faculty, one member elected from the faculty of University College, and one member elected by the Graduate Faculty Assembly. All members of this committee shall be tenured. The Chair of the Faculty Conference shall serve as an ex officio member with vote. The Chair of the committee shall attend open meetings of the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees

#### **Proposed revised wording:**

Section 7. University Life. This committee shall be responsible for examining issues submitted by faculty members that affect the conduct of university life, and shall address these issues by communicating directly with appropriate administrators and members of the University faculty and staff to understand the issue more fully and to facilitate a resolution to the concern as needed. The committee shall report

its findings, and the status of issues to Faculty Conference, to the Committee on University Priorities, and to the President at least once each semester.

The committee shall consist of nine members: two members elected from each of the degree-granting colleges and one member elected from the Library faculty. At least one member elected from each of the degree-granting colleges and the member elected from the Library faculty shall be tenured. The Chair of the committee shall attend open meetings of the appropriate committee of the Board of Trustees. **The Chair of the committee shall serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Faculty Committee on University Priorities.**

Section 8 University Priorities. This committee shall be responsible for meeting at least once per semester with the President and the other Executive Officers of the University to provide a faculty perspective on admissions policy, planning, objective setting, and resource allocation, as well as other areas that are important to the university's future.

The committee shall consist of **nine** members: one member elected from each of the degree-granting colleges, one member elected from the Library faculty, one member elected from the faculty of University College, and one member elected by the Graduate Faculty Assembly. All **voting** members of this committee shall be tenured. The Chair of the Faculty Conference shall serve as an ex officio member with vote. **The Chair of the Faculty Committee on University Life shall serve as an ex officio member without a vote.** The Chair of the committee shall attend open meetings of the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees.

**Justification and explanation:**

These changes in the by-laws will place the Chair of the Committee on University Life as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Committee on University Priorities. This request comes unanimously from the Committee on University Priorities with the unanimous support of the Committee on University Life. Given the overlapping charge of these committees, this change will facilitate coordination between the two committees as they respond to faculty concerns. The stipulation of *non-voting* member, coupled with the wording change for all *voting* members of University Priorities to be tenured, is considered necessary by the Rules Committee because the current by-laws state that all members of University Priorities must be tenured, whereas not all members of University Life need be tenured. It is conceivable that a non-tenured chair of University Life could be elected, which would violate the by-laws as currently written. The proposed changes in the by-laws have been unanimously approved by the Rules Committee.