

## Winthrop University Faculty Conference

25 April 2014

2:00 pm Byrnes Recital Hall

Quorum Not Reached

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

I. There was a motion to proceed without a quorum (121 members in attendance).

II. Approval of minutes for March, 2014 Faculty Conference

The minutes were approved.

III. Report from the Chair, John Bird

- a. Dr. Bird referenced Winthrop faculty's recently passed resolution on academic freedom and noted that all SC public bodies have passed similar resolutions (on academic freedom). He noted: "This situation is ongoing as the SC Legislature continues to debate the budget."
- b. Dr. Bird thanked Casey Cothran and Tara Collins for agreeing to serve as Faculty Conference secretary and parliamentarian again next year.
- c. Dr. Bird extended his thanks to the 2013-2014 chairs of university committees, and specifically to Jo Koster of the curriculum committee. Thanks to Christopher J. Aubrie, student body president, who has done a good deal of work; thanks to Debra Boyd for all her behind-the-scenes work, coordination, and cooperation throughout the year; thanks also to President Williamson for championing the faculty and working with the board to return our communication rights. Dr. Bird noted his appreciation for the board, especially Sue Smith-Rex and Kathy Bigham (in attendance): he thanked them for listening to faculty and working for students.
- d. Dr. Bird noted that the Board of Trustees will meet on May 9; at that time, there will be opportunity for public comment. Please speak to Dr. Bird if you have any information you would like to convey to the board.

IV. Report from the President, Jamie Comstock Williamson

- a. President Comstock Williamson thanked the faculty for their time and for their contributions during the week of investiture. She attended as many events as she could, and she was moved by the care faculty and students put into planning celebratory events. The event was an important one for Winthrop, but also an important event in her life.
- b. Report from Columbia: The House moved their budget forward to the Senate with \$0 recurring dollars for higher education. There are some monies for one-time funds. Clemson got 1 million dollars, USC got 1 million, and Winthrop got \$750,000 dollars.

This is an exciting potential opportunity. There seems to be evidence that Winthrop has a strong reputation, a perception that Winthrop deserves support. The senate budget is still in process, but the university has reasons to be optimistic.

- c. The decisions of the state legislature affect how we proceed with our budgeting for next year. President Comstock Williamson: “We are trying to build a budget that will function if we get 0 dollars or a million dollars (what we asked for); we are trying not to increase tuition. All current versions of the budget include a salary increase for faculty and staff. Now, the budget is based on projected enrollment; if projected enrollment is not made, we will not be able to do all the things we want to. I know you understand this. We will know much more before the end of June than we know right now. I’m sorry I cannot be more definitive; I am just sharing what we are trying to do.”
- d. President Comstock Williamson apologized for not communicating more with faculty and students about how and why summer school tuition was being increased. She noted that there should have been a communication to everyone who was advising students about why tuition was increased. (The president reviewed the history of the price of summer school, noted how it was lowered during the economic downturn and was never raised back to a normal level . . .until now.) President Comstock Williamson: “I hope you will accept our sincere apology for not getting that communicated to you.” News about summer school: as of April 18, students have registered for 7,028.5 credit hours. Last year, students completed 7,905 summer school hours. It is expected that some students who are enrolled will drop out and some will sign up, but if numbers stay the same, we will have made 588,375 dollars increase in revenue. (Note: The university must see \$600,000 to give a 1% raise to faculty and staff.)
- e. Notes on enrollment: There are new, exciting trends in retention. Winthrop will have 203 additional students in the fall because of improved retention. There are lots of ways to grow enrollment, and retention is one way of doing this. President Comstock Williamson offered congratulations to the faculty, noting, “Students stay because of you. You challenge and inspire them, engage them with their classmates, and because of you they believe Winthrop University is the place for them. It will be my job to make sure they can afford to stay. We want the students who have the ability to learn and who want to stay to stay. You’ve done your part; now, I’ll do mine.”
- f. The president noted her name change: “I am most comfortable if you call me Jamie. I never want to stop being one of you.”

Jennifer Solomon: Where does the additional summer school money raised go? I’ve heard it’s not going to faculty teaching summer school.

Jamie Comstock Williamson: They will still get their paycheck; there is not usually a corresponding salary increase every time tuition goes up. There are various budgets, of course, but our “best case scenario” does allow for overall salary increases rather than particular money for just summer school teachers. Dr. Boyd and I also want more money to “say yes” when people

want money for activities to help students, to provide travel funds, to complete all sorts of brilliant plans... we have no money right now to help, and we look forward to having it.

- g. The president noted: "Thanks for all you will do today to help students graduate on time by taking a full load of 15 hours a semester."

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

Provost Boyd advised the faculty: "It is time to reflect and take a breath and think about what the year has been about. It has been a very positive time for me, working with Jamie and with all of you. It is always a privilege for me to work with you in whatever opportunity or capacity we have to do so. I look out here and I see a group of people who are dedicated, who give so much to Winthrop and to its students. I appreciate the work that you do so that strangers who come to our campus quickly see that we really are a community." Provost Boyd noted that she looks forward to the things that faculty will do in the next two weeks to reinforce and strengthen the Winthrop community. 1) Exams build community. Students need exams; it reinforces learning, makes it deep and permanent. Also 2) Celebrations build community. It is important to honor all the work done by students, faculty, and staff.

#### VI. Committee Reports

- a. Academic Council Report: Dr. Jo Koster

Dr. Koster thanked the members of Academic Council for a year of very good and very hard work.

There was nothing to be voted on concerning Curriculum.

The faculty voted on the certification of new GNED courses: the new courses were approved.

Dr. Koster reminded faculty that next year courses will need GNED recertification for global credit; remember that 200-level courses in Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, etc. will need to be re-approved. Get started early on the necessary paperwork!

The faculty voted on a proposal to change language about using courses in both the major and the minor: it passed.

The faculty voted on a proposal to change the grade equivalent for S to C-. Dr. Bird called for questions or discussion. Seeing none, the faculty voted: the change passed.

Dr. Koster opened the discussion on the modification of the General Education Program. She thanked the faculty for their thoughtful, principled, and open-minded contributions, for keeping the welfare of the students at the forefront. She encouraged the faculty to notice that the proposal had grown longer because the committee responded to the faculty's previous suggestions and

comments. She noted, “The plan presented today has been unanimously recommended by Academic Council.”

### Redefining the General Education Program

1. Proposal 1: Change the name of Winthrop’s general education program from “The Touchstone Program” to “The General Education Program.” The faculty voted to change the name: the change was approved.
2. Proposal 2: Strongly encourage departments and programs to move to reduce the minimum number of hours required for graduation from 124 to 120, except where licensure, accreditation, or complexity make such reductions impossible. The faculty voted to change minimum degree hour requirements: The change was approved.
3. Proposal 3: Require that departments and programs re-examine their overall programs of study in relation to general education in accordance with the seven principles set out by this task force. (See Appendix I for Principles.) The faculty discussed requiring departments and programs to re-examine overall programs of study:

Greg Oakes: I admire that we should self-examine for “major creep,” but how will things be played out after the examination has been conducted? Will departments be asked to report on this? What happens after the examination?

Debra Boyd: We will handle it the way we would handle any curriculum information; bring the results forth to the college, and changes will be made at the college level. This puts a lot of trust and responsibility on faculty to honestly examine programs and requirements.

Andrew Vorder Bruegge: Is the committee asking us to use major requirements in the competency areas to meet general education requirements?

Jo Koster: Yes, we encourage departments to let students do this.

Paul Martyka: The Department of Fine Arts demands a work intensive degree (the “Bachelor of Fine Arts”). I would like to speak out against Principle V; it discriminates against my College. I would like to offer a formal amendment to Principle V. There should be a *three* course limit rather than a *two* course limit. Also, I would like to critique the use of the word “should” rather than the word “must.”

No second: The amendment did not pass.

Chad Dresbach: Does Principle V conflict with Principle I? By limiting it to two courses, it could defacto add hours to a degree.

Jo Koster: The hope is that departments will reduce the number of major hours required to earn a degree to a reasonable number, one that will allow students to graduate in four years.

David Wohl: I think there is an implied asterisk in Principle V that accreditation overrides that rule. I think we would be more comfortable if that was more explicitly stated.

Matthew Hayes: Is this about process or product? Looking at department major requirements?

John Bird: We are giving the departments and programs a chance to look at things and work *with* the Curriculum Committee. We are sure this will be a process that may take place over a couple of years.

The faculty voted on the need for departments to re-examine major requirements in concert with the seven principles: the requirement was approved.

4. Proposal 4: Recommend that Winthrop adopt a modified version of our current General Education program that reduces the overall number of hours from 46-58 to 35-50 hours, as outlined in the following table (see Appendix II). This modified program will allow two courses from a student's major program of study to apply to General Education (usually 6 hours), exclusive of the Writing Intensive, Oral Intensive, and Technology proficiencies (which should be met in the major if possible). The faculty discussed the modified version of the General Education Program:

Jo Koster: Please note the new physical activity requirement. Notably, here we are making official what students are already doing; many take these courses.

Jeff Sinn: I would like to thank the committee for its good work. I would also like to make the point that we only received this document in March. We have not had much time to consider it.

Apologies given.

Jeff Sinn: I feel like I've only recently engaged. I wish I knew this was going on when it was being planned. I'm doing my best... once you pass something this substantial, you change the fundamental constituencies. I feel that the issue of major creep has not been fully addressed. Our current remedy is that we don't let students use more than 2 credits from the major for GenEd. This is a good idea, and I support it, but my main fear is that we are making the Social Sciences pay a heavy price rather than policing departments. And can departments police themselves? Is this the same issue that was a problem with the previous GenEd form? The petitions process gives us a treasure trove of possible remedies. Many ad hoc agreements could be specified ahead of time... that's an empirical data set we could look at right now. Majors and specialists are by their very nature focused on what they do and have a hard time seeing beyond that. This will not solve the problem.

Paul Martyka: Allowing three major requirements to count toward general education requirements might help to solve the things concerning Jeff.

Jeff Sinn: To continue... I am worried about the Department of Religious Studies, which requires people to take an introductory course in order to discover or develop an interest. The people on this committee do not have experience with this sort of student flow. If we consider the lab requirement, make it only required for those in the College of Arts and Sciences, that could save huge amounts of money. The study Academically Adrift shows that the liberal arts are necessary to get students critically thinking deeply... these courses are crucial. Also, CRTW can be replaced by PHIL. You speak against "Helicopter Faculty," but it is true that students pick easy courses; I think they need our guidance.

John Bird: To address your comment on CRTW and PHIL, do note that the common core will be investigated next year.

Jo Koster: There has not been a big public hearing, but the committee has requested and received continuous input from faculty across the campus all year.

Mike Lipscomb: I would like to speak in support of Jeff. Cutting Social Sciences and the Humanities from 15 to 9 hours... this is indeed troubling. I feel these courses need a special kind of protection. In order to ensure the protection of those courses, we have to protect their enrollments, in a way that we don't have to protect the enrollments of courses in the natural sciences or in the College of Education. In a world where these kinds of courses are under attack, I think a good case can be made that the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts are having to make a huge sacrifice in order to get these hours down to size. I would like us to reconsider this.

Janet Wojcik: To speak specifically about the Social Sciences... There are requirements for graduate school. Students will take social science classes, despite the fact that they are not required for the completion of GenEd.

Paula Mitchell: Speaking as someone who advises science majors, I can't say enough how important it is to encourage scientists to take Psychology or Sociology. It forces them to get a broader education, inspires them to branch out in minors...

Will Kiblinger: I would like to propose a formal amendment. I would like to change the cut to the Social Sciences/Humanities/Arts section to 3 hours. The proposed cut of 9 hours is disproportionate and premature. I propose a more balanced and shared sacrifice. Indeed, we do not yet know the results of formal examination of the core. Programs have not yet addressed their major creep. We can revisit the need for further cuts to Social Sciences/Humanities/Arts at a later date.

**SECONDED**

Paul Martyka: Dean Gloria Jones... please remind us of the charge.

Gloria Jones: SACS requires 30 hours; we require 36-58. Frankly, we give our students no exploratory room. If we reduce the number of required courses in GenEd, our students have the

opportunity to take courses in Arts, Humanities, and the Social Sciences... courses that are not proscribed.

Mike Lipscomb: I don't think this addresses Will's point about it being premature to make these kinds of drastic cuts. We don't know how this will affect enrollment. This is a democratic body; we can revisit this issue again next year.

Kristin Kiblinger: There are things that need further consideration before we proceed. The timing of this time of year... I am not convinced this issue has received the attention it would have otherwise received. We are better off proceeding slowly rather than having to redo it; once cuts are made, it is unlikely they can be reversed. Until the majors have made their adjustments, let's not ask so much from GenEd. Even though there are global and historical perspectives, philosophy will still suffer.

Laura Dougherty: Can students double dip if a course applies in different areas?

No... only for the Constitutional Requirement

Debra Boyd: I would like to speak to two things 1. The issue of programmatic change. We have talked about being deliberate. Whenever we make any change, there are both intended and unintended consequences. In order for us to be more flexible and more attentive to our students, we may need to try things out rather than making them perfect; however, it doesn't mean that we don't need to be careful and pay attention. We need to trust the people you have selected, for this committee, to make good decisions. 2. This is not about enrollments! This is about what are we doing to serve our students well. Let's stop talking about what students will take our particular courses and talk about this issue in terms of what will serve our students well.

Greg Oakes: I do have significant concerns about the impact on our program. And while I don't want to engage in a struggle over turf, I think we have a special case here of significant risk. If we were to change this to a reduction of three hours instead of six, this can be revisited later. Once they are gone they are very hard to put back. I vote to accept the amendment.

Mike Lipscomb: I don't think enrollments and what's best for our students are disconnected. The health of Philosophy and Anthropology departments are crucial to the health of our students. Getting rid of these departments does not serve our students. It's not enrollment in the sense that we can have the best or most popular department in the university... we are talking about causing an existential crisis in these departments.

Debra Boyd: We would not be a university of any caliber if we did not have Philosophy, Anthropology, the Arts, religion courses. I believe having options for students are important. I am not speaking against this amendment. I am simply pointing out that any program worth its salt allows students to explore topics in which they are interested. The literature requirement was cut, but English survived.

Adolphus Belk: I supported this as a member of Academic Council because I felt like it helped us reach goals for students. But I appreciate this open discussion. Even if we cut hours, our goal is to grow enrollment. That means the demand will be there because we will have more students. But, we can't know about enrollments now. I find myself swayed by this argument, and I don't think adding this class back would ruin the overall goals.

Jeff Sinn: English is taught in high school. There are certain courses where we need to think about enrollment because it's not on their radar. Students don't know what it is.

Guy Reel: I am in agreement with Adolphus. Anytime you have warring factions, a modest proposal may be in order. We can always change it later.

Janet Wojcik: We're not cutting hours like we said we wanted to.

Jeannie Haubert: I agree it's in the student's best interest to cut requirements to 120 hours. Yet, I do think students are harmed by such a drastic cut to Social Sciences and Humanities. I think we can get down to 120 with other cuts. We have not yet addressed cuts to the core and cuts in major hours.

Barbara Pierce: Motion to call the question.

SECONDED

VOTE ON THE AMENDMENT without further discussion on the Kiblinger amendment. 71 for/45 against, the amendment passes. Proposal 5 as amended passed.

Jennifer Belk: I would like to make a motion to postpone discussion of amendment four until a subsequent meeting.

SECONDED

Motion failed

5. Proposal 5: Although it was outside our charge of looking at ways in which the General Education program might have lost focus or have fallen victim to 'major creep,' we are aware that many faculty have questions about the General Education Core (ACAD 101, WRIT 101, HMXP 102, and CRTW 201) in terms of content, sequencing, consistency of delivery, transferability, and other issues. We therefore recommend that the Provost appoint a task force of faculty and staff with appropriate expertise to evaluate the Core and make recommendations for any changes that might be necessary to ensure that it continues to meet the principles of the General Education program.

Jeff Sinn: What is meant by expertise? How public will this be?

Debra Boyd: People who have taught the courses and people across campus.



Paul Martyka: What does “examine the core” mean?

Debra Boyd: Asking questions about the order of the courses, the content of the courses... many things.

Daniel Gordon: Does that mean deciding what transfer credits count? Transferability?

Yes

Dwight Dimaculangan: We are in favor of this. Can these skills be taught in the major itself? When should students take HMX? This is a ton of hours (9). Are these courses actually needed?

The faculty voted on the need to examine the Core: the motion was approved.

6. Proposal 6: Charge the General Education Curriculum Committee to examine the category descriptions and requirements to ensure that they are congruent with the revised General Education definition and program, and ensure that the processes by which courses are included or recertified for the General Education program document that these courses meet all the requirements for inclusion, such as course content, writing components, etc.

Paul Martyka: Is this the existing committee or the ones that have been voted in (that would be assumed to start in the fall)?

The newly elected committee

The faculty voted: the charge was passed.

7. Proposal 7: Charge the Office of Records and Registration or appropriate support offices to update the instructions for the Curriculum Application Process to remind departments and programs of the need to explain clearly the reasons (such as licensure or accreditation requirements) for specifying or restricting the selection of courses in a student’s general education choices so that there is a clearly-documented rationale for why such decisions were made.

Greg Oakes: Point of clarification ... the intent is as we go forward? I note the phrase “decisions were made.”

Yes

The faculty voted: the charge was passed.

Debra Boyd: I would like to offer thanks to the task force, to Academic Council, and to all of you for putting our students first. This sort of spirited debate is what makes Winthrop University so great.

b. Rules committee: Paula Mitchell

No questions on report; Sue Spenser announced as the new chair.

c. Faculty Committee on University Priorities: Mike Lipscomb

Dr. Lipscomb noted the changed nature of the committee's work this year. Faculty will be able to view the committee's report online, with summaries of written responses from the administration, addressing inquiries. The committee was able to have candid conversations with Jamie, Debra, and the rest of the executive officers. The committee is pleased that these administrators have created a new kind of atmosphere where concerns are addressed. Thank you! Faculty will be able to see the report via a secure website. The Committee on University Priorities worked with the Committee on University Life to make sure all concerns were addressed. Dr. Lipscomb emphasized the important process of communication: "Please communicate if your query isn't being adequately answered, or if you have questions or ideas about the issues brought up in the report. These conversations are continuous and will roll forward." Michael Matthews will be the next chair. The committee is hoping for continuity of purpose and vision.

Jeannie Haubert: Why are responses being relegated to a website instead of brought up here?

Jamie Comstock Williamson: Questions always welcome here.

Debra Boyd: Maybe at the next meeting, when the report is final, we can have a discussion here.

Kristi Schoepfer: Asked about the way that students are suffering due to the increased cost of summer school; the price increase was never communicated to us or to them.

Jamie Comstock Williamson: I am so sorry; it can't be undone, and I understand your frustration. As an aside, it's unusual that summer tuition has not changed in so long. I wish we would have thought of and realized this communication oversight sooner. I hope nothing like this will ever happen again; we will be very mindful.

Mike Lipscomb: The report encompasses 17 enquiries that take up 9 pages of response. It might make more sense to send the faculty a written document that would allow them to pursue specific feedback, especially when this meeting is so long.

Jennifer Solomon: It seems to me that, for this particular committee, having actual reports presented to Faculty Conference would be very helpful. People would hear things at the same time and be able to ask questions about it. Frequent and public reports would produce a more engaged faculty.

John Bird: I will place this committee on the agenda at the August meeting for us to discuss issues.

Brad Tripp: Is the concern about summer school included in the forthcoming report?

Mike Lipscomb: Yes. It's also been addressed in this meeting through the president's candid remarks.

Jamie Comstock Williamson: "I can tell you that it is easy for me to be forthcoming because you are so civil. I appreciate our reasonable responses. Thank you for asking questions; it's good for me to hear these questions. That makes it easier for me, that you are so reasonable and civil and your questions come from a place that shows you care about our students."

d. Faculty Committee on University Life Report: Jennifer Disney

Dr. Disney could not yet report on the committee's new chair. She encouraged faculty to please read the written report. A lot of questions forwarded to the committee were policy questions; the administration directed the committee to where policy was written. She noted to Dr. Bird, "Please put this committee on the agenda for fall, too."

e. Academic Freedom and Tenure: Dave Pretty

Dr. Pretty referenced the situation concerning the College of Charleston and USC Upstate, and the potential cuts in their state funding. The committee took no further action.

VII. Unfinished Business

There was none.

VIII. New Business

The Article 8, Section 8 Bylaws change was voted on and passed.

The Article 8, section 7 Bylaws change was voted on and passed.

IX. Announcements

Gina Jones, Registrar reminders

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Casey A. Cothran

Next meeting August 22, 2014

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

## Appendix I

General Education Task Force's Seven Principles to Preserve the Integrity of Winthrop's General Education Program:

- I. Majors should specify specific courses in general education categories only if they are bound by accreditation or an outside agency.
- II. Majors may recommend a specific course for discipline or pedagogical reasons, but they must accept other courses that have been approved for our general education program if students take them (or have previously taken them).
- III. If a student changes majors, he or she may use previously-taken courses to satisfy general education requirements, except in the case of accreditation or licensure issues.
- IV. Majors are encouraged to fulfill the writing intensive, technology, and oral proficiency requirements within the major. We realize that this will not be possible in all majors. (These are exempted from item V because they represent proficiencies rather than points of view.)
- V. There should be a two course limit on how much of a student's major program of study may be used to meet GNED requirements; departments should be asked to make changes in their programs to avoid exceeding that limit.
- VI. Overall, to fulfill general education requirements, we should try to focus on competencies rather than specific courses as much as possible.
- VII. Majors should not be so rigid in the way they interface with general education that students can't complete the major within four years if they do not start in the major from the first semester, accreditation requirements notwithstanding.

## Appendix II

*Recommendation 4: Proposed General Education Program (for 2015-16 Catalogue)*

ACAD 101 (required of first-time freshmen only) 1 credit

Shared Skills and Proficiencies

### Writing and Critical Thinking

WRIT 101 (A grade of C- or better is required) 3 credits

HMXP 102 (Grade of C- or better in WRIT 101 is pre-req) 3 credits

CRTW 201 (A grade of C- or better in HMXP is pre-req) 3 credits

Oral Communication (may be met in course counted in the major) 0-3 credits

Technology (may be met in course counted in the major) 0-3 credits

Intensive Writing (may be met in course counted in the major) 0-3 credits

Physical Activity (may be waived for some students) 1 credit

### Thinking Critically Across Disciplines

Global Perspectives 3 credits

Historical Perspectives 3 credits

Constitution Requirement (may be met in another Gen Ed category) 0-3 credits

### Introducing Students to Broad Disciplinary Perspectives

Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

Social Science (at least two designators if 6 hrs) 3-6 credits

Humanities & Arts (at least two designators if 6 hrs) 3-6 credits

Quantitative Skills and Natural Science (including one lab science)

Quantitative 3-8 credits

Natural Science (if two courses taken, one each from 2 of 3 categories and one must be a lab)  
3-8 credits

**Total 35-50 credits**