

The Student Academic Development and Achievement Committee Meeting Minutes for April 11, 2014

Attending: Gordon Williams, Curt Szuberla, Cindy Hardy, Joe Mason, Sandra Wildfeuer, Sarah Stanley, Brandon Uzzell, Colleen Angiak, Linda Hapsmith, Alex Fitts, Libby Eddy

Next year's committee:

We polled the committee to see who would be continuing on SADA next year. Curt, Cindy, Joe, and Sandra will be continuing from their campuses and departments. Sarah reported that she would be replaced (English) by Jennifer Schell and Gordon noted that the Math department had not yet selected its representative for the committee (he is replacing David Maxwell this year while David is on sabbatical). We need to determine representation from the following rural and community campuses: CTC, Kuskokwim, Bristol Bay, and Chukchi (John Creed may continue). Non-faculty members include Colleen from RSS, and possibly Brandon from the Advising Center. We will continue to seek a representative from TRIO/SSS. We asked Alex Fitts to continue as our ex-officio administrative representative; however, this is ultimately the Provost's choice. Libby Eddy has agreed to continue on our e-mail list and meet with us as she can.

We also noted that we had requested an additional member of the committee from a CLA department offering core classes in our revised committee definition. Our revised committee definition is still under review—as are all the Faculty Senate committees.

Catalog Placement Language:

Libby brought us a proof of the catalog layout for the areas dealing with placement and the new placement charts. We reviewed these and made a suggestion that the charts be moved next to each other and be on the page next to the language that refers to Math and Writing placement. Libby will forward this to the folks at Marketing who are producing the catalog.

Gordon raised a question about courses in AAS programs that have embedded Math content. We discussed how students are placed into these classes and where placement for embedded math classes is listed. There are a few similar situations with embedded writing content, as well. We agreed that looking into the placement pathway for these classes would be a topic for next year's committee, as it is too late to make significant changes in this year's catalog.

Learning Commons:

Brandon has been working on a Learning Commons website. At our last meeting we suggested forming a subcommittee, and noted that Brandon and Cindy would meet with Suzan Hahn to initiate this. SADA members can let Cindy or Brandon know if they would like to take part in this subcommittee.

BOR Resolution:

We discussed the recent resolution passed by the Board of Regents, calling for alignment of developmental and general education courses across the UA system. What follows is a summary of the discussion:

--We have already aligned placement for DEVE and ENGL 111X classes across the system, and there is currently an effort underway to align the DEVM/Math classes between UAF and UAA. However, we note that aligning placement and general outcomes is not the same as making the course content and specific learning outcomes the same for each University. We note that the student and academic populations and goals differ on the three Universities, as do the resources available in the respective departments. We feel that it is better to have a diversity of resources at each location so that students have a real choice between Universities.

--We feel that this resolution puts the brakes on the GERC process because it suggests moving to a General Ed with limited choices across the system. We feel it could be possible to agree on broad outcomes across the system, but course development should respond to the needs of the particular campus and reflect the faculty resources on that campus. We also see that it could be possible to align course numbers for courses that have the same description, but to align much deeper into course content, etc., would tie the process up in committees for years to come.

--We are concerned that this resolution is the first step in a short-sighted attempt to make the UA system one university, without campus diversity, and to further silo some departments/subjects on separate campuses. This is reminiscent of a proposal from about ten years ago, which proposed moving some departments to one campus, a proposal which died when it became clear that students would not follow the departments and needed to be served geographically. One member suggested an alternative possibility—a fourth University entirely online which would develop its own culture just as the current three Universities have.

--We are concerned with the consequences of trying to assess courses system wide. How would this impact classes unique to programs or locations, such as the classes for the AAS and Certificate programs?

--We are also concerned that the common calendar would limit some flexibility in our offerings, such as late start classes, Wintermester classes, and lab offerings. We are concerned about the impact of a common spring break on school districts and on the ability to travel during those already high-demand times.

--We encourage the BOR to put the quality of education at the foremost of their considerations, and note that quality education results from an institution's ability to recognize and respond to the needs of its students and the strengths of its faculty and other resources.