

Minutes of the SADA Committee

Jan 17, 2014

Attending: Gordon Williams, Alex Fitts, Sarah Stanley, Cindy Hardy, Curt Szuberla, Sandra Wildfeuer, John Creed, Brandon Uzzell

Committee logistics: According to our new committee definition, which still needs to be approved, we will need another CLA person. We will ask Dean Todd Sherman to find a faculty member who is available to come to SADA.

Our meeting schedule for Spring semester will be:
Feb 14, Mar 14, Apr 11, May 9 (if needed to wrap up business)
These are all Friday dates. Meeting times will be 10-11:30AM.

Learning Commons: Sarah spoke with Susan Bishop, development officer at Rasmusen Library, who didn't know there was a faculty motion to put a Learning Commons in place. We agreed to invite Suzan Hahn to our next meeting. Sarah reported that Susan B mentioned three learning commons proposals put forward in the library plans, one that cost no money (the dedication of a portion of the 3rd floor for use in tutoring and other student/faculty uses), one a \$250,000 proposal (this would involve clearing out the third floor space and digitizing all periodical), and a third, involving extending the building onto the current patio would cost millions. We discussed the Chancellor's Gala as a venue for raising funds for the learning commons in support of students.

There was a subcommittee of SADA and the Library: Suzan Hahn, Cindy Hardy, Dana Greci, Amy Barnsley, and Reba Dupras--that met over several years and wrote up a proposal for the Library dean. Cindy will follow up with Suzan on the status of this project.

Obstacles to student success: Alex is working on a questionnaire that is going out to English 111X students, asking questions about how many hours students work, their use of Degree works and the Academic Advising Center, and whether or not they live on campus. This survey is going out now to students. We asked how SADA can help support the process. Alex noted that there's not much to do now until she sees what types of responses she is getting on the survey. Sarah noted that the survey is also part of a pilot assessment of English 111X, and is also looking at student writing.

Alex also informed us that there is a group meeting to talk about students on academic probation and academic recovery. This committee can track this information, and we can move things along to help with policy changes that come out of the committee process.

GERC: For the remainder of the meeting the committee discussed and drafted a response to the GERC proposal, which follows:

***Response from SADA Committee
To GERC Proposal
January 17, 2014***

Members of the SADA committee addressed the GERC proposal and had the following comments:

We are excited about the ability to have the GER outcomes clearly stated by means of the attributes and to have many courses fulfill these outcomes. This will give students more choice in fulfilling outcomes, rather than being limited in their course options. We believe that this will help with student retention. Furthermore, it fixes the problem of bottleneck courses that devolve into a dire experience for students. Once this proposal is enacted, courses that already have the content that applies to the attributes will come forward to adapt to the curriculum—and this will lead to the expansion of recognition of these courses as fulfilling Gen. Ed. requirements.

In general, we see that the proposal doesn't dilute the rigor of the Gen Ed program, but offers students multiple choices. This proposal will also allow students to double count classes, which will be a benefit to students taking elective credits. For students whose programs don't currently allow electives, it will encourage exploration and help with retention. Finally, it will put transfer students and current UAF students on the same footing. The current system is harder on our own students because they have a limited list of courses to pick from in comparison to the list of acceptable transfer courses. The new system will give more choices to our current students.

We note that this could involve a messy and frustrating transition for students, faculty, and staff. Students with old transcripts—re-enrolling students—may have additional criteria to meet, especially as courses required under the current Perspectives begin to go away or be offered less frequently. There will be some potential for confusion on the part of advisors and students based on increased choice and during the transition period. DegreeWorks will need to change to adapt to the new GenEd requirements, and the new attribute system will initially create a greater burden on the registrar's office, but the changes, overall, will be better for students.

Recommendations:

Expand current "h," "s," and "n" attributes to allow students greater choice in meeting these parts of the BOR requirements. Currently the "h" and "s" attributes are required only in the BA degree. More classes could fit under these attributes.

Solicit student input into this process—they are the ones who will be most impacted by this change.

Continue with work on the motion to change BOR requirements so that they better fit the GERC proposal. We are not sure where this motion stands at this point, but we would like it to go forward.

Develop a review structure for the attributes as subcommittees of the current Core Review committee. This would provide more committee service opportunities for junior faculty.

Continue discussion about the C attribute and the role of written and oral communication at UAF.