

College of Liberal Arts Council
September 4, 2007 meeting minutes

Members present: Bardhan, Baertsch, Beardsworth, Benti, Bird, Breznikar, Cáceres, Cook, Gadzekpo, Giblin, Gray, Kidd, Lapham, Leonard, Morshed, Lowery (proxy for Nadler), Netzley, Ojewuyi, Poquette, Rodriguez, Schoof, Silver, Venable, Wang, Ward.

Members absent: Boyd, Burnside, Chonez, Curtis, Ludwig, Pattisapu, Sloboda, Spaulding.

1. Welcome, Chair Alejandro Cáceres

Cáceres called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. He welcomed new and old Council members and thanked the Council for voting him in as chair for this year.

2. Approval of May 8, 2007, meeting minutes

Motion to approve by Netzley. Seconded by Gray.

3. Ratification of CoLA Council members nominated after May 2007 elections

Cáceres explained that on his request over the summer, chairs of CoLA units not represented after the May 2007 elections had nominated individuals from within their units to join the Council. He requested ratification of these nominated members by other Council members. Netzley made a motion to ratify. Rodriguez seconded.

4. Chair's remarks and suggestions for Council for the year 2007-08

Cáceres brought up several issues that need to be addressed by the Council this year. These included revisiting procedures followed by the Selection and Election Committee for electing CoLA Council members, discussing how to better represent various CoLA units in CoLA Council (currently there are 18 units and 22 members. Should we have two members per unit and 10 students? In that case, how many members would be voting members? The other option would be to go by areas as is the current practice), reviewing the CoLA operating papers, including language in the CoLA operating papers about nomination, selection and appointment of the associate dean, and the possibility of combining the Grievance and Selection and Election committees for this year for the purpose of reviewing the operating papers. Cáceres requested members to reflect on these issues so they may be discussed, and if needed voted upon, in the Oct. general meeting.

5. Election of New Committee Chairs

Cáceres announced the five committees, and requested each committee to select a chair from amongst themselves after the meeting.

6. Committee Reports

Teaching and Learning – No report

Promotions – No report

Grievance – No report.

Academic Policy – No report

Elections & Selection – Rodriguez announced that the Council is short by one undergraduate student representative, and requested members to nominate a student for appointment.

7. Dean's Remarks, Alan Vaux

Dean Vaux thanked current and last year's members for their service. He reported that the welcome back reception for the college was a success, and that he was pleased to review and announce the accomplishments of various faculty. He noted just a few highlights. Prof. Larry Hickman has been offered an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Cologne. The Southern Illinois Symphony Orchestra will be bringing in world renowned pianist Emanuel Ax, and Segun Ojewuyi from the Department of Theatre has played a key role in organizing an upcoming visit by Nobel Prize Laureate Wole Soyinka.

The dean next reviewed the budget situation. There has been an overall cut of 3%, including the loss of five tenure track positions and quite a few term positions. These are permanent losses and there will be tough decisions to be made in the near future. He next reviewed enrollment. The college has been pretty stable for the last eight, hovering just above 3000. But this year, it is at the bottom of the distribution, and we need to find ways to better recruit and retain students. He next informed the Council that the WAC statement issued by the Council last year allowed him to procure some funds from the provost to organize teaching and faculty development workshops. He suggested that the Teaching and Learning committee could take charge of spearheading this initiative.

8. Associate Dean's Remarks, David DiLalla

The associate dean reported that several non-tenure track hires were made over the summer. Work was also done by the Faculty Union and the Provost's Office on implementing new non-tenure track faculty contracts. Special sessions were held to welcome the arrival of new colleagues this fall. These were helpful in getting these new faculty acclimatized to the procedures and culture of this college/campus. Another such session is scheduled for Sept. 6. A Tenure and Promotion workshop will be held in October (date TBA). DiLalla concluded that hiring, while it will be a challenge, will continue, and that the CoLA Budget Advisory Committee will be constituted soon.

9. Dean's Office Business, Anita Hutton

Hutton handed out enrollment figures and information about various recruitment events. She reported that the two events in Springfield and DuQuoin were successful. Almost 88% of CoLA students are in good standing, 4.5% were suspended and 6.5% are on probation. Enrollment has hovered around the 3000 mark since the year 2000, and this year the college is down by 110 undergraduate students and 4 graduate students. Hutton also announced the start of SIU System Service Centers that will be staffed by retired SIU staff.

Cáceres next spoke about the mission of CoLA Council. He suggested that this year the Council visit the issue of critical thinking, i.e., what kinds of critical thinking skills are we teaching through CoLA curriculum? This goal is in keeping with the CoLA operating papers. He suggested that following the example of the WAC review last year, the Council could conduct a review of the state of teaching critical thinking throughout CoLA curriculum. Dean Vaux agreed that this is a good idea. Cáceres further suggested that the committee on Teaching and Learning could take this on. Bardhan requested Council members to offer their suggestion on what else they might think would be good issues to address in the Council this year. Cáceres further noted that he was in the process of inviting the Chancellor to address the Council in the Oct. or Nov. meeting.

Dean Vaux suggested that while reviewing the operating papers this year, it would be a good idea to think in terms of stability and agility. Some restructuring of current committees could serve that goal and make the workings of the council more flexible. Cáceres suggested that the sizes of committees could be adjusted according to work load, and Dean Vaux noted that new committees could also be added. The dean reiterated that the Council might want to add language regarding how to hire and appoint an associate dean, and interim positions in the dean's office.

Morshed inquired who approves of changes in the operating papers. Rodriguez clarified that first the Council does, followed by the College and then the Provost. Silver inquired how many Council members would be voting members on this. Cáceres stated that is uncertain at this point. Hutton added that according to the current operating papers, that number would be 31.

Ojewuyi noted that the Academic Policy is in no position to make informed decisions about merits vs costs about proposals for new programs. It may be advisable to address that issue while revising the operating papers. Hutton stated that procedures could only be changed after the operating papers are revised and approved. Beardsworth inquired who would be in charge of the revisions, and Cáceres explained that the Grievance and Selection & Election combined (once that decision is voted upon) would be mainly in charge.

10. Old Business

None

11. New Business

None

12. Announcements

None

13. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Rodriguez at 6:55 p.m. Seconded by Netzley.

Submitted by Nilanjana Bardhan/Vice-Chair (2007-08)

