

College of Liberal Arts Council
April 1, 2008, meeting minutes

Members present: Baertsch, Bardhan, Beardsworth, Benti, Bird, Breznikar, Burnside, Cáceres, Chonez, Giblin (proxy Leonard), Gray, Kidd (proxy Rush), Leonard, Ludwig (proxy Sloboda), Netzley, Morshed, Ojewuyi (proxy Rush), Pattisapu, Rodriguez, Schoof (proxy Weinert), Silver, Sloboda, Spaulding, Venable, Wang.

Members absent: Cook, Curtis, Gadzekpo/Chipasula, Lapham, Poquette, Rivera, Ward.

1. Welcome, Chair Alejandro Cáceres

Cáceres called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. Approval of March 4, 2008, meeting minutes

Motion to approve by Rodriguez. Seconded by Netzley. Minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Guest Speakers on Writing Across the Curriculum: Jim Allen and Jonathan Gray

Cáceres introduced the speakers and said that they would update the Council on the progress that has been made on the WAC effort.

Allen commended the Council and Dean Vaux for reviving the WAC initiative, and stated that Jonny Gray, Ronda Dively, Jane Cogie and Jerry Nelms have been instrumental in post-revival WAC efforts. They have been visiting different CoLA units, speaking about issues related to WAC and answering questions faculty have. Allen also shared the results of the recent *St. Martin's Handbook* research on the most common writing errors that students make (2006).

Gray stated that the team has some resources now, and it has been meeting and brainstorming, conducting workshops, seminars and outreaches to departments, and focusing on particular issues related to writing, such as academic integrity. He stated that another issue that needs to be addressed is that of knowledge gap and the lack of knowledge transfer between WAC courses. He said that WAC should not be ghettoized in one department/unit, and emphasized that in order to have a strong WAC program, institutional support (structure and funds) and commitment are necessary.

Silver inquired if the team has been observing WAC classes, and Gray responded that it has not had the time to do so. However, he noted that the meetings with faculty who teach these classes in various departments have been productive. Faculty members have concerns and they would like some guidance.

Allen noted that there are three main issues that seem to stand out – 1) faculty want to know what is being taught in Freshman English, 2) they would like to know what the role of The Writing Center is, and 3) they are concerned about the grading load of the writing intensive classes that they teach. Regarding the latter point, Silver noted that there are creative ways in which the amount of writing can remain the same, but the instructor's grading load can be lessened (e.g., group grading). Burnside pointed out that another problem is that some students don't put much effort into the work that they turn in, and all effort on the part of faculty is futile if this is the case. Students have to be taught to be good learners.

Gray pointed out that several faculty members are not trained to teach writing, and The Writing Center can help. It can send staff to classes, and relationships can be cultivated with the Center for the purpose of teaching WAC courses. Faculty workshops are another option. Sloboda inquired if Gray was advocating that the CoLA Council have a committee for WAC in place. Gray responded that could be one possibility, and that WAC has to be someone's specific responsibility, i.e., a part of someone's job. He stated that WAC goals cannot be accomplished in a fragmented manner, and noted that the position of director of WAC needs to be revived. He also noted that it is important for TAs to be involved in the learning required to teach WAC courses effectively.

Dean Vaux thanked Allen, Gray and the team for taking on the WAC effort and for putting WAC back on the radar. He agreed that funds and structural support are important for WAC, and that perhaps, given the shrinking budget, some arrangement may be possible with English Composition. He thanked Gray and Allen for addressing the Council.

4. Committee Reports

Academic Policy – No report.

Promotions – No report

Teaching and Learning – No report.

Grievance – No report.

Selections & Election – Rodriguez reported that less than half the CoLA units had sent in names to be put on the election ballot. He requested Council members to remind their chairs to send these names in by Friday.

5. Dean's Remarks, Alan Vaux

Dean Vaux reported that all 12 CoLA promotion/tenure decisions for this year were positive, and that the letters had been sent out by the provost last week. He noted that the 5th Annual Research Meeting that was held today had strong CoLA participation – 20 out of the 40 research posters were from CoLA. He congratulated speech communication senior and Council member Pattisapu for winning an award for her work. He next reported that the SIUC Wind Ensemble had played at Carnegie Hall last weekend, an event he attended for fundraising purposes, and he reminded members of Emmanuel Ax's performance tonight.

6. Associate Dean's Remarks, David DiLalla

No report.

7. Dean's Office Business, Anita Hutton

Hutton requested members to send in stories about student accomplishments for the next CoLA newsletter. She reported that the Externship Program this year was a success. Twenty-two CoLA students participated, and 16 new sponsors came on board. Two CoLA students have been recognized as Super Students, and almost half of this year's 25 Most Distinguished Seniors are from CoLA. The debate team has had a very successful season, and one of the debaters is No. 1 in the nation.

Dean Vaux added that the College has done well with getting Undergraduate Assistantships this year.

8. Old Business

None

9. New Business

Cáceres reminded Council members that nominations are still needed for the positions of chair and vice chair for next year.

10. Announcements

Netzley made announcements about upcoming lectures and colloquiums for the Humanities Forum and the English and History departments, Cáceres made announcements on behalf of Foreign Languages, and Rodriguez made an announcement about the upcoming Junior High/High School Science Fair.

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Netzley at 6:52 p.m. Seconded by Rodriguez.

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