

## **Council of Associate Deans (CAD) Minutes**

**August 6, 2013**

**226 Tigert Hall**

**Present:** Tammy Aagard, Peggy Carr, Stephanie Hanson, Christopher Janelle, Angela Lindner, Bernard Mair, Lynn O'Sickey, David Pharies, Robin Rossie, Jen Day Shaw, Horace Tucker, Elaine Turner, Theresa Vernetson and M. Dee Williams

The meeting was called to order by Bernard Mair at 1:30 p.m.

### **1. The Preeminence Bill**

Mair stated that the purpose of this meeting was to get their feedback on the Preeminence Bill particularly the courses that are included in the bill. According to the bill, UF can offer 9-12 credits of unique courses; these courses are to be a signature experiences that sets apart a University of Florida graduate.

The university already has experience with this type of initiative which has been successfully launched; the Good Life course. In 2009 the task force took two years to develop the course. A series of pilot programs were implemented and then it was launched to all incoming freshmen last Fall (2012). Between Fall and Spring the Good Life course was offered to about 6,392, in Summer B it was offered to about 2,000 freshmen.

We can also gain insight from looking around the country and see what programs that we can learn from. We can take a look at adapting these programs, to fit the University of Florida. A few strengths and characteristics can be taken into account when setting up the design for the core program.

In addition to the specific courses, we need to consider the timing of the implementation process developing the courses, developing the program in general, developing the course in particular and the process with carrying on that program for a long time. Keeping in mind that in 2015, the changes to the General Education program will be implemented, should one big massive change take place all at once in 2015 or should the Statewide Gen Ed changes take place in 2015 and then gradually implement the core program over the next 2 or 3 years?

The committee discussed features of the program

1. What are characteristics of the university that we believe that students should have when they leave here?
2. What are the characteristics and values that we want students to take with them?
3. What is important for their future whether it be graduate school, careers or jobs?
4. What sort of attitude do we want students to take with them?
5. What is so important or distinctive about the University of Florida that could be used to brand this program?

Mair asked, "What is so distinctive about the University of Florida that we would like to be apart or contribute to this program? This program should signify who we are, what our mission is and what experience students should have while they are here?" The committee mentioned the following attributes:

- UF is the only land grant, sea grant and space grant institution in Florida.

- UF is a comprehensive institution with research and service learning, professional and academic disciplines.
- UF is in the process of developing in a huge internationalization effort through QEP for SACS reaccreditation.
- UF is a research intensive university; it is the only institution in country which has all six health center colleges on the same campus.
- We should aim to bring a wide variety of disciplines and opportunities on campus into the student's experience.
- The program should include a capstone course in the discipline that integrates and synthesizes information from multiple courses.

## **2. Capstone Courses**

There was some discussion on how to develop capstone courses-existing courses could be retooled as capstones, so that there would be no need to create new capstone courses. Mair stated that 50 percent of the majors have something they call a capstone course. It would be one way to include the signature experiences with minimal requirements added to the curriculum for the majors.

## **3. General Comments**

The distribution of the courses over the four year period was discussed. Should they be lower division only, or spread across all four years? Elaine Turner stated that there would be backend challenges with transfer students. If the courses were spread out over a four year period and a transfer student came in year three would they take the years 1, 2 & 3 courses all in their third year? Or if the other courses are front loaded into general education in the lower division and a capstone experience is modified to include those but a transfer student has not taken them, how would the student be able to integrate those courses into the capstone?

Robin Rossie stated that the Preeminence bill only requires FTIC students to take the unique set of 9-12 credit hours. Robin thinks that transfer students should automatically be exempt according to the way the bill is written.

Elaine Turner asked how the signature courses would potentially fit into a reorganized Gen Ed. How much of that could be accommodated within the restructure of general education given that it will remain at the 36 credits? Bernard Mair stated the Good Life course is one general education course and five of the general education courses are determined by the state wide core of 25 courses. Six general education courses have been determined; if one thinks of 36 credits as 12 courses half of the general education program is determined.

Bernard Mair asked about the flexibility in the majors to include additional credits. How much flexibility is there beside major courses and Gen Ed to have electives that are not classified in any particular bucket? Rossie stated that her college has 9 credits hours accounted for Gen Ed, prerequisites or upper division courses. Any student that enters with 15 credits of AP or IB has satisfied their electives.

Horace Tucker asked if the common/signature experience should have the same objectives as the Good Life course. Mair stated that it is to create a university of Florida program that is different and distinctive from other universities which contains within it the qualities, skills, and values that are important to us. We are looking for something different rather than something similar to the Gen Ed program. It should be distinctive that seeks to integrate their experiences which will have a UF

stamp on it that says this UF degree is different from other degrees. Other things to consider are to improve the quality of the education that the students leave with to make them more suitable for graduate school. We should consider placement in high profile leadership positions and to make them more recognized as having the high quality education. The Pre-Eminence Bill was designed to create a distinctive experience for the students that included the distinctive features of the university, not just providing another set of skills that they can get anywhere else.

Jen Day Shaw stated that the undergraduate task force was explicit in recommending a freshman year experience, a sophomore year experience, and a junior senior year experience. Looking at faculty development you can see how students develop their ability to make meaningful progress developmentally across the four years; therefore there is some power in something that will continue that theme for the four years.

Lynn O'Sickey stated that one of the things that she talks about at Preview is the importance of experiential learning. A student's experiential learning could be their senior clinical, their internship, research, or overseas study. Mair stated that the committee should not think that new courses would have to be created. There are many courses that can be slightly changed or modified. The terms would have to be defined in such a way that many of the courses would meet the definition, maybe adding a component to a course, add service learning, or experiential learning. Space will need to be available for one or two courses that are different from what is already in your program. Mair asked the committee to find space in their programs for one or two courses that may be different without increasing the number of credit hours. Turner stated that whatever is created or modified there needs to be a component experiential learning, for students to do and not just sit and listen. Experiential learning includes service learning, research and other formats.

Jen Day Shaw stated that the Retention Task Force discovered that First Year Florida has a significant on freshmen year retention. A lot of schools have a First Year Florida type course that combines career planning, career development in one course. This could be an option for UF.

A discussion on the financial aspects followed from David Pharies question on how Maryland and Texas financed their signature programs. Mair stated that they came as part as their teaching load. They used existing teaching faculty and teaching assistants. Will the signature courses count for Gen Ed? Will the colleges that supply a lot of Gen Ed courses be severely impacted? Pharies indicated that the deans are excited about these types of interdisciplinary courses but that we need to address how the colleges would be compensated for offering them and how faculty would be assigned to teach them. Would they be taught as overloads?

Stephanie Hanson asked for an explanation of the goal of these courses. She felt that we first need to decide if we want to do something thematically; or to emphasize building skill sets in our students or to do a compendium of exposure to interdisciplinary activities? Should we build on the SACS internationalization focus or on the really exceptionally externally funded research here; or on improving the faculty student ratio? Many believe training to be a global citizen is missing in education so perhaps we might want to focus on global citizenry to solidify education activities. We need to make the super ordinate decision before we start dealing with all our operational pieces behind what preeminence really mean on this campus, or what area we want to look in terms of trying to address a student starting with us as a freshmen then coming out as a senior. Operational issues should be put aside until we find out where we are.

Horace Tucker agreed and asked for some overarching principles and the relation to the march toward the top ten publics and our mission statement.

Peggy Carr stated that the global citizen idea really resonates and it reminds her of the Graham Center push for trying to educate people in civics. It has a much more domestic orientation than the global citizen. But trying to expose students to how to make a difference in the world is understandable or how the city commission or the UN works would be a really distinctive goal if agreed.

Chris Janelle stated the common experience should have the capability to really address big problems from multiple perspectives, multiple disciplines and colleges, capitalizing on UF's diversity.

In response to a question about process, Mair informed the committee that input is being gathered from the deans, from this committee and many other groups including the Faculty Senate. The general framework will be based on input:

1. How many courses
2. What the topics would be
3. How broad should they be
4. What is meant by interdisciplinary should it be tied the international QEP.

These questions will be addressed in a document which would set out the parameters for the program, and then the faculty would be engaged in designing the courses. Then a process will be set up to manage the courses going forward do we continue to receive applications, do we have a time limit, implementation. These large questions will be determined based on the input that is obtained from different groups, and then set up committees or task forces to get courses developed. The senior administration will decide on the general framework.

The committee discussed the challenges of staffing new courses in the face of faculty attrition in the colleges, and the workload of faculty who are making up for the loss of staff.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.