

Minutes of the Subcommittee on Upper-Division Cross-School Opportunities

August 31, 2009

In attendance were: Ladelle McWhorter (Chair), Kathrin Bower, Chris Cotropia, Crystal Hoyt, Joan Neff, Porcher Taylor, Steve Thompson, and Margaret Denton.

Two agenda items were the bases for most of the subcommittee's discussions: what we learned from our meeting with the Leadership Studies faculty and dean on Friday, August 28, and preparation for the meeting on September 1 with Academic Council.

As for the first item, it was clear from the meeting at Jepson that Leadership Studies already has a cross-school model in place. By definition Leadership Studies is inter-disciplinary. Subcommittee members asked the faculty about challenges in dealing with interdisciplinary cooperation. One issue that emerged was that such cooperation often is initiated by an individual faculty member who is responsible for identifying colleagues whose interests might lead to team teaching. The Faculty Development Center was identified as a potential facilitator for cooperation among faculty at both the meeting with the Jepson faculty and the subsequent subcommittee meeting.

Leadership Studies faculty receive full credit for team-teaching beyond the first time. According to the Richmond Promise, team teaching is to be supported for all participating faculty members for the first and all subsequent iterations of a team-taught course. Leadership Studies also has worked out a system to give credit to faculty members who mentor honors students. The question arises then about awarding credit to a faculty member who mentors outside of his/her school.

Dean Peart brought up two other points. One, that if a faculty member is involved in interdisciplinary teaching, his or her tenure reviews must include a member from the other discipline. She also stressed that while interdisciplinary courses are a desirable component of undergraduate education, disciplines are inherent in our system of higher education.

Another challenge was that of cross listing. Both a general reluctance on the part of some departments to cross-list and the administrative complexities of some cross-listings were also cited as challenges. Still another challenge is the issue of prerequisites that do not allow students outside a particular school easy access to upper-division courses.

The second item led to discussions about how we, as a subcommittee, keep in balance ideas about cross-school opportunities and the nuts and bolts that will allow cross-school initiatives to function well. The subcommittee, mindful that the first-year seminars will be in place for fall of 2010, considered them in relation to upper level cross-school opportunities. An example of the first year seminar team taught across schools was given by Porcher Taylor. Professor Taylor, who teaches Paralegal studies, will be offering a first year seminar with Jonathan Wight,

Professor of Economics and International Studies, and Professor Darrell Walden, Associate Professor of Accounting. The course, "The Business Ethics Recession" will be taught by all three faculty the first semester then by each of them separately.

The subcommittee reiterated its goal to look into cross-school teaching opportunities as a means of recognizing that often problems or issues demand to be explored from different perspectives not contained within one discipline. The committee chair also emphasized that the opportunities involved are not only curricular and thus connected to the students, but also can encourage and foster intellectual community within and among the five schools. The committee is in the process of exploring ways to facilitate those opportunities for faculty interested in them.

The meeting concluded with discussions about scheduling the open fora this fall.

Respectfully submitted by Margaret Denton, September 1, 2009.