Minutes
College of Liberal and Applied Arts College Council

November 12, 2013; 3:30 p.m.; Boynton 209

Attending: Dr. Linda Bond, Chair; Dr. Ray Darville, Dr. Louise Stoehr, Dr. Al Greule, Dr. Ben Dixon, Dr. Alan Baily, Dr. Lee Payne, Dr. Denise Millstein, Dr. Elizabeth Tasker, Dr. Steve Taaffee, Dr. Dana Cooper, Dr. Jeffery Roth, Dr. Latoya Wesley, Ms. Elizabeth Spradley, Dr. Sharon Eaves, Dr. Kim Rich-Rice. Ex Officio: Dr. Marc Guidry (Associate Dean). Visitors: Dr. Ken Collier, Dr. Don Gooch, Dr. Cindy Pressley, Dr. Tyler Spradley.

- Session called to order at 3:30 p.m.

- Minutes from November 5th reviewed.
  - A motion was introduced to approve the minutes of the November 5 meeting. The minutes were approved.

- Pre-law Minor: Dr. Gooch (Pre-law Advisor) was available to field questions about the proposed pre-law minor that was tabled at the Council’s last meeting. Dr. Gooch reiterated that most of the courses in the proposed minor are being offered already, but uniting those and other relevant courses under a “pre-law” heading can benefit students. Designating a “pre-law minor” both affirms the value of political science education as one path to law school and aids the student in identifying the courses most likely to contribute to that goal. The proposed minor focuses on general principles and processes characteristic of the American legal system, rather than the specific legal fields that are addressed in postgraduate training. As Dr. Gooch added, the minor also provides an opportunity for students to consider whether they really want to go on to law school before they invest significant time, effort and resources pursuing a potentially unsatisfying career path. Council discussion revolved around five questions:
  1) Can one be both a Political Science (PSC) major and a pre-law minor? Dr. Gooch replied that, yes, a student may major in PSC and minor in pre-law. However, per university policy only six hours may be counted towards both the major and minor. Most pre-law courses are offered by the PSC program but there are many more PSC courses that are not included in the pre-law minor so a student majoring in PSC and minoring in pre-law would encounter a diverse array of content even though both concentrations are housed in the same department. The PSC major requires 36 semester credit hours of advanced PSC courses; the pre-law minor requires 18 hours. Thus, one can complete both the
PSC major and pre-law minor with a (minimum) total of 48 hours of advanced credit.

2) Should the pre-law program be more multidisciplinary? (Several courses from within the college were suggested as potential additions to the curriculum, including Argumentation and Debate (COM 313), Reasoning and Writing (ENG 382), Constitutional History (HIS Special Topics) and Forensic Psychology (PSY Special Topics)). Dr. Gooch expressed openness to the possibility of including such courses, though it seeded difficult to arrive at an acceptable schedule of additional courses in the near term. He urged the Council to approve the proposal as-is, and revisit the question of adding new courses to the minor in future years. A suggestion was offered that courses from outside the minor might be included for credit on a piecemeal basis, pending the approval of the pre-law advisor. Dr. Gooch adopted this suggestion as a friendly amendment to the proposal.

3) Will this minor attract students from outside the Political Science program? Dr. Gooch replied that, yes, in his opinion, it will. The Department of Government hopes that the minor will attract students majoring in other fields across the University. It is also possible that the PSC program will lose some majors whose chief motivation for majoring in PSC is to prepare for law school.

4) Why designate an official minor? Why not opt for a less formal “pre law concentration” (for Political Science majors/minors)? Dr. Gooch adduced three reasons to opt for an official minor. First, there is student demand for it. Second, an officially designated minor sends a clear signal to students (and potentially, parents) that the course of study can sharpen skills and convey valuable knowledge to potential legal professionals. Third, the minor provides an official credential visible to law schools and potential employers.

5) How common is the pre-law minor? According to Dr. Gooch, the pre-law minor is rather common at mid-sized teaching institutions similar to SFA.

- A motion was introduced to approve the pre-law minor (with the additional language to include approved courses from outside programs). The motion carried by a majority.

Leadership Certificate Proposal: Dr Tyler Spradley is sponsoring this proposal, which he introduced to the Council last spring. At that time, Council members raised questions regarding the protocol for “certificate” programs and the value added by a leadership certificate in particular. At the present meeting Dr. Spradley introduced evidence of the effectiveness of leadership programs and the value added by attaching leadership certifications to a diversity of majors. In addition, Dr. Spradley drew the Council’s
attention to an editorial piece in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* that emphasized the need for leadership training today. As Dr. Spradley summarized it, the proposed certificate program will be integrated with various majors. Students will take a required course in the general principles of leadership as well as a course in their specific (major) field, which includes leadership skills. These academic courses will be complimented with six required hours of field experience and a capstone that calls on the student to produce work which can be included in an employment or application portfolio. Overall, the aim of the certificate program is to engage students in the practice of leadership skills. Council discussion revolved around the following three questions:

1) What is required of the specific leadership course in the student’s major? In particular, will programs have to create special courses to accommodate this certificate? Dr. Spradley replied that the requirement could be met either with an independent study course or a regular course in the major that includes a “leadership component.” Some programs may offer leadership courses or courses with explicit leadership content but this would not be necessary for a given course to meet the certificate requirements. All that is required is for the student to demonstrate the presence of a leadership component in the course in question. There are a variety of ways this might be done, but ultimately the leadership program director will determine whether a leadership component is present (in consultation with student and instructor). It is important that the student be capable of explaining how the course in question contributed to the development of leadership skills.

2) May students earn both the leadership minor and the leadership certificate? Is this permissible? Is it advisable? Also, should the title of the “Leadership Certificate” be amended to convey its emphasis on practice (vis-à-vis the more scholarly emphasis of the leadership minor)? Dr. Spradley replied that nothing prevents a student from taking both the minor and the certificate (with the possible exception of the “double-dip” rule) but in his opinion it is not likely that a student will pursue both. With respect to the certificate title, Dr. Spradley expressed openness to changing the name of the *minor*, in the future, to emphasize its more scholarly character. Being too specific with the title of the certificate, he suggested, may imply a theoretical approach to the practice of leadership narrower than that which informs the proposal at hand.

3) What service learning projects will be undertaken as part of this certificate program? Dr. Spradley replied that the general approach to service learning component is to require students to volunteer at a non-profit organization and then reflect critically on that organization’s structure and management style (for-profits may also serve this purpose but are tougher to partner with). SFA
students have completed similar projects with local organizations including Habitat for Humanity, CASA, Azleway, The Boys and Girls Club, and the Chamber of Commerce.

- A motion was introduced to approve the Leadership Certificate. The motion carried by a majority.

- Communication Studies Program Modifications: The program is proposing three course deletions and three additions, all for the purpose of lining up the curriculum with similar degree programs in the discipline. None of these modifications entail a change in course content. The proposed modifications are as follows:
  1) Delete COM 102 and add COM 305 (Introduction to Communication Theory).
  2) Delete COM 202 and add COM 310 (Research Methods)
  3) Delete COM 315 and add COM 215 (Small Group Communication)

The rationale for the first two modifications (resulting in the addition of COM 305 and COM 310) is that both theory and methods are rigorous courses and are designated at the 300-level or above at peer institutions. The last modification (resulting in the addition of COM 215) is occasioned by the inclusion of “Small Group Communication” in the new core curriculum: core courses must be designated below the 300-level. Council members inquired as to the consequence of these modifications for COM majors. The only significant change in this regard is that majors will have to take three additional advanced hours (in net) due to the revision of COM 315 as COM 215.

- A motion carried unanimously to approve the above modifications to the COM program (the changes apply across all concentrations within the program).

- Integrated Reading and Writing (IRW 097): Presently remedial reading and writing are addressed in two separate courses—RDG 098 (offered by Education) and ENG 099 (offered by English). State policy mandates that these two courses be combined into one, “Integrated Reading and Writing”. The proposal is to add IRW 097 to the curriculum (with responsibility for this course being shared between Education and English).

- A motion was introduced to approve the addition of IRW 097. While there was little substantive discussion, Council members displayed marked dissatisfaction with being called on to approve formally what is essentially a fait accompli. The motion failed, narrowly, with many members abstaining.

- Geography Program Modifications: The Department of Social and Cultural Analysis is proposing two sets of modifications, one set applies to the Geography program and one
to the Sociology program. At this meeting, the Council was able to address the changes proposed for the Geography program.

- As Dr. Roth explained, the Geography program wishes to do away with categories of specialization inherited from an earlier curricular scheme. Regardless of their origin, Dr. Roth suggested, these categories no longer serve students well; they have become less relevant in light of the new emphasis on Geographical Information Systems (an emphasis which is more appealing to both students and their prospective employers). In sum the proposed modification would eliminate the old categories; drop the three “pro-seminars” presently required of majors; and add a “techniques” course at the introductory level. These changes would apply to all GEO majors and minors.
  - A motion carried unanimously to approve the above modifications to the Geography program.

- Dr. Cooper reminded the Council of the Faculty Senate meeting scheduled for Wednesday, November 13th. The Senate will host John Calahan, director of the new “Space Utilization” initiative. Faculty members are encouraged to attend and discuss with Mr. Calahan any questions or concerns they may have about this initiative.

- A motion was introduced to call a special Council meeting on Tuesday, November 19, to address further program and course modifications. The motion carried unanimously.

- Adjournment was at 5:00 p.m.