

UCT Minutes (Taken by Ellen Winner)

4/21/05

Present: Chris Hepburn, Bill Petrie, Sue Barrett, Larry Ludlow, Mary Joe Hughes, Ellen Winner

Guests: Mark Landy, Clare O'Connor, Tim Duket

PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

FRESHMAN TOPIC-BASED SEMINARS

The major topic of discussion was the new topic-based freshman seminars. Six were offered last fall. Three of the leaders came to talk about how they went. All were enthusiastic.

Mark Landy:

Taught a seminar on the presidential election. Said it was the most successful endeavor he had taken part in. He had 15 students, 9-10 were fully engaged and loved it and asked to keep meeting after Thanksgiving. He took them to The Producers and they really appreciated this. Suggested that all cornerstone seminars have events like dinners for bonding.

Tim Duket:

Taught a seminar on the theme of Ulysses. Found the students to be very interested. The seminar provided these students with intellectual engagement. It brings together students with common interests. We should have more things like this. These seminars, like the Honors program, may keep our most intellectual students from transferring elsewhere for lack of enough intellectual engagement. Bill Petrie pointed out that lots of freshmen everywhere think about transferring but don't. Tim felt the freshman seminars are like the honors program but less intensive. They make students a member of an academic community. He agreed that all cornerstone seminars should get together for 1-2 evenings for bonding.

Clare O'Connor:

Taught seminar on medicine, genetics, and privacy. Started by watching the film Gattaca (where your future is determined by your genes). Went canoeing on the Charles. Are going to Science Museum tomorrow (had to be postponed because she broke her ankle in the fall). She had a lot of bio majors. They were enthusiastic, bonded, felt it helped them.

Reports from Ali Banuazizi (Politics of Evil) and Bob Faulkner (Democratic Statesmanship) were sent to the meeting.

How much effort on the part of the faculty member is required?

Chris asked the seminar leaders if it took too much time and would you do it again.

Five of the 6 are going it again; the 6th would but will be on sabbatical.

Mark: very time consuming, esp. the advising, but he is doing it again.

Clare: is doing it again, changing time from late afternoon to mid-day when students feel less pressed.

Tim: is doing it again, advises faculty to do one on something they are working on but cant teach a course on.

Mark felt it was very important to keep the readings short since these are 1 credit courses.

Tim Duket picked out short memorable passages on Ulysses

Bob Faulkner used speeches.

Ali Banuazizi agrees he assigned too much.

Summer Training

Chris asked about the summer training (2 sessions).

Mark felt the session with Tom McGuinness from counseling was very helpful.

Tim felt the session on shared inquiry was very valuable in learning how to get a conversation going.

While veterans might not want to go to all parts of the summer training again, they have to realize they will get less pay because \$1,000 of the stipend is for summer training.

Mary Joe felt that having the veterans present would help the new ones.

Bill Petrie talked about the summer training plans for 2005:

There will be a half day when the Shared Inquiry and Topic Based seminars meet together, and the primary reason for this is for faculty to get to know each other. This is faculty development.

Plans for next year

Chris talked about the plans for next year: there will be 12.

The UCT wants these kinds of seminars to be expanded and to become a major player in the advising role.

Other suggestion

Tim suggested that one cornerstone have as its requirement that the students have an AP course in the topic.

Did this help faculty members become better advisors?

Chris Hepburn asked the leaders what they learned about advising. All agreed that they did not learn how to advise students about requirements in depts other than their own but they knew where to refer the students to.

What should the role of the UCT be in these seminars?

After the guests left, we discussed what role the UCT should take in running these seminars. Our role is to oversee these seminars, to determine whether the program should continue (we all agree it should) and to ask for an expansion (which we will do). We could also design questionnaires for student evaluations next year. We can suggest new faculty to teach in the program.

Bill P. said that Clare Dunsford will oversee ALL the cornerstone seminars. Bill will oversee setting up the meetings and will represent the UCT's point of view.

Request for next year

We need to write a letter to the AVP about why this program should be expanded, even though Jack N has already agreed to double it. We don't know what will happen to this program with the new AVP. We still must make sure Father Leahy approves it, and that the Board of Trustees approves it. Father Leahy may need to be convinced about why people are getting paid to do advising which he sees as part of a faculty member's job, but we must stress that this is extra advising. Students really get to know their advisor and see him/her once a week. Thus this is much better for the student than ordinary advising and much more intensive for the faculty member. Larry L. would like a more formal kind of evaluation, such as being able to show that kids who take these seminars are less likely to leave BC, etc.

We must give the administration good feedback about these courses. We have done a very informal evaluation (listening to what the leaders said). We don't have student evaluations but will next year.

Chris H. is emailing all of us a brief letter that he wants to send to the AVP asking for the program to be expanded, and asks for our feedback.

Recruitment strategies

We are not going to advertise this as something any faculty can apply for. We are inviting faculty. If any of us knows someone who would be good, let Bill P. know. He will interview each person.

TAM/TAME Grants

We then discussed the Tam and Tame grants.

TAM:

\$245,000 was requested, \$145,000 was awarded

This year more people applied than ever before

Most were good.

We turned them down if they were developing a course they had to develop anyway.

TAME

\$7,100 was requested, all were funded fully.

Larry L asked what we should do when a dean or chair sends a very negative recommendation. He felt the applicant should be told the contents. We decided that we would ask the dean/chair to convey his/her comments to the applicants so the applicant can benefit and improve.

We discussed how we would evaluate peoples' use of these TAM/TAME funds. We decided people will have to turn in a self report and won't be considered for a new one without a written productivity report sent to the UCT and to the person's chair.

We adjourned, thinking we may not have a meeting in May