Core Undergraduate Learning Experiences (CULE) Minutes for November 19, 2013,
8:30-9:30, Room of Nations Room

Present: Cole Davidson, Marion Harris, Lisa Nordick, Larry Peterson, Seth Rasmussen, Susan Ray-Degges, Amy Rupiper Taggart, Kent Sandstrom, Carolyn Schnell, Herbert Snyder, and Beth Twomey.

Unable to attend: RaNelle Ingalls, Rajesh Kavasseri, Andrew Mara, Cynthia Naughton, and Kevin Walsh.

1. We approved the minutes from 11/12/13 emailed on 11/12/13.

2. We introduced ourselves and welcomed Amy Rupiper Taggart as the new General Education Director. She is joining us because of her role in implementing the future revised GE program.

3. Seth met with Ben Duncan and Sean Sather-Wagstaff from Mathematics about a math-based critical reasoning course. They are already trying to do some of this with MATH 104, but they would want to "beef this up," if this moves forward. Right now they have 10 sections of 35 students in MATH 104. They wondered if the responsibilities for such a new course could be split between Mathematics and Statistics. Seth has so far been unable to meet with Rhonda Magel from Statistics.

4. Kent and Lisa reported on their meeting with Mark Meister. Mark thought a Communications Center, housed in a central university location, was a good idea. He also suggested that it could offer virtual learning as well as face-to-face. He suggested following a design like University of Colorado, Colorado Springs has, with multiple competency-based modules. They also have communication "skinnies," one-credit, three week courses. Mark suggested that if the committee should contact and visit University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. Mark felt that the NDSU Communication Department faculty would be on board with the UC-CS plan. Mark told them Cornell had a similar center.
   - Marion suggested sending someone to Colorado to see how it actually works.
   - Larry will check with Provost Rafert about funding to send 1 or 2 people to Colorado to view their center.
   - If a Center is staffed by graduate assistants from the colleges, Seth is concerned this will not work in his department as the graduate assistants do full time research and don’t have time for any additional duties. It would prolong finishing their Ph.D. by years.
     - Larry suggested we might hire someone like a Jeff Boyer with expertise in communicating in the sciences
   - Lisa reminded members that the NDU plan is about applied experiences, not a traditional course module.
   - Amy suggested that we consider the option of incorporating this requirement into "communication intensive" courses in the major.

5. Lisa reported that M State may be initiating a new first year course based on the “seven habits” model. Lisa has staff trained in offering this through their Executive Education program. She noted that a curriculum based on these habits is being incorporated into many K-12 systems.
6. We continued our work on the components for our collective model, checking them against the findings from the surveys and meetings.

- We started our work on the Critical Thinking and/or First Year (Second Year?) Experience
  - We began by discussing potential funding obstacles.
    - Larry reported that he and Kent got a positive response from the Provost about additional ongoing funding for first-year experience seminars. Kent suggested it would cost at least $500,000/year. The Provost said he will discuss this with VP Bollinger and the President.
    - Marion asked how we can come up with a model when we don’t have any funds to support it. She suggested having two models, the fully funded model and a lesser model to present and hopefully get funding for.
    - Amy thinks we should lead with our best foot forward. If that gets turned down, then we can go back and come up with another model. Kent, Lisa, and Herb agreed with that approach.
    - Lisa suggested submitting the model with a budget to show what expenses we think it will incur.
    - Because of the Provost’s departure, it is unclear if he can make any commitments about funding for GE revision. Kent suggested having a meeting with the President and making a proposal to him and see what, if any funds are going to support the GE model. Then we will have a better idea of how to proceed.
    - Larry asked for volunteers to meet with the President. Amy, Herb, and Kent volunteered.

- We discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the two proposed structures for a first year experience. Should it be a single 3-credit course or three 1-credit modules which might be combined by colleges or departments?
  - Kent emphasized that we need to know what the research is about first year experience courses. Is there a delivery model that is more effective?
  - The question of how will this affect transfer students came up too. Cole will gather information on how many transfer students we have, how many of them transfer a completed GE package, etc., to share with the group at the next meeting.

- This is related to how we develop students’ critical thinking. Marion suggested a critical thinking center would be very helpful to faculty.

Next meeting Tuesday, November 26 at 8:30 am in Peace Garden