Core Undergraduate Learning Experiences (CULE) Minutes for November 26, 2013, 8:30-9:30, Peace Garden Room

Present: Cole Davidson, RaNelle Ingalls, Andrew Mara, Cynthia Naughton, Lisa Nordick, Larry Peterson, Seth Rasmussen, Susan Ray-Degges, Amy Rupiper Taggart, Kent Sandstrom, Carolyn Schnell, Beth Twomey, and Kevin Walsh.

Unable to attend: Marion Harris, Rajesh Kavasseri, and Herbert Snyder.

1. There was one correction for the 11/19/13 minutes emailed on 11/19/13. Lisa stated that in Section 5, instead of MSUM, it should be M State. Minutes were approved.

2. Seth was unable to follow up with Rhonda Magel (Statistics) about math-based critical reasoning yet, but will try to next week.

3. Larry reported about a meeting on funding. Kelly tried to set up a meeting with Larry, Kent, Herb, and Amy with the President, but the President asked that we first meet with the Provost. That meeting will be on December 10.

4. Larry reported about funding to visit the Communication Center at University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. He and others were having difficulty finding some of the features Mark Meister mentioned on the UC-CS website. Larry will follow up by trying to contact the director at UC-CS to discuss the features of their center.

5. Cole reported on transfer students who have completed their GE. He received data late yesterday and when he reviewed it, it doesn’t seem accurate. It showed that only 26 students out of thousands had transferred in a completed GE. He would like to have the data pulled again and review it before providing it to the committee.

6. Larry asked if members are able to meet on December 17th. A majority of committee members indicated they would be available to meet. Larry asked them to hold this date as a possibility to wrap up the GE model, so we can be prepared to do presentations in January.

7. We continued our discussion on the Critical Thinking and/or First Year (Second Year?) Experience component for our collective model, as usual checking our thoughts against the findings from the surveys and meetings.
   - Cynthia moved to discuss a 3 credit module due to room scheduling making 1 credit courses difficult to schedule. Amy seconded the motion due to the depth and intensity that would need to be presented in the courses.
     - Andy asked who would be teaching these courses. Will they be folded into classes that already exist? He stated that trying to find faculty and rooms for new courses will be difficulty when we don’t know if there will be funding for this.
     - Cynthia reminded us about the email discussion we had about Quantitative Literacy and Critical Thinking on November 12-13. This was sparked by an email from Rajesh about John Paulos, Innumeracy, and about an article by Joel Best about Critical Thinking and Quantitative Literacy. One suggestion had been to have a first year seminar with a unit on critical thinking with numbers, critical thinking in the social
sciences, and critical thinking in the humanities. Several people noted the value of an integrated, cross-discipline approach.

- Carolyn asked how we would coordinate all these sections with a core curriculum.
  - Larry stated it would be and that it would more than likely fall upon the GE committee.
  - The practical difficulties of this seemed daunting without significant additional funding for positions.
    - Larry noted the models of first year experience courses either taught on faculty chosen topics (Michigan Tech and Southeast Missouri State have both had this model) or taught on college-based models (University of Nevada, Las Vegas).
    - Both models have some attractive features, but staffing them with our overstretched faculty will be the problem.
- Amy asked if the group had discussed having critical thinking embedded in the disciplines. Larry said it had not been previously discussed.
  - Amy suggested having a course within the major on critical thinking and one outside the major so that students get exposure to critical thinking outside of their major.
  - Cole suggested having the option of both courses being outside the major, but with the restriction that both courses could NOT be in the major. This would help with students who haven’t declared a major yet or those who change majors.
    - Larry indicated that there would have to be some faculty development to assist faculty in how to teach critical thinking to students.
  - Kevin noted that it had been important to for him to learn how to think and study as a college student, and that he learned that from other students who had more rigorous high school experiences.
- Andy made a motion to have at least one 3 credit course outside the major and have one course inside the major if the department decided the above plan didn’t fit their program. Larry made an additional amendment to exclude capstones from meeting this requirement because we want the capstone to build on already robust critical thinking skills.
  - These courses would have a special designator, such as CT, (as we do now with Cultural Diversity or Global Perspectives) to indicate that Critical Thinking was an intentional, significant, and embedded feature. These courses might be revisions of existing courses (especially in the major) or they might be new courses on how a discipline makes sense of the world or on how we can think about and discuss a controversial topic.
  - This model would not have common campus wide courses, as discussed earlier.
- It was decided to continue this discussion at the next meeting.

Next meeting Tuesday, December 3rd at 8:30 am in Peace Garden