

From: Larry Peterson
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 3:28 PM
To: Lawrence Reynolds; Kenton Rodgers
Subject: RE: Faculty senate agenda concerns

Hello Larry and Kent,

I'll do my best to respond to Kent's concerns.

First of all, I'd like permission from both of you to share our communication with the rest of the members of CULE.

Second, the next Monday's Senate meeting is simply a presentation of the GE model with a chance for senators to ask questions and provide feedback. We had the first of four open forums on the this proposed model yesterday and we will have three more on

February 3, Tuesday, 10:00-11:30, Rose Room, Memorial Union
February 12, Thursday, 1:30-3:00, Rose Room, Memorial Union
February 24, Tuesday, 9:00-10:30, Rose Room, Memorial Union.

Third, please remember the focus of this proposed model is what is common for all NDSU undergraduates. When it comes to science, we are really looking at the 40% (at the most) of the undergraduates who are not science or engineering majors. This may be their last formal educational experience with science. What will prepare them best to be scientifically literate citizens (and perhaps partners and parents)?

Fourth, as far as use of word "science" is concerned, I am going to quote my response to Ken Lepper on this topic:

"The 'Natural and Physical Worlds' language was approved by the Faculty Senate (both in 2013 and 2014) and was certainly not intended to be in any way whatsoever an assault on science. ["Assault on science" refers to Ken Lepper's email.] The bullets that elaborate on that learning outcome (below), I hope are evidence that this is not part of an anti-science agenda.

"Students will

- analyze components and dynamics of natural and physical worlds
- develop models to explain phenomena within the natural and physical worlds
- identify the role of scientific methods in the study of natural and physical worlds"

Other faculty have also contacted us to express their concern about the removal of the laboratory requirement. Our decision to make that recommendation was based on the concern that the value of the present lab courses for non-science majors. We will certainly be reviewing all the suggestions and feedback about the proposed model."

When I look at the bullets under the Learning Outcomes, I see science explicitly or implicitly in outcomes such as: Diversity and Global Perspectives

- "identify the role diversity plays in the ability of biological organisms to adapt to a changing environment"
- "analyze how diversity contributes to and shapes solutions to challenges confronting the global community"

- “evaluate how diverse systems (both natural and human-made), technologies, or innovations emerge from, interact with, and affect various communities”

and in [Personal and Social Responsibility](#)

- “identify stewardship of the land and its people as integral to a land-grant university”
- “analyze human impacts on the world and the importance of sustaining its resources for future generations”

Fifth, this model does shift away from disciplinary content and toward lifelong learning. Yes, Science and Technology would go from 10 to 6 credits. Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences goes from 14 credits to 6. The emphasis is now on transferable, non-discipline specific learning such as “Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, and Problem Solving” and on “Personal and Social Responsibility.”

Sixth, the CULE group discussed the laboratory science issue again this Tuesday. With the authors’ permission, I have been sharing the emails on this topic we have received from Don Schwert, Kent Rodgers, and Ken Lepper. Seth Rasmussen was clear in this meeting and in previous meetings that he is very dubious about how much science education (for those non-science majors) actually happens in our current GE lab courses. The current student member of CULE (a non-science major) certainly felt as if he had not gained much from his required lab course. Consequently, we decided to make no changes at this point, pending feedback we get from faculty and other stakeholders.

Finally, I’m glad that faculty are engaged with this issue. It would be tragic if we were discussing revising our GE and faculty were indifferent.

Please contact me if you have other questions or comments.

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