

APPROVED 1/11/07

**ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
ACADEMIC SENATE
DECEMBER 14, 2006: 12:10 P.M. – 1:50 P.M.
ROOM 1829 OF THE SAU**

Absent: R. Barbato, E. Boyd, S. Dianat, I. Evans, K. Ingerick, W. Koontz, H. Palmer, L. Quinsland, L. Sorkin, J. Venkataraman

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Kristen Waterstram-Rich called the meeting to order at 12:14 p.m.

2. COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER'S REPORT

The minutes of December 7, 2006 were approved with one abstention.

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

Kristen Waterstram-Rich reported on the presentation that Mike Morley gave to the Institute Council meeting regarding the Presidential Search. She reported the following points:

- The Committee is on schedule.
- They are soliciting candidates from the submitted resumes; there were not many applicants with business and government backgrounds.
- 150-175 resumes have been received and the Committee has reduced that number
- The Search committee will meet this weekend to go through the exiting 20 or so candidates.
- By January the Committee will have the number of candidates down to 8 and at that point will do background checks.
- The number of candidates will then be reduced to 3 or 4 and those individuals will be invited to campus.

She stated that if anyone has any questions for the search committee or questions they want the search committee to ask the candidates, to be sure to ask them by posting them on the Presidential website.

Katie Schmitz stated that the Committee is more concerned with having more applicants now than less later.

K. Waterstram-Rich reported that the Calendar the Senate unanimously approved is going back to the Calendar Committee to be reviewed again as all governance groups did not approve it. She also stated that Dawn Soufleris gave a great annual report on student conduct and the report will be given during a January meeting.

Tom Cornell asked what was the issue with the calendar?

K. Waterstram-Rich responded that the issue was the 3-week break at Christmas rather than 2 weeks.

Mark Price asked if Mike Morley said how candidates would meet people on campus?

K. Waterstram-Rich responded no, he did not.

4. REPORTS

Robert Clark, Dean Emeritus of the College of Science, reported on the General Education White Paper. He thanked the Senate for the invitation to speak and have a dialogue with the Senate. He stated that the paper had been distributed to the faculty of the three participating colleges and that meetings had already taken place at NTID and COLA and would be held with COS later in the week. He reported that the Faculty Team had been busy over the last several months in preparing this draft and that he had made the 400-mile commute to have this discussion with the Senate. His introductory remarks included the following points:

- The Faculty Team included Lisa Hermesen, Ron Jodoin, Joel Kastner, Marilu Raman, Pat Scanlon, Katie Schmitz, Matt Searls, Sean Sutton and Kristen Waterstram-Rich
- The genesis of this document is seated in the response to questions by the faculty team
- Specifically, we asked:
 1. What would we expect an RIT graduate to do and know based primarily on their General Education experience at RIT?
 2. How do we determine if the program has been successful?
- The boundary conditions we imposed for answering these questions included only:
 1. The need to be consistent with New York State Standards stipulated for General Education requirements.
 2. The need to be consistent with the issues stipulated by the Strategic Plan.
- The rest was open free space.
- This White Paper is to be considered a draft.
- It is not intended that even after this round of conversations this week that this will be the final version. As the Committee's work moves along, the paper may still be subject to continued modifications.

Stan McKenzie stated that he was here primarily to listen.

Carol Whitlock asked that in reference to the makeup of the committee, would it have been advisable to include some of the internal customers of General Education?

K. Waterstram-Rich responded that this would be the last question about process.

R. Clark responded that leading up to the constitution of the team, there had been several months of internal conversations including discussions with the Deans of five of the colleges in addition to CLA, COS and NTID. He stated that the Deans of these five colleges made the decision to remain outside of the conversation until later in the process.

S. McKenzie stated that the Committee was determined that this not be a top down conversation but rather a bottom up conversation. He stated that the Committee was adamant from the beginning that there was a need for a university wide discussion since General Education constitutes 50% of every BS program's curriculum, but that the three colleges with primary responsibility for delivering the General Education be the initial primary participants to get something "on the table" for the rest of the colleges to discuss. He stated that COS, NTID and COLA are the primary providers of General

Education Courses and they should be the primary contributors to the first cut. He added that the rest of the community is being included at this point.

R. Clark responded that the origin of this question was the very reason that he came to this body to present the Committee's work.

K. Mayberry stated that in one set of outcomes, she could not be more delighted to see the Second Language there. She stated that she would urge the Committee to consider uncoupling the first and second language in A and B. She said that this outcome might work with students coming in to RIT with 3 or 4 years of Spanish, but it is her hope we will have students coming in that will begin to study Farsi or Chinese. She added that there is no way that incoming students could achieve these educational outcomes within one year of coming to RIT. She stated that what it would take to achieve fluency in one year would be almost impossible.

R. Clark responded that COLA agrees.

Lisa Hermsen added that maybe we can specify first and second language requirements and that this is one spot that the Committee will pay attention to.

Barbara Birkett asked if R. Clark could very briefly tell her what the definition of Liberal Arts is in New York State?

R. Clark responded that the State tends to spend a lot more time telling you what they are not rather than what they are, but that generally the State Education Department requires that the "liberal arts and sciences" be of a general theoretical rather than a practical applied nature.

Tanya Schueler asked if there a reason to stipulate first language rather than English.

L. Hermsen responded that NTID had desire to recognize ASL as a second language, but also expect fluency in English and vice versa. She added that the fact that the second language can be defined in a variety of ways indicated that the Committee had initially made a horrible assumption.

M. Price stated that we are often criticized for being a country that is monolingual. He asked what is the point of taking 3 or 4 years of language in high school if a student cannot speak or write in that language upon graduation? He stated that he did not want to back off of this.

L. Hermsen responded that Wilma Wierenga, Director of Foreign Languages, was at the COLA meeting and that in fact in four years a student would not be fluent but might be able to do a little reading. She added that fluency is not an issue but that students would have an introduction to the culture and basic reading and writing.

M. Price stated that this requirement might be more appropriate at the graduate level.

L. Hermsen responded that the Committee's position was that clearly another language, however defined, might be appropriate at RIT.

Sylvia Perez-Hardy stated that computer language in some of the computing disciplines is accepted by the state as a language. She added that the definition of computer literacy is not flexible enough

to move between language and practice. She added that some of these disciplines would not be able to meet their 90 credit requirements without more flexibility. She stated that at this point her college counts a three-course comprehensive program sequence as part of the general education requirement and she is concerned that this document would not allow this practice.

K. Mayberry responded that we count computer language not because it is a language but because it is a science. She added that in the old document, Computer Science was a very different discipline, not because of the language but because of the programming piece. She stated that the state is letting us do this, but we are not saying that it can be included as a language. She stated that we are bound by New York State educational standards.

Ron Jodoin added that computer language is not allowed as a language.

S. Perez-Hardy asked that in terms of the computer department trying to come up with General Education Courses such as security and communications, how would this document allow us to do this?

L. Hermesen stated that a broader category for computer literacy is needed, as it has been too narrowly defined.

S. Perez-Hardy stated that students are coming out of high school with computer literacy and that we need a broader definition of literacy.

K. Mayberry stated that the document that the Academic Senate has approved stipulates what are the courses that departments can consider for General Education. She added that this is dicey in terms of what Mid-States and New York State consider to be General Education. The state asks in what ways could this be called a liberal art or science course? Here, we think what course could be more capacious?

T. Policano responded that these are remarkable goals and why would we not want this. He stated that the big issue here is to add a second language, with the assumption that half of the students will enter without this ability. He added that all languages would fall into Liberal Arts and many students would not be able to achieve this within our academic environment and still get good technical training.

Wade Robison said that according to #7, Epistemology, students are to demonstrate 'the ability to describe the essential knowledge, principles and methods proper, but not limited, to mathematics, the physical and biological sciences, literature, history, philosophy, social sciences, and the arts.' I am delighted to see that philosophy is included in this long list, but I myself would be pleased if a student could demonstrate such an ability for any one of these disciplines. The list is connected by a conjunction -- '**and** the arts', and that is just not a plausible requirement. Surely we cannot expect a student to describe the essential knowledge, principles and methods of philosophy without taking at least one philosophy course, but presumably they will need more than one -- maybe a major. But #7 requires that they describe the essential knowledge, principles and methods of **all** those disciplines. We shall rack in a lot of money while students take courses for years trying to achieve the ability in each of these disciplines that VII requires for them.

Tom Cornell stated that this had been an interesting week and that this was his fourth discussion on the White Paper. He stated that the boundary conditions that were set forth in these discussions included the state guidelines. He added that this reminded him of Benjamin Franklin's saying that something is not good because it is required but can be required because it is good. He stated that the fields of study listed in the guidelines are good in themselves and that RIT recognizes them as such. He added that currently we have expectations that students take courses in these fields and that every student at RIT must be certified as having met these requirements (for example, COLA's requirement of two core courses in the Humanities and two core courses in the Social Sciences). He continued that we should indeed explore what these experiences have meant to them. In addition to the breadth requirement, COLA has a depth requirement (three related upper-level courses). He stated that the current partitioning of the 90 hours, based on the fields listed in the state guidelines, along with COLA requirements that foster breadth and depth of study (all in a way that offers students considerable flexibility), is like the body of the U.S. Constitution. He stated that even with these expectations for students worked out, there remain expectations that we have not yet fully expressed. With that in mind, he suggested that the White Paper should be seen as functioning like the Bill of Rights, a series of amendments that spell out the remaining expectations. Examples would be globalization and the complexity of cultures. He asked what are those things above and beyond the current explicit requirements of students that we want them to have. By placing its emphasis there, the White Paper would extend the discussion of curriculum that we have been undertaking for the last 3 to 4 years.

Mark Price commented that in regard to Tom Policano's suggestion to add courses, we need to be concerned with the new retention initiative which has actually reduced courses in an effort to allow students to graduate on time.

R. Clark stated that if the Institute desires more courses, that could be accommodated. He also suggested other ideas have been incorporated into the White Paper, including breaking down discrete barriers between disciplines.

B. Birkett asked T. Cornell if this paper meets the criteria he was trying to express.

T. Cornell responded that this paper is too abstract and tries to rethink issues that we have already resolved. He stated that we need to be more specific about expectations that we agree are important but that we have not yet formalized.

Sean Sutton stated that it was not the intention of the Committee to burden students and take them beyond 4 years to graduate. He stated that the Committee came down to 12 general goals or outcomes that they felt would define well the education of students and their capacity to finish a technical degree on time. He added that the outcomes do look a little difficult to achieve but for the most part he was surprised that we are not meeting these goals today.

R. Jodoin stated that he agreed with S. Sutton and that the whole process is the first time that a discussion across boundaries has been undertaken. He stated that this is the first time there is a campus wide discussion of what General Education requirements look like. He added that we have been doing a good job. In reference to Tom's (Policano) point, the issues being discussed about what are we missing may reveal a need for new courses.

K. Mayberry stated that this was a good segue. She stated that the Committee did a good job with an impossible task. She said that we are getting constrained unnecessarily and that most students

would pass these requirements with flying colors with scientific literacy, computer literacy and relationships and never take a Liberal Arts course. She stated that we should be the institution that we are and asked why do we need General Education goals when we are already meeting these criteria? She added that we already have a head start here and that we should think of these as RIT's General Education outcomes.

Abi Aghayere asked how do we assess this? He stated that from an engineering background, students take General Education because they are required to. He added that one of the goals should be that these students should be more excited about taking these courses and he does not see this.

M. Price suggested that a Gen. Ed. Course, in say, "Globalization & Chinese Culture" could be taught from a number of multi-college viewpoints. Experts from Business, Food & Hotel, Liberal Arts, Packaging, etc. could all participate in giving the students a holistic view of Chinese culture. RIT's various colleges would have to agree to such an undertaking, but such a course could be fashioned without increasing total graduation requirements.

Mary-Beth Cooper stated that as an aside remark, she has a student with her doing a 'Day in the Life...' and that she will be taking pictures during this meeting.

Leon Reznik asked about computer literacy and how it will be assessed. He asked if a student knows how to use Google and email, is this enough?

R. Jodoin responded that maybe computer literacy is not the right word. He stated that students come in with skills but we want to make sure that they are using computers in ways that augment their discipline specific skills.

L. Reznik stated that he agreed that the term computer literacy is the wrong term. He added that many students already have skills and this means that we take students who are computer literate and graduate students that are computer literate. He stated that there is the suggestion that we do not teach anything and that computer literacy is not good enough.

L. Hermesen responded that both learning outcomes and assessment will have to change, and that the committee will welcome change.

A. Aghayere asked who would assess this? He asked have you actually considered surveying alumni as to whether General Education has helped them?

R. Jodoin responded that assessment is the next phase. He stated that Middle States does not expect assessment of all objectives and learning outcomes and that it needs only general information. He added that there must be some assessment structure across disciplines and that much needs to be worked out.

Pat Scanlon stated that we have not looked at graduate requirements and what, in best of all possible worlds, would students need.

T. Policano stated that he was excited about Kit's (Mayberry's) ideas about generalizing this as an Educational White Paper and that this is where Mark's (Price's) points come into play by not adding onto the paper but looking at this further.

L. Hermesen stated that the using across curriculum phrase or what we conceived of as the General Education requirements would require the interaction of people across the curriculum. She added that this would be an exciting change and might be found with people willing to change approaches to deal with cross disciplinary concerns.

Paul Rosenberg stated that globalization is a key term. He stated that English is the language of the world. He added that after 2 decades in a multi-national corporation, the major issue is that we still cannot communicate and we have lots of problems understanding ways in which cultures are different. He asked if we want to use the term language or cultural communications and that he is uncomfortable with the word language.

W. Robison commented that the requirement in #7, Epistemology is so obviously unreasonable that it makes me wonder about the whole point of this exercise. I had understood the Provost to say that he wanted this exercise done at a high philosophical level. One outcome I share with the Provost is that we graduate students who have at least some understanding of what it is like to think like someone in a discipline other than the one we are training them in. We want to teach students in engineering to think like engineers, but we should also want them to understand what it is like to think like historians, for instance, or political scientists. And I had hoped that this statement of general education criteria would drive a thorough and exciting revision of the general education requirements and, especially, the general education courses. But this list cannot be taken seriously given the requirement that students demonstrate an ability to describe the essential knowledge, principles and methods in all those disciplines, and that makes me worry that rather than drive and animate a new and exciting revision, the process will simply serve as cover for what is already in place. What in it will cause anyone to change anything?

S. McKenzie responded that this is a credible question. He stated that he did not want the goal of having everyone think that General Education is simply sweetness and light. He stated that he did not know the answer as to what those higher principles are and would like to have a significant conversation about this issue. He added that he hoped that graduates would understand and be able to articulate the differences between the science, engineering, humanities, art and social science disciplines in their distinctive approaches to ideas or problems and that he did not know if that is doable in a 4-year education.

J. Kastner stated that he was not worried about the feasibility of achieving this in four years and that we were are very unlikely to look at what we have now and say it is all fine. He added that there should be no fear that things will not change.

S. McKenzie responded to W. Robison that it certainly is possible that we will come up with the same thing and that it is the responsibility of all, including the Senate, that we would come up with an identity with what we have.

Joan Stone asked what does the Committee think about how students will be different based upon what is in the White Paper?

Pat Scanlon responded that as we are not dealing with curriculum, we do not know how to answer that question.

J. Stone replied that she would like to know how students would be different with these goals.

R. Jodoin responded that he hoped that students would find an excitement that is different from the reaction to courses that are currently here.

L. Hermesen stated that we did not start with the assumption that students were leaving here deficient. She stated that if three colleges here came together to do an assessment, we could know what students are excited about and we will know how to serve our students better at the end of this process.

S. Perez-Hardy stated that in looking at outcomes, our department is moving through our assessment and seeing the same outcomes. She asked how do we get everyone else there; how do we get everyone else to implement these assessments?

R. Jodoin responded that in the program proposal form we need to look to see how new courses are supporting preexisting programs.

S. Perez-Hardy asked do we need to require that courses address these outcomes? She added another question in reference to transfer students, asking if there were any thoughts about how we will merge other/outside cultures, stating that we will not look like any outside institutions.

M. Price stated that if we look at the presently proposed General Education goals and outcomes, they appear to be similar to other such goals and outcomes at other U.S. universities. He asked that if RIT is going to offer its own unique “brand” of education, should not our Gen. Ed. proposal reflect this unique “brand?”

K. Mayberry responded that she was not sure that not starting from a deficit point of view would have been an interesting approach. She added that to pick up on Wade’s (Robison’s) point of what we have achieved, we have gone down to one quarter for a writing course and in general writing is lower than it should be. The White Paper does not address writing. She stated that if we do not beef up input, expectations and output, we are doing students a disservice. She added that this is not going to drive anything like this and asked what is going to drive the globalization piece. She stated that she would like to use this to solve issues that have been plaguing us for some time.

S. Perez-Hardy stated that we need to address these issues in the General Education requirements.

K. Mayberry stated that she is not suggesting these changes for all degree programs and that the best person should teach a course.

L. Hermesen stated that she did not believe learning outcomes necessarily drive change. She asked that if we agree on the outcomes, what are we going to do to drive this? She added that this is just the first step and that a whole sequence of events will drive change.

L. Reznik stated that we all agree that General Education supports our degree programs. He stated that when we go for accreditation we need to prove that our students meet General Education requirements. He stated that this document does not show how each college could meet General Education requirements.

T. Cornell stated that this particular discussion part of the extended discussion reveals aspirations among faculty about what the curriculum needs. He added that there is a consensus within the Institute on at least some of these things and he stated that he bets we are very close to reaching widespread agreement about some or much of what is included in this report. He stated that Institute consensus would facilitate quick change.

T. Policano responded that assessment and implementation are in the curriculum. He stated that the way to get faculty all involved is to put everyone together to implement change and that a way to put everyone together is to change from quarters to semesters.

W. Robison said, with no little irony, that he had not been able to get anyone to agree that semesters are better than quarters and that this is a great idea.

Ed Holden stated that he had one concern. He stated that with the language thing and other types of issues, do we run the risk, when we are marketing ourselves and we are significantly different will we have trouble attracting particular students. He stated that he would like to go along with the statement that they are not going to learn a language in 4 years.

T. Cornell stated that the Senate had a very helpful presentation by J. Miller on branding and that it might be helpful to the Committee that they have access to this report.

Barbara Birkett asked is it possible that this could be used to evaluate whether courses meet General Education requirements?

J. Stone asked do we have a General Education policy in place?

B. Birkett responded that in doing transfer credits, there are many courses that she feels could be counted as General Education.

R. Clark stated that he felt that he could speak for the team in that there is much more than language that could fit in here. He added that they also understand that as we move forward into implementation, these are questions that they need to ask. He stated that 90 General Education credits would stay 90. He said that who will do the assessment would also need to be clarified and that this will occur in the second phase. He thanked the Senate for their candor. He added that the Committee will be meeting with NTID today and COS tomorrow. He concluded by stating that the next draft of this document will be a whole lot better as a consequence of this discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Feeney Bushnell
Communications Officer
1/2/2007