

**MINUTES OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
FACULTY MEETING (Version 2)**

**Thursday, 9 December 2010, 3:30 p.m. in the Nebraska Union**

**Opening Remarks, Approval of Minutes, and Appointment of a Parliamentarian**

Dean Manderscheid opened the meeting at 3:45 p.m. and stated that instead of giving a presentation he would respond to faculty questions at the end of the meeting. The minutes of the Spring Faculty Meeting on 22 April 2010 were then approved without change or discussion. Owing to the absence of the Faculty Parliamentarian, Lloyd Ambrosius (History), the Dean initiated discussion of the appointment of a Parliamentarian for this meeting. Asst. Dean Bill Watts agreed to serve as Parliamentarian for this meeting.

**Recommendations of the College Curriculum and Advising Committee (CCAC)**

**Thomas Lynch** (English), Chair of the CCAC, introduced the CCAC's seven recommendations. Only the recommendation to approve a new minor in Computational Biology and Bioinformatics generated discussion. **Anthony Starace** (Physics and Astronomy) asked from which departments students who enrolled in this minor would come. **John Osterman** (School of Biological Sciences) responded that students would come from several departments across UNL. The proposal passed.

All other recommendations passed without discussion. Approved were (1) Essential Studies courses in Areas E (Historical Studies) and H (Ethnicity and Gender); (2) A change in the Anthropology major; (3) Changes to the major and minor in Communications Studies; (4) A new minor in Global Security Studies; (5) A title change for the minor in "Human Rights and Human Diversity" to "Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs"; and (6) A new major in Microbiology.

**Update on Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) Certification Process**

**Glen Ledder** (Mathematics), the College's representative to the University Curriculum Committee's ACE subcommittee, opened his presentation by noting that *re-certification of ACE courses would begin next year*. The two key criteria for re-certification are: (1) The course must have followed its approved plan; and (2) Assessment data must have been collected and used. Ledder asserted that the UCC-ACE subcommittee will not assess how well any particular course is doing in meeting the ACE goals, but it expects that departments are doing this. Ledder emphasized that in applying for recertification, departments must be very specific about what data will be collected and how it will be used. Moreover, the UCC-ACE subcommittee will look at the course syllabus to see whether or not students are informed about what outcomes they will gain from the course.

Ledder concluded his presentation by recommending that *departments ask students on the course teaching evaluation form if they are taking the course for ACE credit* since such data will be useful for both departments and for the UCC-ACE subcommittee.

A fast-paced and rather detailed question and answer session followed:

- **Stephen Lahey** (Classics and Religious Studies) questioned why “stewardship” was included in **ACE Outcome 8** (Explain ethical principles, civics, and stewardship, and their importance to society.) Ledder suggested that stewardship does involve ethical matters, such as with regard to the environment.
- **ACE Outcome 9** (Exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of an issue.) elicited much discussion concerning whether students could satisfy this requirement by spending a semester abroad. By an informal faculty vote, the faculty present expressed the view that students should request credit for study abroad. **Marshall Olds** (Modern Languages and Literatures) suggested that the relevant paperwork could be administered by International Affairs. **John Meakin** (Mathematics) suggested that students should be required, in order to get credit, to say something about what they gained from their experiences abroad. **Jody Kellas** (Communications Studies) concurred with Meakin.
- The relation of co-curricular experiences to **ACE Outcome 10** (Generate a creative or scholarly product that requires broad knowledge, appropriate technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection.) brought to light the fact that the only way to get credit for ACE Outcome 10 for a co-curricular experience they undertake (such as, e.g., a summer research experience) is if the students enroll for credit for that experience.
- **Susan Belasco** (English) asked when the ACE rules would be posted online. Ledder responded that they would be online by the end of December. (*Note added:* The ACE Program URL is: <http://www.unl.edu/ous/ace/>)
- **Anthony Starace** (Physics and Astronomy) asked if there were any plans to bring ACE instructors up to speed. Ledder responded that there were not, but suggested that ACE instructors should prepare to evaluate how well students meet the ACE objective for their course and that they use what is learned from such an evaluation to improve outcomes the next time the course is taught.
- **Deborah Minter** (English) asked which outcomes would be assessed next year. Ledder responded that outcomes 1, 2, and 3 would be assessed.

*Note added:* Subsequent to the Faculty Meeting, Glen Ledder prepared written notes on his presentation that include the key points of the discussion that took place during the meeting. ***Ledder’s notes are attached as an Appendix to these minutes.***

## **Final Agenda Item: Discussion of the College's Strategic Plan and Opportunity to Ask Questions of the Dean**

- **Amelia Montes** (Ethnic Studies) suggested that the Strategic Plan's Goals 1 (Enhance Undergraduate Education) and 2 (Increase Research and Creative Activities) should have their orders reversed (so that "research" is number 1). **William Thomas** (History) concurred, noting that UNL is moving into the Big 10. Manderscheid responded that the College's first focus has always been on undergraduate education. He said this is also helpful in informing the public and the Legislature about what we do.
- **Anthony Starace** (Physics and Astronomy) suggested that Goal 2 (Increase Research and Creative Activities) may give other universities in the Big 10 the wrong impression, i.e., that we do not do enough research and creativity now. He suggested that different wording reflecting a more "steady state" goal would be preferable. **Steve Goddard** (Computer Science and Engineering) responded that the College *should* have the goal of increasing the amount of research. He noted that there is a difference between a Strategic Plan and a Mission Statement. **Stephen Reichenbach** (Computer Science and Engineering) expressed agreement with Goddard's remarks. [*Note added: After the meeting, Starace suggested to Goddard and Reichenbach that a more "steady-state" goal that would give a good impression would be: "Increase high-profile research and creative activity," as this indicates concern with quality and significance as well as with quantity.*]
- **Deborah Minter** (English) asked whether Professors of Practice, Lecturers, and Research Faculty were voting members of the College faculty. The Dean answered "Yes" for Professors of Practice and "No" for Lecturers and Research Faculty.
- **Anthony Starace** (Physics and Astronomy) asked how many College faculty were planning to accept the University's retirement incentive. **Manderscheid** indicated that roughly 8% of the faculty have indicated they would, but that they have until December 20<sup>th</sup> to make their final decisions. He said that these faculty currently teach approximately 100 courses in the College. Departments have been asked to inform the College about the impact of these retirements on their teaching programs and to indicate their financial costs for making sure that all necessary courses are taught.
- **Deborah Minter** (English) asked whether or not the retirement incentive plan is budget neutral and what cuts it may require. **Manderscheid** indicated we do not yet know.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony F. Starace, *Faculty Secretary, 30 January 2011*

***Appendix: Glenn Ledder's General Notes on ACE Administration (attached)***

## **Appendix**

### **General Notes on ACE Administration**

*Glenn Ledder, College of A&S Representative to the UCC ACE Subcommittee*

*15 December 2010*

The initial ACE certification was done by the IACE committee. The transition from IACE to the ACE subcommittee of UCC resulted in a number of misunderstandings in the 2009-10 academic year; however, UCC ACE has now approved about 40 consecutive ACE proposals from Arts and Sciences stretching back to October. The College Curriculum and Assessment Committee has done an outstanding job of prescreening.

The UCC ACE subcommittee has tightened the certification policies in two areas. First, we are requiring that syllabi meet the policy stated in the governing documents. Faculty whose courses were approved in the initial year are encouraged to revise their syllabi to comply with the ACE syllabus policy. Second, we have clarified the policies regarding dual-outcome courses. Some combinations that may have been approved in the initial year are no longer considered: (1) courses certified for Outcomes 1, 2, or 3 cannot be certified for any additional outcome, (2) courses cannot be certified for more than one of Outcomes 4-7, and (3) courses certified for Outcome 10 cannot also be certified for another outcome except Outcomes 8 and 9.

A number of ACE issues remain, particularly recertification. What follows is the current state of the recertification plan. The calendar has been approved. The submission policies and criteria will be settled at our January meeting. Two points are clear about recertification difficulties. First, decertification can only apply to future offerings of a course. Students who are taking an ACE course at the time of decertification or took it earlier will still get ACE credit for the course. Second, no course will be decertified because of failure to be recertified. Courses that are not recertified because of content issues or noncompliance with ACE guidelines will be put on probation, with a final decision coming only after the course has been offered one more time.

#### **Recertification Calendar:**

The University-Wide Assessment Committee and the UCC ACE subcommittee plan to use the same rotation for both assessment and recertification. Next year will be year 1 of the 5-year rotation.

Year 1: Outcomes 1, 2, and 3

Year 2: Outcomes 4, 6, and 7

Year 3: Outcomes 5 and 9

Year 4: Outcomes 8 and 10

Year 5: Program Review (governing documents, co-curricular experience policy, study abroad policy, honors course policy, etc.)

Dual-outcome courses can be recertified for both outcomes in the year corresponding to either of its outcomes. For example, we expect that a course approved for Outcomes 5 and 8 would be reviewed for both outcomes in Year 4; however, the department could choose to have the course reviewed in Year 3 if desired.

**Recertification Submission:**

1. Update original ACE proposal as needed to incorporate changes made and changes planned. In particular, use of assessment data needs to be more specific.
2. Describe what assessment data has revealed about the success of the course and how those data have been used to help the course succeed.
3. Provide a representative syllabus from the most recent offering of the course.
4. If assessment data has not been collected for all sections, indicate how the department strives to make all sections meet ACE requirements (ex: common syllabus, regular instructor meetings).

**Recertification Criteria:**

Some criteria are based on the history of the course as an ACE course:

1. Course appears to have followed the certified plan, allowing for changes consistent with the Outcome.
2. Assessment data has been collected and used to help the course meet the Outcome. UCC ACE will not attempt to judge the success of courses; it does want evidence that the controlling department is attempting to judge the success of the course.

Other criteria are essentially the same as initial certification:

3. Course provides opportunities to develop the knowledge/skills for the Outcome and opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the Outcome.
4. Department has a coherent plan for ongoing assessment and revision of the course. This should be more specific than the plan for the original ACE proposal.
5. The syllabus provides students with information about the opportunities to develop the knowledge/skills and demonstrate achievement.
6. At least one reinforcement must be identified. These are not used for recertification but are intended for information only.

**Other ACE Issues:**

1. We would like to be able to inform departments of the number of students who take each course for ACE credit. This is not currently possible because of a flaw in the DARS program. I am gently pushing for this to be changed. It will not happen soon. Departments should consider adding a line to their course evaluation that asks if the student is using the course for ACE (and which outcome if the course is dual-outcome). This information could be used to prune ACE offerings that are never utilized for ACE credit.
2. The wording of Outcome 8 has proven to be problematic: “Explain ethical principles, civics, and stewardship, and their importance to society.” Following a literal interpretation of this language, we have insisted that each of the three elements must be present in the course to some extent.

Most Outcome 8 courses strongly emphasize one of the three and do not easily accommodate the others. One option is for us to propose a change in the wording, which would have to be approved by all 8 colleges. Another option is for us to be more flexible in our identification of each of the three elements.

3. The rules for co-curricular experiences are being revamped to make it easier for students to get ACE credit for appropriate non-credit-bearing work. Students must have a UNL faculty sponsor in the academic area of the project, even if the work is actually directed by someone outside the UNL faculty. Students must provide a product as evidence of achievement of the outcome and the sponsor must certify that the work is at least comparable to a 3-credit course. The request for co-curricular credit will have to be approved by the college of the faculty sponsor and the student's home college. Approval for co-curricular experiences may be sought either before or after the experience but must be done no later than the semester following the experience. Students who participate in a non-credit UNL activity will probably want to obtain approval prior to the activity. The student will still need to provide a product after the experience has ended. Students who participate in a program that does not have a fixed structure, such as an REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates), may prefer to wait until they have had the experience to decide if it ought to qualify. Prior to the activity, the student should still find a faculty sponsor and file a form indicating the (possible) intent to apply for co-curricular experience approval.

### **Study Abroad Policy:**

Most programs involving foreign study provide students with an excellent experience of human diversity, global awareness, or both. It is therefore advisable to have a simplified process for students who want to use a study abroad experience to obtain co-curricular experience credit for Outcome 9. Since there are some study abroad programs that do not offer experience in human diversity or global awareness, we don't want to have credit for Outcome 9 automatically granted. We will be trying to formulate a study abroad policy in January. I welcome advice from Arts and Sciences faculty for how to simplify the co-curricular experience mechanism for this case while still ensuring that students have actually achieved the ACE outcome.