Minutes of Core Review Committee  
November 9, 2006

The Core Review Committee met Nov. 9, 2006, in Kirby 108. In attendance: Brian Whitman, CRC Chair; Matt Brown, Agnes Cardoni, Ellen Flint, Susan Hritzak, Barbara Samuel Loftus, Andrew Miller, Gina Morrison, Amy Patton, Marianne Rexer, Philip Simon, Ernie Trujillo, and Diane Wenger.

Minutes: The minutes of the October meeting were approved as presented.

New Business: Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Proposal from the Business Division: Marianne Rexer

Dr. Rexer moved, seconded by Professor Simon, to approve the Business Division WAC Proposal. Discussion: Dr. Rexer explained that the division has established an undergraduate competency committee and included the “Six Principles of Good Writing” in its proposal. Students will be assessed by means of a portfolio. Students who are currently in the pipeline under “WI” requirements will be able to request waivers if necessary.

Dr. Whitman inquired about the methodology of tracking student progress by means of portfolio. Dr. Cardoni suggested faculty might evaluate specific earmarked assignments (distributed anonymously with rubrics). Dr. Rexer noted that there will be both individual and programmatic assessment of portfolios in the Business Division. Dr. Cardoni pointed out that the portfolio provides lots of information easily, but the downside is that it takes faculty an enormous amount of time to assess this information.

The Business Division proposal allows certain identified writing courses in another department to satisfy WAC requirements. Dr. Wenger raised the general question of how most departments will be able to determine if courses outside their own department should be allowed to satisfy writing requirements. This question on the template implies that there will still be a type of “writing intensive” designation, though clearly this is not the intention of WAC. Dr. Rexer explained that, in the Business Division, these courses are already required for majors.

Amy Patton asked how transfer students will be able to fit into the new format. Dr. Rexer responded that accommodating the needs of transfer students was a major concern as they crafted their proposal, and junior business majors will be able to add papers from other classes to build their portfolios. The division is more interested in outcome than having a selection of freshman and sophomore papers. In response to a question from Dr. Miller on the capstone, Dr. Rexer explained that students have to integrate all business disciplines in the portfolio, and it would not be possible to cover all this in the capstone.

Professor Simon asked how we can be sure that adjuncts teaching upper level courses will deliver approved WAC curriculum (this question needs to be asked of all proposals). Dr. Rexer noted that all business courses were developed by full time faculty with content predetermined.
The motion to approve the Business Division WAC Proposal was passed unanimously.

Other discussion:

Dr. Morrison asked whether a similar template (like WAC) might be used for multiculturalism. Dr. Cardoni agreed; Dr. Wenger expressed reservations.

Dr. Trujillo voiced concern about the need to include “creative” writing in the WAC proposal since, for example, the chemistry department does not do much creative writing. The committee agreed that the emphasis in WAC needs to be writing within discipline and each discipline will decide what type(s) of writing that should be.

Dr. Miller suggested the committee consider what might constitute grounds for rejection of a WAC proposal; Dr. Whitman responded that plans with no clear objective and no assessment plans would be unsatisfactory.

Dr. Morrison urged the committee to provide some guidance on how to include multiculturalism in the core. Dr. Whitman reminded the committee that some classes (HST 101 for example) are already addressing these issues, and that we need to determine how and where we will assess multicultural components.

Old Business: Update on Core Goals and Objectives: Barbara Loftus

Dr. Loftus reported that she and Dr. Ellen Flint recently attended a Middle States General Education Assessment Workshop. She distributed a chart showing how the current Wilkes University core demonstrates competencies in the areas required by Middle States. The bottom line is that every student who graduates from Wilkes needs to be exposed to these core competencies. As of now we do have Middle States competencies covered, though certain areas still need to develop performance outcomes and assessment tools. The question is in which areas do we want to expand; one, for example, is multiculturalism and where we want that to fit in.

We also need to strengthen information literacy; this competency “never had a home,” and we also need to define “technological competence” (Middle States does not limit this area to computer literacy).

Dr. Flint asked if information literacy could be handled within departments like WAC, using library staff as experts. Dr. Loftus noted that there are a few problems as the library is currently set up including lack of staffing, lack of attention in the past to information literacy. This will, however, be a major component of the job description for the new Dean of the Library.

Dr. Morrison suggested that multiculturalism is a good fit under several of the Middle State Competencies, including critical analysis and information literacy.

Dr. Loftus noted that the performing arts do not have written outcomes linked to competencies, and it is a matter of linking these courses to one of the stated competencies.
Professor Simon suggested they may work best under written communication, since the emphasis is not on performance, but on learning about the subject.

Dr. Loftus pointed out that the areas which are not yet reporting out (outcomes & assessments) are critical; Dr. Whitman suggested taking this up with the deans at their regular meetings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Wenger