

College of Architecture, Planning and Design Listening Meeting Tuesday February 12

Task Force members present: Karen, Vicki, Lynn, Brian

Notes prepared by: Brian Kovar

9 faculty members were present.

Lynn presented a brief introduction and overview of the current proposal.

Q. Why is the university wanting to change the existing General Education program?

Q. Will there be enough courses offered in the new program?

In order to be tagged into a content area, a course description and objectives need to address one of the content areas.

Comment: Worried that there might not be enough classes available in some of the content areas. Concerned about too many offerings in one content area and not enough in other areas.

Ethical Responsibility and Social Engagement might be one content area needing more courses.

Comment: One faculty member present was very against the list of 8 content areas. Thought it was an arbitrary listing. Felt 4 content areas (ethical, social systems, diversity, and global community) were actually just one content area. Does not see the value of these specific four content areas. Could be reduced down to one or two content areas. Sees more value in artistic courses (literature, art, music, theater). Says our 8 content areas force students into arbitrary categories. Feels these 4 areas are the “politically correct ones.” Feels student should have complete freedom in what they choose to take. One of the advisors in attendance also felt this same way.

Karen mentioned that the timeline is not driving the proposal. The proposal will drive the timeline.

Comment: Programs with a significant number of slots outside of their college can easily deal with the proposal. Well-regimented programs will have a harder time finding available slots to make this proposal fit.

Comment: A faculty Senator on Academic Affairs was present. Feels that it is important that the proposal drives the timeline. Critical issue is why are we changing? Include a statement outlining problems with existing system and how this new proposal will solve those (Should be included in the final recommendation created by the Task Force. Feels this is very important). We need to be cautious. Why are we changing? Feels that 4 of the content areas are too focused on social sciences.

Q. What are the areas of the proposal that we are looking at revising (based on feedback that we have received)?

- Working on exact wording for content areas.
- Assessment of student learning: general statement focusing on university SLOs
- Changing how a class is given a content tag (moving away from the 30% criteria)
- How many content areas can be taken within a major?

Comment: One faculty member present felt that assessment is foolish. A student either learns or doesn't learn. Indicates we need to "fight the assessment fad."

Comment: Another faculty member felt that the content areas are being covered in their existing coursework (somewhere) and that students would be burdened by needing to go elsewhere to satisfy the content tags. There is almost the feeling that the only way that someone can get a particular content area is to go outside of your college/major (at least that is how it is being perceived: why can't the major satisfy more of these areas if those content areas are indeed covered in the major)?

Q. Is the existing bureaucratic overlay still going to be present (was asking in regards to critical thinking and communication)? Will faculty have to "prove" that their course satisfies the focus/emphasis? In the response that was given, critical thinking and communication is something that should be built into all courses.

Karen indicated that there might be some sort of designator/designation that a course would be appropriate for non-majors (this would be made at the department level. It would distinguish between "this is appropriate only for majors" and "this would be a good course for non-majors to take to gain exposure to this subject area or content area."

Comment: Advising will be crucial in order to make sure that the students stay on track. Some curriculum and colleges may need to develop a "listing" of courses to consider (within each content area, especially when going outside of the college).

Q. How is general education going to be assessed (questions regarding content of page #19 of the proposal) and what is the deal regarding standardized testing?

Comment: The Task Force should take the feedback provided by each of the colleges, revise our proposal, and then come back to the university community for additional feedback.

Comment: Faculty Senator on Academic Affairs feels that our report should address how we draw attention to students regarding the content areas and the requirements regarding how they should be met. How will a student know a class in a given content area is available? Also feels that Communication should be a content area.

Q. When can we (the faculty) expect to see the next version of the proposal?

Comment: in content area description, avoid wording that implies "an educated guess."

The Task Force will need to define what actually qualifies as an "experience" and how acceptable experiences translate into credit hour equivalents? For example, if I spend one hour doing something, does that count, and how?

Comment: dropping the 300 level and above requirement seen in the current UGE system is a good thing.