

Minutes of the LPWG

July 15, 2008 – 3 p.m.

Red and Gold Room

In attendance: Jennifer Nostrala, Kedron Bardwell, Mike Hadden, Rick Spellerberg, Murphy Waggoner, Steve Shafer, Bill Friedrichs, Maria DiPalma, Jim Hayes, Steve Griffith, John Bolen, Sal Meyers, and Cyd Dyer

Steve Griffith began the meeting with handouts and descriptions of the embedded skills. With the analogy of contracting and expanding, Dean Griffith said we were ever closer to the goal of by the end of the summer to have the embedded skills clear enough to present to the other faculty for their responses. In addition to the embedded skills products, he hopes that we will also have ideas about LAS and ideas about Senior Colloquium so that we can present these also at that time to the full faculty as the product of our summer work for their review.

Rick Spellerberg suggested that the information be presented in small group format when we come to that juncture as the group will be seeking a discussion Q & A type format rather than a formal presentation.

Steve Griffith asked which skill to review first or if there were any that gave people concerns.

Sal said the one she had the hardest time with was the one on teamwork and collaborative learning. She suggested taking collaborative learning off the title. She thought collaborative learning was a logical pedagogical approach when teaching but did not see it as much as an embedded skill. Another thing she struggled with was interdisciplinary learning as an embedded skill.

Rick Spellerberg said he is struggling a little bit with what seems to be a complete disconnect between interdisciplinary studies and collaboration. Jennifer Nostrala noted that an interdisciplinary approach could be done by individuals while collaboration would probably take more than one person. Interdisciplinary does not require teamwork as such. An example is in the women's studies classes which are the same subject taught by several departments or disciplines.

Steve Griffith asked if we want to attach interdisciplinary with teamwork and collaboration.

Murphy Waggoner thinks they are not necessarily connected and that you can do teamwork without it being interdisciplinary and vice versa. However she thinks we need to intentionally teach persons to work outside of their disciplines and with other disciplines. The students need to work outside of their comfort zone.

Rick Spellerberg then asked, “So the question is do we want to require interdisciplinary learning approaches?”

Rick then argued that students need an environment where students learn interdisciplinary ideas and the inter-relational importance of these ideas. Too many students get to their senior year and don’t have an understanding why they should take a course outside of their discipline – they don’t understand the importance.

Steve Griffith said that this is an issue we all agree on. This is an overarching thing that comes with a liberal arts education. I don’t see it as a standalone.

Murphy said she would like to see it still as an option.

Kedron said that as a new faculty member coming from graduate school where you focused solely on a discipline for 6 to 8 years faces a transition when addressing an interdisciplinary approach. Getting back into the mold of this can be difficult.

Steve Griffith said that’s right and that’s where faculty development and talking about it etc. can be of help and value to new faculty.

Bill Friedrichs noted that some Senior Colloquiums have supported this type of approach in the past and some have not. The ones that did have been the more successful in his opinion.

Sal then moved the discussion to the implementation challenges of the oral communication embedded skills. She’d met with the sub-committee and said that they talked about formal communication skills and informal communication skills. They looked at how other colleges handled this. They also envisioned classes that used both and classes that used one or the other.

Jennifer Nostrala then said that the subcommittee felt it too early to be decided since the whole communications package is not yet ironed out. Since written communications has been separated from written communications it’s too early to decide stamps for courses.

Steve Griffith then reviewed the list for Understanding Culture and the Human Experience and asked to have volunteers to establish criteria for these. These subgroups will work again much as the groups for the embedded skills and present their work at the next meeting. If a group gets their area done early, they are welcome to send out attached documents for the LPWG to review before the next meeting. The groups and their volunteers are as follows:

1. Global Awareness – Western Jim Hayes
2. Global Awareness – Non-Western Maria DiPalma, John Bolen
3. U.S. Culture – Citizenship Kedron Bardwell, Bill Friedrichs
4. U.S. Culture – Minority Perspectives
5. Scientific Reasoning Rick Spellerberg, Steve Shafer, Mike Hadden
6. Creative Process, Performing Jennifer Nostrala, Cyd Dyer

Steve Griffith asked Shelly to get the list of volunteers out to the whole group and ask for volunteers from persons who are not present. He also asked the groups to remember to put out their ideas as soon as they are done. The areas will be discussed at the next meeting August 12. Persons joining a group need to be in place soon so work can begin in the sub-committees.

Steve Griffith then asked what they all thought about the faculty workshop and what they might like to see happen there. Did they want to submit the summer LPWG work there?

The group seemed to want to do this and Kedron suggested small, informal conversation /feedback groups to introduce the ideas generated over the summer.

Bill Friedrichs suggested a food fair would be popular with faculty going from snack area to snack area to hear about the ideas.

After the laughter subsided, Jennifer Nostrala said that it might be interesting to solicit what embedded skills classes are already teaching. This is something the LPWG could glean from the other faculty that day. She also noted that it took the group a while to get the embedded skills into an articulate, coherent format – she has a concern about the group being able to get the human experience ideas that we'll work on next meeting ready for the review of faculty by the faculty workshop day.

Steve Griffith hoped that we will be able to submit both for the full faculty then. So if persons are ready with their area they are to send the information to the LPWG group.

Next meeting is Aug. 12 – 3 p.m. – Red and Gold room.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelly Priebe