



Minutes from October 5, 2016

June Deery, co-chair
Connie Grega
Brett Fajen
Aparna Gupta
Gina O'Connor
Chris Perry
Steven Sperazza
Varun Rao
Guest: Lee Ligon

Bruce Piper
Rhett Russo
Linda Schadler
Spencer Scott
Josie Seddon
David Spooner
Sharon Kunkel
David Bell

- 1) The minutes from September 21, 2016 were unanimously approved.**
- 2) Core Curriculum-June Deery introduced Lee Ligon and initiated the discussion on the Core Curriculum report. L. Ligon was asked how the Core Curriculum Implementation Committee (CCIC) defined Data Intensive and/or Collaborative courses. The intent is to gather information from each school on how they define data intensive (DI) or collaborative for their programs. There are some areas in the report that are loosely defined, but that was deliberate on the part of the Committee. How will we track these new requirements? Some of the tracking will be very straightforward. Code a course appropriately and track it in the degree audit report. Some of the recommendations that are not course related will be more difficult to track. She is meeting with the Student Life Leadership Team to discuss the report. Some of the areas that may be more difficult to track fall under Student Life.

In the feedback she's received there has been a lot of focus on the Humanities, Arts and Social Science requirements. The recommendations include a 3 course depth requirement and no distinction between Humanities and Social Science courses. The new requirements are not as flexible for engineers and architecture students who don't take the full 24 credits. How did the committee intend to classify the depth? The CCIC envisioned the proposed three-course concentration as a single prefix, not quite a minor. HASS faculty do not see the proposed new depth requirement quite so constrained, but in addition advocate extending the concept to a limited number of well-considered, cohesive three-course sequences across HASS department prefixes. Mike Kalsher added that in some departments, the distinction between Humanities and Social Science courses is already blurred, i.e. STSS and STSH. He has suggested structuring some of the minors so the depth concentration will serve as a gateway to the minor. There is some concern about offering sufficient Communication Intensive courses to meet student needs. There is a meeting scheduled with HASS and the School of Engineering to discuss the concerns about engineers not having enough flexibility.

The discussion continued with more questions and comments about the proposed HASS requirements. Depth concentrations can be pre-defined groupings and all of the courses don't have to have the same prefix. How did the CCIC decide that depth is more important than breadth? Their feedback indicates a 3 course concentration is fits better than a minor. Why are we going from a 2 course concentration to 3? Gina O'Connor said based on what she's read, we should be expanding the breadth not the depth. The Committee surveyed alumni to get their feedback on what was missing in their education at Rensselaer and what was done well. The results from the survey show that disciplinary expertise was rated very high. Other areas i.e.

diversity and global awareness were rated much lower but the alumni don't think they need more in these areas.

The depth requirement is 3 courses so there are still additional credits required which gives students some flexibility. B. Fajen suggested providing options for students who want something other than the pre-defined concentrations. Maybe students can define their own concentrations. Other comments and concerns discussed included the following:

- Look at the larger goals of a core curriculum. A minor in some specific area doesn't necessarily meet the larger goals
- The goal should be a purposeful set of courses
- Resources will be needed to offer adequate sections
- Vocational vs intellectual exploration
- Having a pre-defined list may be more difficult to schedule
- First year inquiry courses can be used to feed into multiple 3 course sequences. They could be the gateway to multiple paths
- Concerns about course availability and advising
- Degree Works (new degree audit) includes a plan of study that will help with advising as will the Hub advising model
- Most first year students will be fine with pre-defined concentrations
- Has anyone modeled the enrollment impact on the HASS courses at 1000, 2000 and 4000 level? This will definitely have a resource impact
- Implementation is targeted for Fall 2018 not 2017.
- Communication skills/global awareness/writing skills are some of the larger goals. Inquiry courses will cover many of these larger goals but there is no direct mapping
- We will lose some of the randomness that occurs now with the pre-defined concentrations
- The current distribution requirement(humanities and social science) is confusing
- Current requirements are complex and would not want to see that continued in the new core
- Design It Yourself concentrations- 3 courses in a prefix-would have to be approved by the Associate Dean and/or the HASS Hub adviser
- There has to be some specificity. How do you encourage students to take more intentionality in their course selections?
- Students will look for courses that fit in their schedule so it's important to offer a wider range of HASS options
- There is more structure but the proposal does not dictate the entire requirement
- In some ways they are conflicting goals but it is probably a good compromise
- Even if you know the goals of the rules, it doesn't mean they aren't confusing
- Can one course be both DI and CI?
- Data Intensive courses could be an engineering course. They don't have to be part of the Institute core
- The DI criteria still has to be defined. There needs to be a consensus about what a DI course is. Find out what we are doing now, how is it defined in each school and then reach a consensus
- The intent of the DI requirement is analogous to the CI requirement. It's not a course about data. It can be a module in an existing course that is already one of requirements for the major.

L. Ligon said the report represents a compromised, brokered and negotiated effort. Hopefully the result is a workable compromise. She added that in general, the feedback has been positive. L. Schadler sees the report as a proposal with broad support. Most agree that it's time to refresh the Core Curriculum. The CCIC has to take the feedback, evaluate it and determine if there is reasonable support.

The CCIC plans to continue to receive feedback until mid-November. At that point, the CCIC will meet to review the feedback, regenerate the proposal and hopefully should have the updated proposal to the FSCC by the end of the Fall term. L. Ligon indicated the school curriculum committees should provide feedback to the CCIC and then the revised report would come to FSCC. The FSCC will discuss the proposal at least one more time. The School curriculum chairs should send their feedback directly to Lee.