

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Jeffrey Funderburk, Faculty Senate Chair
FROM: Dr. Deirdre Bucher Heistad, LAC Director
RE: Faculty Senate Petition and Request
DATE: April 18, 2012

In advance of my scheduled appearance before the Faculty Senate, could you please share the details of my request to the Senate? My hope is that in this way I won't need to take up too much of your valuable time during next week's meeting. I would be happy to answer any questions UNI Faculty Senators may have pertaining to this proposal. Thank you in advance for your willingness to consider my request.

Request before the UNI Faculty Senate

The LAC Director requests that the UNI Faculty Senate endorse and/or approve the following recommendation:

As part of the UNI's on-going commitment to improve the assessment of student learning in its Liberal Arts Core, faculty will work with the LAC director during the 2012-2013 academic year to develop measurable student learning outcomes and a manageable assessment plan for each LAC Category.

This request has been endorsed by the Liberal Arts Core Committee, the Assessment Academy Leadership Team and the Executive Vice-President and Provost.

Context for Request

In fall 2011 the UNI Faculty Senate approved the LACC's request to suspend the LAC Category Review Process for one academic year. The LACC found this request to be in the best interest of UNI faculty, students and administrators for two important reasons.

- The LACC wanted to be assured that the faculty could focus their time on the LAC Review Steering Committee recommendations to make substantial changes to the LAC.
- The current category review process was not providing faculty, the LACC or the administration with meaningful information concerning the effectiveness of the Core. The lack of comprehensive assessment of student learning throughout the LAC continues to be an enormous obstacle needing to be overcome immediately.

To follow-up on the LACC concerns enumerated above, the following actions were taken:

- 1) The Liberal Arts Core Director along with the Associate Provost of Academic Affairs and the Co-chair of the LAC-RSC met with faculty representing all categories and sub-categories of the LAC. The conversations focused on improvements to the LAC via assessment practices, faculty development and curriculum revisions.

Results of these conversations:

- Category review procedures need to be revised so that the process is more meaningful to faculty and administrators
- Assessment of the category should be imbedded into the review
- Reviews should be less burdensome for faculty
- Category review should be coordinated at the Dean's level
- Agreement that a task force, representing faculty and administration should be formed to revise procedures

As a result of these conversations with LAC faculty, the LACC approved the LAC Director's request to create an LACC sub-committee to review and propose revisions to the current category review process.

- 2) During the spring 2012 the LAC Director met with the aforementioned LACC sub-committee to discuss ways for improving the LACC Category Review Process. Those invited to join the sub-committee were those faculty/ administrators who had recently either led or participated in a category review. Members of the sub-committee included current and past LACC committee members, a representative from Institutional Research, the Director of Assessment and Associate Deans from CSBS and CHAS. In addition to the concerns voiced during the faculty discussions mentioned above, members of this sub-committee noted the following:
 - To be effective, category review should be a less-burdensome, yet on-going activity
 - A meaningful category review cannot occur without measurable goals/outcomes and an assessment plan for each category

Implementation of Proposed Request

The Director of the LAC will work with the Dean's to create faculty work groups, much in the way that faculty work groups are currently working for Categories IV and V. (Fall 2012)

The LAC Director will provide the administrative support necessary to call and organize meetings to establish category level outcomes for each LAC category (or sub-category, if necessary). (Fall 2012)

The LAC Director in consultation with, UNI's Assessment Academy mentors, will bring in an outside facilitator to help the faculty finalize their outcomes and create a manageable assessment plan. (Fall 2012)

Category committees will finalize and prepare for the implementation of the category assessment plans beginning in fall 2013. (Spring 2013)

The LAC Director will continue to work with the LACC and the Assessment Academy Leadership Team to create a revised set of LAC review procedures to be implemented beginning in 2013-2014. (Fall 2012-Spring 2013)

Thank you.