

Discovery Committee Minutes, September 7, 2011

Present: Barb White, Michele Holt-Shannon, Jessica Fruchtman, Tom Safford, Ihab Farag, Stephen Pugh, Sean Moore, David Richman, Dennis Britton (Absent: Bill Ross, Lisa MacFarlane, Heather Barber, COLSA rep, WSBE rep)

Next meeting: Wednesday, Sept 21, 2011

Opening remarks: Barb White welcomed everyone; introductions of each member were made. It was noted that WSBE and COLSA have not yet sent forward a representative to the Discovery Committee for AY 2011-12. Heather Barber has had to step down from her role as representative of CHHS due to new obligations and the college will be sending a replacement representative to complete her term.

The committee took the following action:

Review of the following courses was tabled pending further information:

CEPS

CS 403 – Weaving the Web – ETS (revised proposal)

CS 404 – Do-It-Yourself Internet – ETS (new proposal)

ENE 656 – Environmental Engineering Microbiology – BS w/DLAB (new proposal)

The Committee discussed the following:

Barb discussed the scope of the DC charges: reporting on the Discovery Program to Faculty Senate, acting as the “shepherds” of the undergrad core curriculum; the role for the DC is ongoing. We are charged with safe-guarding the integrity of the program. We have practical responsibilities, such as petitions, etc, but we primarily review courses to see that they are appropriate fit for DP – in category, scope, and core curriculum goals, INQ, and the University Dialogue.

Minutes cannot be posted until approved, and the minutes from the final meeting in May need review and approval. Most members of the current DC were not here in May so cannot vote on them. If Bill Ross can approve them, all others may abstain, and the minutes may pass. This will be on the agenda at the next meeting.

Maintaining the cap on INQ courses – INQ Attribute courses at 35; 444’s at 25. We have a couple of instances on campus where instructors are going over caps on INQ courses, perhaps more than once. We have caps for a reason, so we should probably have a policy as a mechanism for enforcing the caps.

The Associate Dean’s visit: We will be talking about INQ – how to meet requirements; issues with caps; etc.. We may ask how we can help. Also, what the balance is between the 444 and the INQ. We have seen slippage in the 444’s – should we monitor that? Colleges are working in the direction of satisfying their INQ with a major course; that was not the intent. If we move to a model where this is met within the major, we lose sight of the initial spirit or intent of the 444 course. It comes down to resources. 444’s are seen as “random” courses at a time when there are constraints.

What is the current policy on whether tenure/non-tenure track can teach 444’s? Originally it was tenure track, now it is okay if it is someone who has a proven track record with UNH and the dept, but they should have a PhD. Sometimes we flex if the person is in process of their PhD and has been teaching the course in a partnership with a tenure track professor. As a reminder, past practice also has been if the instructor changed, we would look at the course again and would consider pulling the INQ status if the course is no longer meeting standards.

There are also pilot courses (BIOL 411/412) with TA’s closely monitored by faculty and going through specialized training prior to teaching.

Is there a plan to deal with the 444 shortage? These are all points to bring up with the Associate Dean’s – resources, dept dependence, etc. There is also interest in crafting a 444 proposal by recent PhD’s who have not taught here before, but are new employees of UNH. They would have to align with a dept and have a proven track record of teaching.

Faculty Senate Charges: 3rd charge – identify a mechanism for sharing innovative teaching moments; e.g., CIE 402, some 444’s, etc. We can discuss this further at our next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30pm.