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Sent Thursday, July 9, 2009 10:27 am
To Anne McCall <Anne.McCall@du.edu> , Alayne.Parson@du.edu ,
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Cc Michael Levine-Clark <miclark@du.edu> , Chancellor@du.edu
Subject Re: General Education Update

Discussion of the consequences [of the curriculum changes that the faculty vote ratified] might begin with a closer analysis of the faculty vote. I'm copying the Chancellor and Senate President because some of what follows relates to a conversation we had at the Senate's spring quarter Chancellor's Luncheon. Relevant supporting data are attached below.

This is a curriculum for which the undergraduate units have collective responsibility. Fifty-one percent of the faculty charged with that responsibility voted yes [Table 1]. Forty-nine percent either voted no, abstained, or didn't care to vote at all. Thus, it's difficult to tell what kind of faculty buy-in actually exists. There appears to be a statistically significant difference between the "Yes" vote in units that had representatives on the Gen Ed Review Committee and those that didn't (58% to 42%, respectively). Units not represented on GERC but that are (a) heavily invested in Gen Ed and (b) strongly suspected of having a chair- or senator-encouraged debate about the GERC proposal voted "No" by a wide margin (58% no to 22% yes). Unsurprisingly, the "Didn't Vote" percentage declines where faculty are actively encouraged to participate in serious discussion and debate.

Much more surprising is the vote result in NSM. A majority of faculty in three of five NSM units voted against the proposal [Table 2]. This is a stunning result given that the science piece of Gen Ed has remained essentially unchanged for over 20 years and no substantial revisions were proposed here. It's tempting to see accumulating assessment data as a driver. NATS Curriculum Committee data suggest that minimal gains in scientific literacy are made over the course of the three-quarter sequence. CORE data-- <https://portfolio.du.edu/pc/port.detail?id=128945> --suggest that non-science majors complete the NATS sequence having very poor understandings of some very basic scientific concepts, including those central to contemporary Culture Wars. For example, non-Honors students graduate from NATS courses with an "F" grade (57%) understanding of evolution and related concepts. Honors students score only slightly better at D- (61%). This state of affairs is doubly consequential for us in AHSS because scholars and educators in our disciplines are increasingly engaging with evolutionary science. One reads almost daily about emerging paradigms in biocriminology, Darwinian literature, process theology, evolutionary aesthetics, and other hybrid fields. Majors in AHSS are thus poorly served by the science status quo we're about to reproduce.

Just as the scientific literacy of our students hangs in the balance, so too does their interdisciplinary competence. We've chosen to eliminate opportunities for explicit interdisciplinary work at the high end of the Gen Ed curriculum. Given such

shrinkage, we would better respect the variety of interdisciplinary subjects that the lone Advanced Seminar might address by eliminating its writing intensive requirement and welcoming a variety of course pedagogies that are subject-appropriate. Senate discussion of the GERC proposal produced several concerns about the ASEM's writing intensive requirement. The requirement is a disincentive to faculty who already teach successful CORE courses. Frankly, dedicated veterans don't need to jump through any more course approval hoops. It's a disincentive to that already vanishingly-small number of science faculty willing or able to offer an advanced interdisciplinary seminar, especially those who might be keen to incorporate experiential pedagogies such as laboratory or field work. It's a disincentive to faculty who might wish to compensate for the purging of CREX by incorporating expressive pedagogies other than writing. Eliminating the WI requirement would likely help ASEM staff-ability. It certainly wouldn't diminish academic quality and probably would enhance it.

Thanks,
Dean

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Table 1. General Education Vote Results (numbers are percentages)

Vote as % of Faculty Voting, All Units (n=307):

YES	= 70
NO	= 21
ABSTAIN	= 9

Vote as % of Faculty Eligible to Vote, All Units (n=424):

YES	= 51
NO	= 15
ABSTAIN	= 6
DIDN'T VOTE	= 28

AHSS Vote (n=225):

YES	= 54
NO	= 14
ABSTAIN	= 6

DIDN'T VOTE = 26

NSM Vote (n=78):

YES = 44
NO = 32
ABSTAIN = 9
DIDN'T VOTE = 15

Total Arts and Sciences Vote (n=303):

YES = 52
NO = 19
ABSTAIN = 6
DIDN'T VOTE = 23

Vote in Units Represented on GERC (n=238):

YES = 58
NO = 5
ABSTAIN = 6
DIDN'T VOTE = 31

Vote in Units Not Represented on GERC (n=186):

YES = 42
NO = 28
ABSTAIN = 6
DIDN'T VOTE = 24

Vote in units not represented on GERC and suspected of having a debate partly informed by the Counter-Proposal (n=78, including ANTH, HCOM, RLGS, GEOG, CHEM, MATH, and ITEC):

YES = 22
NO = 58
ABSTAIN = 9
DIDN'T VOTE = 11

Table 2. General Education Revision Vote, 2009						
Division	Unit	Faculty Voters	Votes Cast			Not returned
			Yes	No	Abstain	
Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (AHSS)						
	Anthropology	7	0	7	0	0
	Art	15	12	0	2	1
	Economics	8	3	0	0	5
	English	22	13	0	2	7
	History	11	7	2	0	2
	Human Communications	10	0	9	0	1
	Judaic Studies	5	0	0	0	5
	Lang & Lit	36	17	6	3	10
	Mass Communications	15	13	0	0	2
	Music	24	6	3	2	13
	Philosophy	7	7	0	0	0

	Poli Sci	9	5	0	1	3
	Psychology	24	18	0	1	5
New	Public Policy	3	0	0	0	0
	Rel Studies	7	4	2	1	0
	Sociology	11	10	0	0	1
	Theatre	5	5	0	0	0
New	AHSS General	9	2	3	0	4
Division of Natural Sciences & Mathematics (NSM)						
	Biol Sciences	20	15	2	2	1
	Chemistry	16	6	8	2	0
	Geography & Env Science	13	2	10	1	3
	Mathematics	15	3	5	2	5
	Physics & Ast	11	8	0	0	3
School of Engineering & Computer Science (SECS)						
	Mechanical	10	0	0	0	10
	Electrical	10	7	0	0	3
	Comp Sci	12	4	1	0	7
Daniels College of Business (DCB)						
	Accountancy	13	10	0	0	3
	Finance					
	HRTM					
Rename	Bus Eth & Legal Studies					
	Management					
	ITEC	7	2	4	1	0
New	Inst for Leadership & Org					
	Marketing	10	9	0	1	0
	RECM					
	Stat OR					
Morgridge College of Education (MCE)						
	Education					
Korbel School of International Studies (JKSIS)						
	GSIS	31	8	1	4	18
Graduate School of Professional Psychology (GSPP)						
	GSPP					
Graduate School of Social Work (GSSW)						
	GSSW					
Sturm College of Law (SCOL)						
	SCOL					

Penrose Library						
	Penrose					
Writing Program						
	Writing	20	14	0	1	5
	Eng Lang Ctr					
University College						
	UCOL					
The Women's College (TWC)						
	TWC	6	5	1	0	0
Centers and Programs						
Moved	Center Cont Issue					
New	Conflict Resolution					
New	Pioneer Leadership	2	1	1	0	0
TOTALS (using formula)		413	216	65	26	117