

From Dean Saitta <dsaitta@du.edu>
Sent Friday, April 17, 2009 7:55 am
To Michael Levine-Clark <Michael.Levine-Clark@du.edu>
Cc "faculty-senate@du.edu" <faculty-senate@du.edu> , Gregg Kvistad <gregg.kvistad@du.edu> , Kristi Burgert <Kristi.Burgert@du.edu>
Subject Re: [Faculty-senate] General Education Review - details about the vote

Attachments GenEd CounterProp.pdf

Dear Senate Colleagues—

As we close in on the General Education proposal vote I want to thank you for considering the alternative set of ideas for reform contained in the attached counter-proposal. Recall that this document was distributed to you (and your constituents, if you saw fit to pass it on to them) for the purpose of enhancing discussion about the common undergraduate curriculum at DU. As you know, the counter-proposal is based on a previous faculty/staff/trustee committee's work on student learning at the university. It is grounded in a paradigm of liberal education, informed by comparative research, and spiced with assessment data. It was carefully vetted by the Senate Executive Committee before distribution to the General Education Review Committee and the Faculty Senate.

I understand that the counter-proposal has been viewed by some colleagues as illegitimate, as publicly undermining the work of the General Education Review Committee, and as violating faculty governance and process. I also understand that discussion in some academic units was discouraged for fear of legitimizing the document. This is astonishing to me. As far as I know there is no prescribed form for faculty feedback on an official committee's proposal during the public commentary phase of a curriculum review. An individual offering up a full-blown counter-proposal might be audacious, but it's certainly not illegitimate or a violation of process. In fact it seems perfectly consistent with the principle that ALL faculty have status as co-owners of the curriculum and that all faculty feedback—in whatever form—about a proposed curriculum change should be respected and addressed. Distribution of such feedback by the Senate is fully consistent with the Senate's constitutional charge "to formulate, debate, and adopt policy recommendations regarding any aspect of the life of the university and to communicate these recommendations to the administration." I would think that open, robust debate about curriculum would be at the very top of the list of Senate and Faculty interests.

Whatever the result of the vote, I'm grateful for the public and private expressions of support for a different way of thinking about undergraduate education at DU.

Cheers,
Dean

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