

Minutes

Faculty Assembly, School of Liberal Arts
Lecture Hall 105, 2:00 PM, November 7, 2008

Present: Acevedo, Aponte, Barrows, Brant, Carlin, Chumbler, Cochrane, Craig, Davis, DeTienne, Dwyer (recording), Eller, Foote, Ford, Fox, Gibau, Gronfein, Jeong, Hughes, Leech, Little, Marvin, Masters, Morgan, Parrish-Sprowl, Polites, Rebein, Sandwina, Scarpino, I. Sheeler, K. Sheeler, Shepherd, F. Smith, Steinberg, R. Sutton, Thuesen, Turner, Upton, Vargus, Wallace, Wang, Ward, Weeden, Weiden, White, White-Mills, Wittberg, Wokeck

Guests: Helman, Illg, C. Smith

1. Call to Order, 2:08—Philip Scarpino (History)
2. Approval of Minutes, unanimous
3. President's Remarks—Philip Scarpino opened his remarks by expressing his intention to make time available at these meetings to discuss issues of significance to colleagues in the SLA. With that in mind, and after talking to the Agenda Council, he invited Richard Ward, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and Amanda Helman, Director of IUPUI and Ivy Tech Coordinated Programs, to provide information on enrollments and our relationship with Ivy Tech. He noted that the SLA would soon begin the process of developing another five-year plan, which should be faculty driven, especially in key areas such as enrollments and teaching. He voiced his hope that the presentation would begin a conversation that would in turn allow the faculty to meet challenges and take advantage of opportunities as we prepare to plan for the next five years.

Scarpino then invited Carrie Foote (Sociology) to speak on behalf of the Staff Appreciation Luncheon. Scheduled for November 14, all contributions to the event are welcome and participation is encouraged.

After rearranging the order of agenda items, Scarpino called on Brian Vargus (Political Science) to present a motion from the Academic Affairs committee to abolish the Integrator requirement from the undergraduate degree requirements.

4. New business
 - a. Academic Affairs—Brian Vargus outlined the history of the Integrator requirement as growing out of high ideals and curriculum coordination between the SLA and School of Science (SOS) in the late 1990s. Originally, the intention of the requirement was for juniors and seniors to fulfill the call in the Principles of Undergraduate Learning to synthesize insights from across the humanities, social sciences, and sciences in courses co-taught by faculty from both schools. The deans of both the SLA and SOS supported the measure and pledged to find funds to underwrite course development. Very few courses were designed and even fewer were co-taught. The SOS abandoned

its Integrator requirement entirely in 2005 and the SLA suspended its requirement for a year at approximately the same time. Despite an increased number of Integrator courses, students continued to struggle to fulfill the requirement. In response, an increasing number of waivers were granted and single-instructor courses that appeared to uphold the ideal of the “integration of knowledge” from disparate fields of inquiry were accepted in fulfillment of the requirement. The Dean’s Office for Student Affairs and the Academic Affairs committee are faced with an increasing number of petitions for exception from the requirement and a sense that the Integrator ideal is being honored in the breach.

The text of the motion reads as follows:

“For several years the School of Liberal Arts has implemented a requirement that a student have, as one of the area III requirements (5 courses outside your major—often in schools besides Liberal Arts) an “integrator.” The idea for this effort originated in an attempt to provide interdisciplinary courses with the School of Science. Three years ago the School of Science dropped the Integrator requirement. Since then, though we have specific courses for the Integrator and some courses within departments specifically designated as “integrators”, it remains difficult to field enough courses to provide a sufficient range of times and topics to meet student demand. Thus, many students require “exceptions” (essentially waivers) to fulfill this requirement. Not only does this situation cause confusion among students and an extra burden on both advisors and The Office of Student Affairs, but it has caused a wide degree of latitude in what counts for an integrator course, seriously diluting the original intent of this requirement.

Thus, the Academic Affairs committee proposes:

1. The Integrator requirement be abolished and the Area III, five three credit 300/400 level courses outside the major, remain as is.
2. Those courses now designated as Integrators—especially those under the label INTG be encouraged as Area III courses by all departments.
3. Those courses that are in areas suited to Comparative World Cultures requirements such as the integrator courses in African American Diaspora Studies be counted in that Category.

The results of this change will not harm any departments’ enrollments but will allow greater efficiency in advising and avoid the questionable variations in application of the label “integrator” to a wide variety of courses that do not always fit the intent of the original requirement. Further, it will allow students to be able to select more clearly which courses they need for graduation without requiring waivers from advisors or Student Affairs.”

Speaking from the floor against the motion, David Craig (Religious Studies) noted that the number of Integrator-approved courses had increased and that the SLA website included a list of Integrator courses. Are students simply not paying enough attention to this requirement? Associate Dean for Student Affairs Richard Ward (Anthropology) replied that unresolved problems included when the courses are

scheduled, e.g., there are very few offered in the evening. Moreover, while there are many courses listed, only about ten are offered each semester.

Patricia Wittberg (Sociology) shared her experience of having taught an Integrator-designated course in which many of the students seemingly resented being there due to a requirement.

Herbert Brant (World Languages and Cultures) noted that while the original intention of the Integrator was worthy, its implementation as an essentially unfunded initiative doomed it to failure. He urged the Assembly to learn from the experience.

After reminding the Assembly that the deans had promised to find money to support the Integrator initiative, Associate Dean Marianne Wokeck (History) asked Vargus if there was any possibility of keeping the Integrator but with it being voluntary. Vargus replied that the second item in the proposal—urging departments to encourage students to take INTG-designated courses—was written to uphold the ideal of the Integrator while bypassing the administrative difficulties.

Following up on Wokeck's idea, Craig noted that some faculty have invested time and effort into creating new courses to fulfill the Integrator requirement. What about those who have made a commitment to this kind of course? Echoing his sentiments, Monroe Little (History) expressed his reluctance to do away with the Integrator requirement. He blamed a campus-wide attitude of selfishness on the part of faculty and administration. Further, he called for the Assembly to do what is best for general education and broadening the horizons of our students.

In response, Vargus affirmed that those students interested in such courses will continue to seek them out in the SLA. In addition, he restated his support for the ideal of the Integrator, complaining that the requirement is too difficult to fulfill and that it was being cheapened by substituting courses that only superficially synthesized perspectives from across the arts and sciences.

Steve Fox (English) sounded a note of caution and urged the Assembly to not rush into undoing the requirement. He called for like-minded colleagues to join him in crafting a proposal that would keep the ideal of the Integrator alive. In response, Wokeck proposed an amendment to the motion that a sub-committee investigate means of upholding the ideal of the Integrator and report back at the next Faculty Assembly (January '09). Vargus designated the amendment as "friendly" and Ward noted that such a measure may be an advantage during the School's upcoming accreditation and recommended that any change in policy not be implemented until Fall 2009.

Motion was seconded and carried unanimously with the amendment.

- b. Undergraduate Curriculum and Standards—Herbert Brant introduced a motion to create a bachelors degree in Legal Studies to be administered by the Political Science

Department. David Weiden (Political Science) described the history and plan for the degree, emphasizing the Department's intention to maintain rigorous standards and the accreditation process mandated by the American Bar Association.

Questions from the floor began with Robert Barrows (History) who shared his concern that the major will be staffed by a single tenure-track professor, a lecturer, and a host of adjuncts. Weiden responded that while the Department would welcome new colleagues, the adjuncts who teach in the program are practicing attorneys with substantial experience with law practice in Indiana.

Richard Ward noted that the proposal included a 200-level capstone course and mentioned an internship. Weiden answered that the capstone will be reformulated as a 400-level course and noted that the internship is optional.

In response to questions from Andre DeTienne (Philosophy) and Paul Carlin (Economics) regarding the involvement of the Law School in the program, Weiden noted that Legal Studies programs are typically administered by faculties of Arts and Sciences. He described his as of yet unsuccessful efforts to entice the Law School to offer courses for the major.

Kim White-Mills (Communication Studies) raised the question of resources, specially: why initiate a program without any new or pledged resources? Weiden replied that there was a pressing demand for the program among students and that law firms were eager to hire Legal Studies graduates.

Steve Fox asked if there shouldn't be more 300-400 level courses required in the major. Weiden replied that the current courses, many of them cast as 200-level courses, were in the process of being reformulated as 300-400 level courses. Fox expressed his understand but noted that the proposal presented to the Assembly did not accurately reflect the major. Richard Ward opined that it would be advantageous to solve the problem now rather than later. In response, Brian Vargus offered a friendly amendment to the motion that the courses currently presented as 200-level be re-cast and presented in the proper sequence so as to make it clear which will be offered at the junior-senior level.

The motion and amendment passed unanimously.

Herbert Brant introduced the dual degree in Spanish and Engineering to the Assembly but a number of questions concerning details in the document derailed the motion and it was withdrawn for consideration at January's Assembly.

5. IUPUI and Ivy Tech: Status of the relationship—Associate Dean Richard Ward and Amanda Helman, Director of IUPUI and Ivy Tech Coordinated Programs

Moving on to the next agenda item, Scarpino shared his intention to invite colleagues from across the university to address issues of importance to the SLA. For today's

meeting, he invited Richard Ward (Anthropology) and Amanda Helman to discuss the evolving relationship between the SLA and Ivy Tech State College.

Ward began his presentation with a slideshow (see attached) that described recent trends in SLA student enrollments. Among the good news, the School's number of majors, graduates, transfers, and true freshman have all grown. Regarding the bad news, one-year retention numbers have not improved, many of our students transfer in with up to three semester's worth of credits, and total student credit hours are down by three percent (4000 credit hours). Graduate credit hours are down as well.

What can be done to address the decline in credit hours? Ward outlined several responses:

- increase the number of undergraduate majors;
- retain and graduate more students;
- examine inter-department scheduling practices to determine the extent to which departments are needlessly competing with one another;
- offer more courses online;
- and identify "bottleneck" courses in each major.

Ivy Tech is our major feeder school. Several departments have developed articulation agreements with Ivy Tech.

Amanda Helman began her presentation by noting her close affiliation with the SLA—she earned her master's degree from the English Department. She noted that an increasing number of students arriving at IUPUI bring college credit from Ivy Tech and Advanced Placement courses in high school. As a result, 100-level credit hours are down in the SLA. After six months in her new position she has set aside a number of preconceptions about Ivy Tech. Sixty-two percent of Ivy Tech students are enrolled full time and the campus has 15,000 students—several times larger than most community colleges. Moreover, Ivy Tech administrators assume that their students will transfer to IUPUI and they place great emphasis on them achieving an associate's degree before they leave. Finally, Ivy Tech faculty are interested in working with IUPUI faculty here to coordinate their efforts, e.g., arrange articulation agreements.

Speaking from the floor, Patricia Wittberg inquired after opportunities for graduate students to teach at Ivy Tech. Helman responded that full-time instructors must possess a masters degree in the content area, although adjunct faculty are hired with less qualifications.

Jennifer Cochran (Communication Studies) questioned the quality of student advising at Ivy Tech. Helman answered that students begin with general advisers and then they are advised in the content area of their associates program.

Kim White-Mills asked what majors Ivy Tech student chooses when they arrive at the SLA. Ward responded that the data was not immediately available.

Thom Upton (English) noted the common complaint that Ivy Tech students are generally ill prepared for upper-level composition courses. Are the 100-level writing courses at Ivy Tech and IUPUI really comparable? Helman acknowledged that she had heard similar complaints and noted that she is eager to get faculty members from Ivy Tech and IUPUI together to address such issues. Ward observed that the Mathematics Department has had a similar complaint. In response, faculty from both schools have labored to at least coordinate their curricula.

Monroe Little shared his observation that favoritism dominates the selection of faculty at Ivy Tech. Brian Vargus shared his experience of teaching in California's community college system where strict guidelines preserved academic rigor and required that students must attain an associate's degree before transferring into other schools for a four-year degree. In response, Helman noted that Ivy Tech students are free to elect whether they will take courses from the vocation training program or the academic curriculum. Ward noted that most Ivy Tech students do not earn associate degrees. Typically they transfer to other schools in pursuit of a four-year degree.

In response to the comments made about the quality of Ivy Tech course offerings and the call for inter-campus conversations, Ronald Sandwina (Communication Studies) asked what happens if after examining Ivy Tech course offerings IUPUI faculty do not think the courses are worthy of credit? Helman responded the Ivy Tech is accredited and thus can offer courses as it sees fit.

Associate Dean Marianne Wokeck urged SLA faculty to encourage Ivy Tech adjunct faculty to join the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

Robert Barrows asked if the 100-level courses in decline had been identified. Ward responded that such an analysis could be completed.

Michal Hughes (English) offered that it made sense to invite Ivy Tech composition instructors to participate in the existing professional development workshop series here at IUPUI. Helman signaled her interest in such an invitation and reminded the Assembly that her office exists in large part to arrange such meetings between IUPUI and Ivy Tech faculty.

6. Adjourn, 3:45