

Faculty Council
Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2009

Present: Julio de Paula, Dean of the College; Jane Hunter, Associate Dean of the College; Cliff Bekar, associate professor of economics; Andrew Bernstein, associate professor of history; Rob Kugler, Paul S. Wright Professor of Christian Studies; Liz Safran, associate professor of geological sciences; and Terri Banasek, executive assistant and recorder.

Agenda Items:

1. Paulette Bierzychudek joined Faculty Council to discuss biology department teaching loads. Dean de Paula reminded Faculty Council that a request was by the CPT regarding the appearance of significantly different teaching loads among departments. What does it mean to carry a full teaching load in the biology department? Dr. Bierzychudek explained that the faculty members in biology teach a 3-2 load, even if it doesn't look like it. Virtually all courses have labs, because it is the lab where the methodology that is taught in the lecture course is practiced. There is an entirely different curriculum in the labs than in the lecture, with separate reading assignments and separate writing assignments. Many labs are writing intensive. Also, the prep is different for labs than for lectures, and there is a lot of individual mentoring. The lab and lecture are basically different courses, but it doesn't appear that way in credit hour terms. Labs provide one additional course credit, even though they have more than one hour of lab. A credit level commensurate with class time is four credits for the lecture course and three credits for the lab. When the department determines teaching loads, they count lectures and labs as separate but don't do it for students (for a number of reasons).

Dr. Kugler raised a concern about the credits students are receiving. If students are getting five credits total but are worked at seven or eight credits, that is a startling imbalance in the curriculum. When asked if other sciences do this at the College, Dr. Bierzychudek responded that she didn't know. She added that there have many pedagogical changes in what goes on in labs. Students or small teams of students are doing their own projects.

Dean de Paula explained how five credit courses are run in the chemistry department. They consist of a lecture, lab, and discussion group. Faculty members share the responsibilities for the course (Dean de Paula explained in detail how it is done).

Dr. Bierzychudek explained that an upper-division course has a lecture and lab section; and an introductory course will have a large lecture with the lab split into four sections. One semester a faculty member will do an intro course and two lab sections and the other semester an upper-division course with a lab. That works out to a 3-2 load. She noted that while a lab section may be taught by Wendy McLellan, all grading is done by the professor.

She added that both biology and chemistry have lab directors. The lab instructor does all of the grading for his/her sections. The lab grade has a certain weight, and the lecture grade has a certain weight, combined into a total grade. Biology faculty members do not use scantron tests. There are four exams in a lecture course consisting of six to seven pages, two of which are essay questions.

In response to Dr. Kugler's concern about students, Dr. Bierzychudek explained that science students don't have the outside homework that students do in other disciplines. Dr. Bierzychudek left the meeting with the thanks of the Faculty Council.

2. Faculty Council discussed the development of a process for moving forward with the General Education Task Force proposals.
3. Faculty Council agreed to discuss electronically the distinguished speaker proposals from Loretta Johnson and Sue McBerry. Both proposals will be forwarded to Faculty Council members for an electronic vote on September 11.
4. The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.