**FHSU Liberal Education Committee**

**Minutes**

Meeting Called by

Shala Mills, Chair

Date: Thursday 2/23/2017

Time: 3:00-4:00

Location: Rarick 312

Members

Douglas Drabkin (AHSS)

Bradley Will (AHSS)

Dmitry Gimon (BE)

Jessica Heronemus (BE)

Kevin Splichal (Ed)

Teresa Woods (Ed)

Glen McNeil (HBS)

Tanya Smith (HBS)

William Weber (STM)

Tom Schafer (STM)

Robyn Hartman (Lib)

Helen Miles (Senate)

Megan Garcia (SGA)

Cody Scheck (SGA)

Cheryl Duffy (Goss Engl)

Kenton Russell (FYE)

Chapman Rackaway (Grad Sch)

3:03 (28 minutes) All were in attendance except for Garcia, McNeil, Rackaway, Russell, and Smith; Will was serving as proxy for Rackaway, and Miles as proxy for McNeil. Established that a quorum was met. Discussion went immediately to a consideration of last week’s Science for Citizens proposal (see February 13 minutes). Chair informed the committee of Brisson’s intention to offer the course next fall as IDS 199; this has received approval from Dean Faber, who has administrative oversight of IDS 199. The question before the committee was whether this offering of the course will received general education credit in the current general education program under the designation “liberal arts – distribution – mathematics and natural sciences.” The upshot of the discussion was the following motion:

*The 3-hour course Science for Citizens, which will be offered in the Fall 2017 semester as IDS 199 to roughly 15 students in the EarthRise living and learning community, will count in the current General Education Program under “liberal arts – distribution – mathematics and natural sciences.” This is a waiver both of current general education program restrictions and of the wording of the IDS 199 course description. This is a one-time waiver, just for the 2017-18 year. If the course were to be offered beyond 2017-18 for general education credit under the current program, it would require new review. The Liberal Education Committee asks to have access to any assessment data coming from this offering of Science for Citizens that has to do with students coming to understand and appreciate scientific method.*

Committee members supportive of the motion thought it a good idea at this time (as we explore our options for designing a new liberal education program) to encourage this kind of innovation and experimentation. Committee members hesitant were unsure of the course’s merits and concerned about bending existing rules, such as the explicit wording of IDS 199 prohibiting its use as a general education course. The motion passed: 12 in favor, 2 against. It will be forwarded to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate for their further consideration.

3:31 (9 minutes) The Science for Citizens discussion led to the question of whether the liberal education committee desires to see more piloting (trial runs) of new courses – for instance, college-specific sections of Composition II. Miles and Chair may be meeting to discuss to what extent Faculty Senate would welcome this sort of experimentation. Woods expressed interest in experimenting, not just with new courses, but with ways to streamline our current program, that is, to make it easier for students in highly prescriptive academic programs to satisfy existing general education requirements. Discussion of piloting new courses also led to the acknowledgment that, until the committee comes up with a pretty firm list of student learning outcomes, it is not clear what to look for when assessing new courses.

3:40 (5 minutes) Gimon reported to the committee that he has spoken with Brisson, who is serving as Director of Study Abroad Programs, about the prospects for counting study abroad experiences toward fulfillment of some or all of the “liberal arts – internationalization” component of the current general education program. The committee was supportive of exploring this possibility, but would like to see a proposal for how this should be done. The question arose: Who should come up with this proposal? Should the liberal education committee do this? Should Brisson? After a brief discussion, the consensus seemed to be that Brisson would be welcome to do so, and that some members of the committee might be willing to assist her.

3:45 (13 minutes?) An open-ended conversation ensued about what, at this point, the committee should be doing. Chair observed that, as we are in the process of hiring a new president and provost, we are at the moment under no pressure from the upper administration to push ahead quickly with developing a new liberal education program. Heronemus observed that there is, however, plenty of grassroots pressure from the faculty to push ahead quickly and replace the current program. Schafer observed that a lot turns on this question: fast or slow? If we choose to move slowly, then more and more of our time will need to be devoted to tinkering with the program we already have (think of the time we’ve just spent on a one-semester waiver of a single general education rule for a single course); on the other hand, if we move quickly then we need to get a model and a set of learning objectives on the table, and not dawdle about it. The chair asked for a show of hands regarding the desires of the committee – slow down and experiment or push ahead to develop the new program? No official count was taken, as this was not a formal motion, but the committee overwhelmingly favored pushing ahead.

3:58? Meeting ended. The next meeting will be on Monday, February 27, in Rarick 329. Drabkin will make a proposal for a new program model.

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**Submitted by D. Drabkin, Recording Secretary**

***Festina lente.***