Rhetoric Study Group, minutes, meeting of 2 October 2002

IMPORTANT: See below for group members’ interview assignments [Bitran, King, Rule: look here to see whom you might select].

NEXT MEETING DATE: 23 October 2002, noon, Fenwick 208 [English Seminar Room, next door to our previous meeting room]


Pat and Ed reported on their 9/30 meeting with Dean Ainlay, Provost Vellaccio, and Jim Miracky of the Engagement with Values study group and Bill Morse of the Mastery of Knowledge study group [chairs of the Intellectual Maturation study group could not attend].

We learned that most groups are meeting every other week. We seem to be the only one with a website and e-res site. The other two groups present have spent most of their time to date considering conceptual issues; they do not expect to be gathering information from the faculty any time soon. The Knowledge group is looking mostly at aspects of the curriculum that are cross-disciplinary, such as questions of whether every student should have a capstone project or a community-based learning experience. The Values group has been looking at what values should be inculcated—what values are we talking about—and how that question might be impacted by the College’s Catholic and Jesuit identity. Jim said that they are planning to request bringing a speaker to talk to the whole faculty about the nature of Jesuit education historically.

Everyone at the 9/30 meeting agreed with Steve and Frank when they emphasized the importance of keeping lines of communication open throughout this curriculum review process. Portions of future faculty assemblies might even be devoted to hearing a speaker or other info-sharing/consensus-building activities. The Dean and the Provost gave us the impression that they did not want this process to be rushed. They were not pushing for quick results. The groups should not be looking for “add-on’s” to the existing curriculum, but should give the whole curriculum searching review in depth. The groups should not be worrying now about the cost of any recommendations they might make, but rather about how to get faculty to buy into them ideologically. Hence the emphasis on communication. It was mentioned that all study groups should expect to report on their progress at the December faculty assembly. At the faculty assembly coming up next week, Dean Ainlay will convey briefly what each group is doing, and group chairs should then be prepared to respond to any questions from the floor.

We at the 10/2 meeting then talked a bit about how we might foster communication about what our group is doing. Among ideas mentioned were having a panel of 6-8 faculty talk about “best practices” in rhetoric instruction [people we hope to discover via our interview process]; bringing a speaker—possibly through the writing-across-the-curriculum speaker sponsored every year by Jasna Shannon; hosting informal forums where people could air their views.
We then turned to a discussion of a draft questionnaire for our interviews with faculty, prepared by Dan, Mark and Loren. The group made several suggestions for minor changes and Loren will circulate the revised questionnaire by Friday 10/4, we hope. Any further changes must be suggested by 10/9; we will then assume we have a final document. It was emphasized that this document is intended only to provide guidelines for our interviews; we should let those interview discussions be open-ended and develop whatever topics seem most important.

Below is a list of faculty to date who have been identified by their department chairs as giving special attention to teaching writing and/or speaking. We expect the total to be around 30, once the missing departments are filled in, so each member of our group excepting Mary Morton [who surely has enough else to do!] will select three of these people to interview. We decided that each of us should select a person from the natural sciences, one from the social sciences, and one from the humanities/arts, but avoiding our own departments. We decided to schedule one hour for each interview. People are going to begin contacting their interviewees asap and try to have at least one interview completed by our next meeting. Formal reports on the interviews are not expected at that meeting, but only informal oral reports on what was accomplished.

Biology:
Robert Bertin—Pat
Mary Lee Ledbetter—Loren

Chemistry:
Ramona Taylor—Sue
Ken Mills—Brian

CISS:
Noel Cary [Honors Director]—Sue

Classics:
Bill Ziobro—Ed
Tom Martin

Economics:
Kathy Kiel [Loren’s idea]—Loren

English:
Christopher Jane Corkery
Beth Sweeney

History:
Stephanie Yuhl—Loren

Math:
Dave Damiano
Margaret Freije—Ed
Ed Suarez [Catherine’s idea]—Mark

MLL:
tba

Music:
Shirish Korde—Pat
Carol Lieberman
Jessica Waldoff—Brian

Philosophy:
Jeff Bloechl—Catherine

Physics:
Timothy Roach—Catherine

Poli Sci:
Ward Thomas—Mark
David Schaeffer—Ed
Judy Chubb

Psychology:
Suzanne Kirschner—Pat
Diane Bukatko—Brian

Religious Studies:
Jennifer Knust—Mark
Mary Hobgood

Sociology:
Susan Rodgers—Sue
Royce Singleton—Catherine

Theatre:
Steve Vineberg

Visual Arts:
tba