Letters and Science Dean’s Advisory Committee Minutes  
September 24, 2007


Excused absence: Lance Grahn

Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM

A. Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the September 10, 2007 meeting were approved as amended.

B. Old Business

1. GDR’s. It was noted that the university GDR report has not been released yet. Upon its release, the committee will further discuss any proposed changes in GDR’s.

2. Humanities and L & S Forum: There were no changes in the previously announced schedule for the Humanities Forum. There are no scheduled L & S Forum events at this time. Committee members were encouraged to recruit fellow faculty to present at the L & S Forum.

C. New Business

The Accreditation Self-Study draft report was discussed.

1. The Introduction to the Self-Study Guide could be improved by more clearly stating the goals and content of the report.

2. In the conclusion section, the statement “As Chapters 1 and 2 suggest … especially among its own constituencies.” (Conclusion, page 1, paragraph 5) needs clarification.

3. In the conclusion section, the statement “As chapter 2 also suggests, … and the desire to protect tenure lines entrenched by fief-like GDR requirements” (Conclusion, p. 2, paragraph 1) should be changed to eliminate medieval references.

4. The historical context of strategic planning, GDR requirements, student contact hours (SCH), and FTE at UWSP was discussed. The strong connection of GDR’s to departmental SCH and FTE was identified by the AACU report as an impediment to change, but separating SCH from FTE could have very negative consequences for departments in terms of FTE distribution. Also at issue is whether or not the GDR structure is actually flawed and an impediment to recruiting, and whether or not the real issue is a student’s understanding of the GDR’s as well as the counseling he or she receives. Some changes to the current GDR structure such as increased “double-dipping” and simplification of areas might be considered. The necessity of strong faculty input into the planning process was identified as the best way to minimize the “turf battles” associated with implementing changes in GDR’s.

5. The total number of GDR credits at UWSP relative to other universities was discussed, along with their influence on student enrollment. It was suggested that a broad-based survey on the GDR issue be conducted. Some relevant questions for the survey might include the following:

   a. What measurable impact do UWSP’s GDR requirements have on student enrollment? More specifically, what is the impact on specific groups such as incoming freshmen,
transfer students, older-than-average students, and other subsets of the student population?

b. The impact of GDR’s on completing specific courses of study at UWSP. It was noted that students in programs with large core course requirements (Chemistry and Biology were examples) have no room in their schedules for electives, given the current GDR requirements.

c. The possibility of increasing cross-listed courses that satisfy more than one GDR requirement rather than changing the current number of GDR credits or categories.

d. Whether the GDR system is deeply flawed and in need of a complete overhaul, or whether it is simply an advising/presentation issue.

6. In the Conclusion Section, the sentence reading “Mission, vision, values, goals: these are topics very much in the air at UWSP” should be changed, with the phrase “in the air” removed from the text.

D. Dean’s remarks – Dean Grahn was absent

E. Adjournment – the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Larsen
Secretary of the Day