Minutes from the Council for International Education

Special Meeting: 1:00 PM, Monday, February 26, 2018

Horrabin Hall 60

In attendance: Davison Bideshi (chair), Pedro Bidegaray (ex officio), Boh Young Lee, Michael Murray, and John Stierman

I. Proceedings of Meeting.

a. Dr. Bideshi asked if the Council members had read Dr. Keith Holz’ e-mail concerning the Council getting “something in writing” about internationalization of the WIU campus and curriculum. Dr. Bideshi asked if the Council had any specific suggestions for putting something in writing.

b. Dr. Bideshi clarified that the concern that students might choose not to come to Western if the Global Issues/Foreign Language requirement were increased was not founded, claiming there was no substantive support for such a concern. Dr. Bideshi restated the Council’s position that the one-course GI requirement does not create experts in global issues, nor does it prepare our students for life in a global environment. He went on to say that there are some majors where it would be difficult to integrate a global issues course in the curriculum, and suggested that the Council could recommend that students in these disciplines could be required to take 2-3 global issues courses.

c. Dr. Bidegaray stated that if a student were in chemistry, for example, the university had general education courses that that student would be required to take and it would be no problem for that student to be required to take a global issues course as part of his/her general education courses. Mr. Murray responded that a global issues component ought to be required as part of any class, but that many faculty members are resistant to this, which is why the GI requirement has been boiled down to a single 3 semester hour course. Mr. Stierman noted that percentages are problematic and, beginning with the Provost’s value that Western’s curriculum should be internationalized, he offered that the Council could state a position that every class should have some sort of international component and then leave it to the departments as to how to achieve this goal. Dr. Bideshi said if the Council were to do that, then departments would respond by asking the Council to tell them how to fulfill the requirement.

d. Dr. Bidegaray said that, looking at it from the perspective of the university as a whole, the general education curriculum is 44 SH, and a Global Issues course requirement could be added to that. Dr. Bideshi suggested a byline could be added to the general education curriculum requiring a global issues course, to which Dr. Bidegaray argued that a Global Issues category should be added. Mr. Stierman reminded the Council that it has established that one or two GI courses is still not enough, and we should not go there. Dr. Bideshi suggested the Council ought to reject a semester-hour-based global issues course requirement, and fight instead in favor of each course having some sort of global issues component, and then work to develop a metric to measure compliance. Dr. Bidegaray said that if the Council were to require all courses to have a GI component and even provide a metric, chairpersons would respond that they could not get their faculty members to follow such guidelines. Mr. Stierman responded that the Council must make departments accountable for complying with any global issues guidelines it establishes. Dr. Bideshi stated that, as a motivational impetus, public shaming probably would not be effective in this case.

e. Dr. Bideshi brought up the issue of “double dipping,” where a single class can satisfy two or more graduation requirements, and stated the Council’s position that this should not be allowed in the case of GI courses, to which all agreed. Dr. Bidegaray suggested that, in terms of definitions of what constitutes a global issues course, the Council should accept clear, concise definitions and explanations that fulfill our definitions of global issues. Mr. Stierman said it would be interesting to see how other institutions were measuring globalization and/or internationalization.

f. Dr. Bideshi asked for concluding ideas. Mr. Stierman reminded the Council that the college deans would be coming to the next CIE meeting. Dr. Bidegaray said the Council must be prepared to speak with the deans, and Mr. Stierman said the Council should ask if there is some sort of mechanism in their colleges for globalization. Dr. Bideshi said that the Council needed to get the deans to commit to a plan of action concerning campus and curricular internationalization. Dr. Bidegaray asked if the Council felt it was prepared to have a meeting like that, and Mr. Murray suggested that probably the Council was not. Dr. Bidegaray said that, looking through the courses in the Multicultural area of the general education curriculum, many of the courses looked like they might be Global Issues courses also, but if we are ready to start a dialogue with the deans about globalization at the next CIE meeting, that will be acceptable. Mr. Stierman reiterated that definitely the Council is against the idea of a global issues course requirement consisting of 3-6 SH of course work. Dr. Bideshi asked the Council members to send him any questions they might have for the deans.

II. Meeting adjourned at 1:44 PM.

Next meeting will take place on at 1:00 PM on Monday, March 5, 2018.

Minutes submitted by Michael Murray.

CIE Members present: Boh-Young, John, Michael, Pedro, and Davison 2018.02.26

We discussed and proposed the following with this key question in mind: ***What type of student do we want graduating from WIU?***

1. There is an implicit argument that a student would choose not to attend WIU if the FLGI requirement were to be retained or s.h. increased has no substantive or demonstrable support. To make this claim is somewhat specious since a decision to attend any institution is not based solely on a single criteria; other variables such as tuition, fees, housing, and associated costs are stronger determinants.

2. That students are required to take 3 s.h. of 120 s.h (normative) or 132 s.h. (high end), which represents 2.5% or 2.27%, respectively, is an undue burden is another argument that cannot withstand scrutiny. If WIU requires ALL student to be competent or become experts in a global or multicultural environment, *then a more integrative approach to implementing the FLGI requirement is sorely needed*. NO ONE would agree or advance a position that 3 s.h. of any coursework would produce an effective, well-rounded individual based on that one criteria. As publicly advanced by the president of the university as well as in the strategic plan, one of the goals of education at WIU is to equip all students, regardless of major, to function effectively in an interconnected world. The *Preamble* to the February 2018 Strategic Plan updates for 2017-2027 (2018.03.01 at <http://www.wiu.edu/university_planning/planningupdates.php>) explicitly states:

We advance our traditions of excellence. We empower students to become engaged and productive *global citizens* committed to making a difference *in the diverse communities and professions they represent* (emphases mine). Our graduates are leaders in their fields equipped with knowledge, problem solving skills, and community awareness necessary to address the professional, economic, and social issues of our time.

Moreover, in its *Our Mission* statement, WIU claims:

**Western Illinois University empowers students, faculty, and staff to lead dynamic and diverse communities.** We provide student-centered undergraduate and graduate programs characterized by innovative teaching, research, and service, *grounded in multidisciplinary, regional and global perspectives* (emphasis mine).

Furthermore, as part of its *Social Responsibility* statement, WIU posits:

**Western Illinois University is committed to civic and community engagement…**We create an environment that fosters and promotes citizenship. We serve as a resource for and stimulus to educational, cultural, environmental, community and economic development in our region and well beyond it for the public good.

3. ‘Double or triple dipping” of FLGI courses is rejected. This becomes a moot point in the proposed integrated approach to a liberal arts education at WIU.

4. A tentative rejection of a s.h.-driven curriculum in favour of an *integrative approach*. In other words, ALL departments would be required to ensure that its courses reflect global, intercultural, and/or multicultural learning. Those departments that are ‘challenged’ by such an approach will nonetheless benefit as a whole since the overall educational experience will be reflective in the General Education courses that all students are compelled to complete for their baccalaureate degree. Each individual sub-component of GE will be designed around the integrated approach. Moreover, those disciplines that are driven by practical skills acquisition (LEJA, Engineering, Business, etc.) will undoubtedly benefit from such an approach to preparing their students for a diverse environment.

5. Metric concerns were also address with the proposal that each department and/or professor will submit a justification for FLGI for *each course* offered. CIE will develop/refine a metric that will be utilised in the construction of courses. Rather than delimiting a specific percentage of a course that meets the FLGI requirement, the overall expectations will reflect a knowledge-based approach to diversity. In other words, rather than stipulating a percent of time spent on cultural issues (whether inter-, cross, and/or multi-cultural), the overall material (i.e., substantive) must follow a tendency toward achieving the stipulated goals set out by the university and CIE.

In light of historic changes at WIU in regard to enrollment, curriculum changes, etc. along with proposal to eliminate or reduce the requirement of FLGI (as well as disbanding of CIE), the leadership of this university stands a crossroad: lead or be left behind in the training of our students to be not minimally knowledgeable, but to be culturally competent in a global environment. Anything else would be shortsighted and detrimental.