CIE Monday, December 5, 2011

Meeting start: 4:00pm

Present: Samit Chakravorti, Davidson Bideshi, Rita Kaul, Kitty Karn, Michael Stryker, Carla Paciotto, Linda Zellmer, Ray Diaz, and two guests from the Foreign Language Department, Dr. Guada Cabedo-Timmon and Dr. Catherine R. Moore

The minutes from November 28 were approved.

The floor was opened for Foreign Language guests to speak. There are some concerns about the FL/GI requirement in the Foreign Language Department.

Dr. Moore attended a meeting regarding Performance Based Funding and asked why the FL/GI requirement was only for one semester. Provost Thomas responded that the requirement came out of the supposed fact that high school students have already taken two years of foreign language. Dr. Cabedo-Timmon remarked that the idea of the FL/GI requirement was originally a good thing, but it did not turn out that way. Dr. Moore expressed extreme concern regarding the fact that the faculty teaching FL/GI courses have no experience in the area.

Carla remarked that there is no promotion of Foreign Language across the University and that it appears that the Senate will not entertain changes in the policy such that it could expand into more foreign language courses.

Michael explained that a study was done by the Senate to see how much foreign language was taken in high school, which resulted in approx. 82% of high school students having taken foreign language. The results of the study informed the current FL/GI requirement.

Rita shared the findings of the FLGI report findings (page 12/14) of the university wide survey that the faculty across the campus supported it (FLGI), but the administration did not.

Dr. Moore feels that no matter what, equating 3 semesters of FL with 1 semester of GS is unfair for two reasons:

1. At least, according to study numbers, 18% of students never had a language and therefore, could not test into the third semester, so they are lost for FL.

2. Many students who had 1 or 2 even 3 or 4 years of HS FL do not test into second year but in first year, because many HS do not have high expectations for their language students.

Students may want to take another language from what they took in High School, but Dr. Moore has a feeling since becoming Chair that faculty do not encourage students to take foreign language or in fact, discourage it. She feels that faculty members are encouraging the Global Issues part of the requirement and not the Foreign Language component.

Michael explained the procedure for submitting courses for FL/GI. Carla explained that there was no discussion at the departmental level on what the criteria should be for FL/GI. Michael questioned how FL/GI courses come to be. Rita said the faculty in her department supported it, but the administration did not.

Dr. Moore said that is was originally a student council that requested the language requirement.

Michael thinks there are two issues. The first is that FL/GI is a requirement that is in its first year and he does not think there will be any support to change the requirements until a study has been done and data compiled. While data gets generated, he feels that the Foreign Language Dept. can still do things to promote foreign languages as part of the FL/GI requirement. He asked if the Foreign Language Dept. is able generate data that shows the numbers for enrollment for the last 10 years in order to see what the impact of FL/GI requirement has been.

The Foreign Language Dept. has some data and strategies as to how to recruit students. Carla supports the need for enrollment data. Dr. Moore does not know how the data will accurately show how it was affecting the FL/GI requirement. Samit suggested getting data on those high school students who take the foreign language placement exam to see if the original study is accurate. Michael again made the point that gathering data is the only way to promote foreign language for the near future to the Senate. Michael explained that going to the Senate without data will actually hurt the Foreign Language Department rather than help it.

Michael encouraged the development of FL/GI courses in the Foreign Language Dept. as a way to draw students in. A new major is being developed that has an introductory course. Michael encouraged the Foreign Language Department to submit the course to FL/GI even though the major has yet to be approved yet.

Samit suggested a Seminar course so that content could be changed by semester, a course that includes culture, language, etc. The Foreign Language Dept. has invited Advisors to help promote foreign language. Carla wondered about marketing differently.

Carla thought that more departments would create new courses, but really what has happened is that departments have modified existing classes to fit FL/GI requirements.

Linda suggested making banners asking for students to respond as to how the Foreign Language could make their Department and/or courses more attractive.

Rita remarked that the grades for high school foreign language courses are not very good, so why would they continue to take foreign language in college?

Michael sees an academic need for foreign language and the FL/GI requirement in terms of how to speak to the WIU population and supports the development of a foreign language course.

Linda suggested developing a General Honors course to promote foreign language at WIU. Dr. Moore remarked that she has been teaching General Honors courses for years.

Linda asked if there is a universal drop in foreign language? Dr. Moore research has indicated that our peer institutions have a foreign language requirement of between 6-8 credits.

Michael reiterated that even though CIE will listen to the frustrations of the Foreign Language Dept., he is unsure that the Senate will.

Carla wondered if one of the reasons that students come to WIU is because we do NOT have a foreign language requirement.

Rita shared that the data shows that the longer you’ve been here as a Faculty, the lower support we have for FL/GI.

Dr. Moore took a General Honors class to France, but it did not encourage students to take French, even though everyone had a wonderful time.

Michael’s summary:

It’s clear that FL/GI is here to stay in its current format for the next 2-4 years, in his opinion. The Faculty Senate is going to want to see if the requirement is functioning as intended. The Foreign Language Dept. needs to get baseline data from the past 5 years showing enrollment data in both broad and specific ways to determine how FL/GI is affecting enrollment. This could be in the form of a Student Survey (or on course evaluation) generated by the Foreign Language Dept. to see which students are taking FL/GI courses for Gen Ed or to satisfy the FL/GI requirement. (Carla suspects that data will show that Global Issues is doing well, but Foreign Language is not). He suggests designing a Foreign Language course to draw students in as early as next fall. The new Foreign Language major is on hold while a Chair search is being conducted, but the class can still be moved forward.

Added by Dr. Moore 2/2/12 – she states that she has started collecting data on students' motivation when taking the FL placement test, and I will continue to do so for the next few years.

Also added by Dr. Moore 2/2/12 – she states that she has had more testimonies from students being discouraged by the university [advisors, loan officers, etc.] from declaring a French major or taking more FL courses.

Linda inquired as to what Discover Western activities the Foreign Language Dept. participates in. Dr. Moore stated that very few students come to the Foreign Language table at Discover Western.

Ray sees and understands the problem…admission requirements are at such a level so that students can satisfy the requirement with two years of high school foreign language.

Rita suggests a policy change at the graduation level….one year of beginning level foreign language study, patterning it off how FYE came about.

Samit suggested mandatory testing in foreign language.

Linda suggested promoting languages to satisfy Humanities credits.

Michael says we’ve scratched the surface of the issues and asked Ray to repeat Western’s policy:

Admission standards are (taken from WIU’s Admissions Website)

* Other: two years of electives to be selected from art, film, foreign language, music, speech, theatre, journalism, religion, philosophy, and vocational education.

If a student has not completed the course-specific requirements, the University will evaluate those students on a case-by-case basis for evidence of the mastery of skills in the area(s) of the deficiency.

The Foreign Language graduation requirement at WIU can be met by two years of foreign language at the high school level.

Michael discerns two issues…1) Admission requirement hinder foreign language study and 2) FL/GI is not constructed to promote foreign language study. He believes that these issues can be solved over the long haul with data and curricular changes.

Ray suggested getting Admissions involved to ask them what their thought process is so that it can inform what modifications we could recommend to the policy. We will need IBHE handout that lists all courses listed for state institutions.

Dr’s Moore and Cabedo-Timmon will come back in the spring term after talking to the Foreign Language Department’s curricular committee. They thanked CIE for their support.

Michael mentioned the draft (CIE Procedures) he is proposing for discussion for the first meeting in the spring and asked each of us to look at it over break.

Michael moved to adjourn. Samit second. Meeting adjourned at 5:09pm.