

Brothers, Sheila C

From: Randall, David C
Sent: Wednesday, November 26, 2008 1:57 PM
To: Breazeale, James D
Cc: Brothers, Sheila C; Carvalho, Susan E
Subject: RE: Preparing for Univ. Senate Dec. Meeting

From: jdbreazeale@gmail.com [mailto:jdbreazeale@gmail.com] **On Behalf Of** Dan Breazeale

Sent: Wednesday, November 26, 2008 9:43 AM

To: Randall, David C

Cc: Carvalho, Susan E; Greissman, Richard; Sanday, Eric C; Perreiah, Alan; Superson, Anita M; Farr, Arnold L; Batty, Clare E; Sandmeyer, Robert; Look, Brandon; Callahan, Joan; Zurn, Christopher F; Bradshaw, David H; Force, James; Oliver Leaman; Bruzina, Ronald; Schatzki, Theodore; Breazeale, James D

Subject: Re: Preparing for Univ. Senate Dec. Meeting

Dear Prof. Randall

Thank you for your detailed report to the faculty concerning the current status of the proposed new GenEd Learning Outcomes, and thank you as well for all the time and energy you and your fellow Senators have devoted to this vitally important issue. I am well aware of how much time and effort has gone into this process, not just on the part of Senators, but also on the part of the members of the present and past GenEd reform steering committees. For this reason, I have tried my best to play a constructive role in commenting upon and suggesting changes in the current LO document, while still representing in a responsible manner the consensus view of my own department: namely, that the omission of Elementary Logic/Critical Thinking from the proposed LO's is a grave error on the part of the GERSC.

Moreover, the reasons offered in explanation of this omission keep changing:

-- (1.) First, we were told by the Chair of the committee that though they wanted to include a logic component, they "could not find a place for it."

-- (2.) Then we were told that though the members of the committee indeed wanted to include a logic component in the new OT's, they decided not to do so because "we did not want to require any single course as part of the new GenEd program." (Obviously, this claim is hard to reconcile with the description of the two courses that would be required under the presently proposed LO III.)

-- (3.) Then we were told that the Department of Philosophy "could not handle the enrollment demands" if logic were to be included in the GenEd program. (This is a claim which assumes that the only way to include a course in logic would be making a required course, rather than by making -- as it is in the current USP requirements -- one **option** for satisfying a general "inference and reasoning" requirement.)

-- (4.) And now, in the latest report from the committee, the one that was attached to your memo to the faculty, we are told that there is no need for adding Logic to LO III, since, a "somewhat revised version of Philosophy 120" could be included in LO I as "a foundational course in critical thinking for the Humanities area." (This last one is a brand new argument, which of course directly **contradicts** the first reason we were offered -- i.e., that they could find "no place" for logic in the new LO's!. Moreover, it would appear to be specious, as even a short glance at LO seems to confirm. LO I calls for courses that will "explore multiple and complex answers to questions/issues" and "explore the ethical implications of different approaches, methodologies, or conclusions." This is precisely the sort of thing that occurs in Introductory courses in Philosophy and Introductory Courses in Ethics, but it does **not** describe what occurs in Introductory Courses in Logic or Critical Thinking.

Clearly, the obvious place for a course in Logic/Critical Thinking would be in a revised LO III, which would have room for such a course in general non-quantitative reasoning, as well as for the proposed courses in mathematical and statistical (quantitative) reasoning. The response to this suggestion from the Committee Chair seems to be based on the

premise that LO III absolutely **must** include the two proposed courses in mathematics and statistics and simply **cannot** be expanded in the manner we have proposed.

But there is simply no justification for making this assumption, which certainly does not follow from the Design Principles. (As I have pointed out on several occasions, there are seven DPs and only four LOs, making it inevitable that each or all of the LO's will satisfy not one but several of the DP's. But the position of the GERSC seems to be that the DP calling for courses in "quantitative reasoning" can be satisfied **only** by a DP (such as the current DP III) devoted **solely** to this topic. But no argument is offered for this assumption.

Indeed, the GERSC has steadily refused to engage the substance of our challenge to this assumption and has refused to offer any justification for its insistence that LO III must be reserved exclusively for quantitative reasoning or any explanation for this radical departure from our current practice of including logic, along with courses in mathematics and statistics, in satisfying a general "reasoning and inference" requirement.

The committee response also ignores what is, I think, the central thrust of my memo to them on the subject: namely, the need to include -- as an option -- a course **dedicated** to "Critical Reasoning" in the LO's in order to satisfy the first DP. Ignoring the implausible and rather desperate last-minute suggestion that a course in elementary logic/critical thinking could fit under LO I, any unbiased reader of the proposed LO's would have to conclude that the committee has simply failed in its charge to come up with a proposal that would satisfy **all** the DP's -- including the first one, with its call for training in Critical Thinking.

Where does that leave us? Yesterday, you received (from Senator Starr-Lebeau) a revised version of my earlier memo to the GERSC, this one intended for circulation to the members of the Faculty Senate. You will note that this new version does not explicitly call for any "amendments" to the LO document, and I take it from your memo to the faculty that no such amendments would be allowed in any case -- or at least not if the Senate concurs with your proposed motion to deny amendments from the floor.

So, first of all, can I assume that you will indeed circulate my memo to the members of the faculty?

And, secondly, where should we in the Philosophy Department direct our energies at this point? Assuming (which I think is a very safe assumption) that the GERSC will continue to dig in its heels re. LO III and will continue to refuse to include Logic/Critical Thinking in a revised "reasoning and inference" LO, and assuming that the Senate accepts the proposal to reject amendments from the floor at the Dec. 8 meeting: then it would appear that the **only** course remaining to us will be to do all we can, by contacting the UK faculty at large as well as the faculty Senators, to insure DEFEAT of the proposed LO document and the return of the same to the same or some future GERSC. Is my understanding of this situation correct?

Please pardon the length of this email, but I wanted to make it clear that this is not a course of action upon which we would lightly embark and that it gives us no pleasure to appear in the role of obstructionists in this matter upon which so many people have worked so long in such good faith. But we sincerely believe that it would be professionally irresponsible of us to allow the proposed LO's to be approved without doing everything in our power to have them expanded in the manner we have proposed.

At this point, to be sure, not much remains "in our power" beyond the use of our powers of persuasion. Hence this memo.

Cordially yours
Dan Breazeale
Acting Chair, Department of Philosophy
Distinguished Professor of Arts and Sciences

Brothers, Sheila C

From: Scott A. Yost [yostsa@engr.uky.edu]
Sent: Monday, December 01, 2008 10:29 AM
To: Brothers, Sheila C
Cc: Sweigard, Richard J
Subject: Gen Ed reform

Senate Council:

As a Senator, I have greatly appreciated the efforts by the GERSC to move forward on the general education reform. As a faculty member of the College of Engineering I am fully aware, and can appreciate, the need for clear learning outcomes, as we have been doing this in Engineering for years. This is a welcomed addition to the University community and I generally agree with the LO that have been put forward by the committee.

Having expressed my support of the LO, I am concerned with a kind of blank check that this proposal seems to contain. We are asked to trust the next group as they will provide the details to this proposal with recommended courses that meet the LO. However given the bias that has existed toward engineering in the past by some of the University community, and just the general principal of not issuing blank checks, I would like some assurances (through a resolution/proposal) that the forthcoming GenEd reform details will NOT lead to an increase in the credit hours needed for graduation for any and all UK programs that already have more than 120 hours required for graduation.

I know that the current proposal is going to be presented without amendments. I would ask that prior to this action, a separate resolution be introduced, an additional blueprint if you will, that constrains the next committee to operate in such a fashion as to ensure that there will be no credit hour increase for any and all programs (already above the 120 credit hours) on campus. To minimize the work, you can make it such that programs must object and provide evidence of the adverse impact by a certain date. But that any objection must be reviewed and addressed specifically by the next committee and the Senate with any and all programs raising the objection invited to participate in all subsequent discussions concerning such objection(s).

Sincerely,

Scott A. Yost
Senator
UC Member

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