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November 2, 2012 - ALEC UCC Meeting Minutes

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ALEC Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
Minutes
November 2, 2012

Present: Mark Balschweid, Lloyd Bell, Kathy Bennetch, Karen Cannon, Myunghwa Kang, Gina Matkin, Jennifer Schoen, Roger Terry, Chair, and Malika Yadgarova

Minutes from October 19, 2012 were approved as amended.

Unfinished Business/Ongoing Business

ALEC 388 Updates – Balschweid explained the Ag Econ faculty member who teaches the ALEC 388 – Ethics and Agriculture and Natural Resources course is planning on retiring soon. Ag Econ presently does not have the capacity to assign someone else to teach this class. ALEC is officially the parent department and is cross listed with Ag Econ. In recent years it has been taught in the fall as a service course and capped at 40. Ag Econ teaches it in the spring. It was not capped and had 80-90 students in the class. It's an ACE 9 class; hence many students are interested in taking it. Recently Balschweid met with Dean Waller and Larry Van Tassel, the department head of Ag Econ, to talk about where to go from here. Waller's proposal would be that ALEC offer 388 as a two credit course that would strictly be content of ethics. Then, other interested departments teach a one-credit that adds the content.

Comments outlined below:

- Takes out teaching in context which we always say is so important.
- How would you tie the two classes together and make sure the various disciplines provide that tie and coursework?
- Getting students exposed to a variety of topics is desirable.
- Important to understand ethical issues in agriculture broadly because we're emphasizing systems thinking and to cut it up would be the antithesis of systems thinking.
- Would it be better as a cruise class, where we explore a variety of domains or are departments saying, we're getting ready to graduate students into the field, and we want them to know specifically and deeply the minefield of issues they'll be faced with?
- Sounds like a recitation section, which would take care of the teaching burden but it would need to look like one class.
- Could have a separate lab but that leaves it open for a lack of unity.
- Students, who took a two hour course, would eventually have to take the one hour.
- Easily see this class attracting several hundred students.
- Seems like an Ag Leadership class, it allows theory to be applied in a practical sense.
- See it as an ACE 10 kind of experience where you have to bring together leadership expertise to an applied major.
- Taking the class this summer with 80 students, didn't practice my moral reasoning and application of decision making because you just didn't have the time to listen to every single student.
- The hardest issues CASNR graduates will face is to be able to use their leadership skills to exert their ideas and opinions of ethical issues within their careers. Seems logical to reside here in the leadership program.
- Uncomfortable discussing this class more, without seeing the syllabi. (one was provided)
- Might we team teach this course? There is a strong leadership component to this class but there is also a strong communications component. Co-teaching the class, bringing in the ethical issues, how do you behave as leaders and how do those leaders communicate

those decisions effectively. A powerful teaching model and it would help us increase the capacity.

- How do we equip our student to have good discussions? As professional adults, we can have good construction discussions on why we differ, why we disagree. Don't see an opportunity right now to teach that. The team teaching approach would help.
- Ethics thing is critical to Nebraska Agriculture.
- We haven't had the capacity to teach the course. First semester in 10 years we had a tenured faculty member committed to teaching it. Adjuncts have been teaching it and it's been really difficult to maintain any sort of continuity.
- Dean Waller has indicated some resources would be available.
- Still have a concern about the two and the one.
- Challenge us not to look at our capacity issue the way we have in the past. Look beyond the leadership faculty.
- Where does it fit in your four year program for a graduate? Does the course have purpose within the program? There needs to be a long-range vision and it be assigned to a faculty member.
- Could require students to take this course.
- Does this support all the options? Yes!
- In the leadership program, would it serve a substantial purpose in turning out an Ag leader? Yes, it's already in our major.
- Could it qualify as a communications course? As an ACE course? Don't see that as a huge obstacle.
- Leadership ethics is one of the most important issues today.
- The whole issue is capacity!
- No one in opposition to ALEC dedicating a faculty member to this course.
- A lot of value keeping this a 3 hour stand-alone course and then communicating to departments the way it's being taught and what's being taught. They can still offer a 1 hour seminar to do applied ethics.
- Trying to fit all of that content in and everything that needs to be done in this course in two hours would be challenging.
- Advantage of a 3 hour approach is that you're free to address current issues that come up during the semester or year. An opportunity to discuss real world situations, however, it's contrary to our systems thinking approach to teaching courses.

Balschweid would like to get the other department heads view of this class and get their feedback. Issue tabled until the December UCC meeting.

Undergraduate Bulletin – As a point of information, Cannon has discovered that the Ag Communications class students are required to take a course that no longer exists. **Terry moved to remove the Broadcasting 226 course (3 hours general credits) from the required courses for the Agriculture Journalism students for the 2013-14 Bulletin. Approved.**

Teaching Award Fund – Balschweid outlined the information about the University-Wide Outstanding Department for Teaching Award which ALEC received in 2007. It came with a \$25,000 cash award given to the department. That fund still has a balance of \$14,500. The university has changed what we used to call the revolving funds, those funds now have been migrated into the distance accounts. The teaching award fund funds are becoming increasingly vulnerable as we move forward. It's the faculty decision on how we use these funds. Bell explained some of the guidelines for securing funds for professional development that is teaching orientated. (Criteria and application forms available now on the "M" shared drive with both ALEC and EdMedia) When someone uses the award funds and it goes to

their professional development, they are supposed to present something to the rest of the faculty and share that information. Balschweid will put a note in the Monday Memo to encourage faculty and graduate assistants to apply for funds. Also, it will be presented at the next faculty meeting with handouts.

Community Leadership Development position – Matkin mentioned this new faculty position is a collaborative position between the Nebraska Human Resources Research Foundation (funding 50%) and IANR (funding 50%). This position presently is held by Lindsay Hastings. Now since this position will be a faculty position we are required to do a national search. Bryce Johnson, president of the board of NHRI, met with Matkin and Balschweid and worked on the job description that is 50% teaching, 20% research, and 25% extension. Balschweid said this is a brand new position that really aligns well with Ronnie Green's Institute for Rural Future and the things that he sees and envisions the Institute playing across Nebraska and the region as it relates to developing Community leaders which is what NHRI does. The UCC Committee was asked to review the draft of the job description. Cannon suggested adding something related to online community or social networking. Further discussion continued about expectations for tenure, research involvement, contractual agreement with NHRI to be developed, looking at endowed chairs at other institutions, the evaluation process and expectations, 25% FTE in ARD, history of half time NHRI position and half time faculty position, and how the position was now secured.

Candidate guidelines – Kang reported at the Faculty Advisory Committee meeting recently there was discussion about when a candidate is brought in to interview. They want to know our policy towards having a candidate teach a class as an experience as part of the interview. Terry said Dean Waller wants consistent guidelines that we could all follow across the departments in CASNR. Cannon recommends moving towards this model of a teaching opportunity but realizes the struggle with the planning in the interview schedule. Kang will collect our thoughts and lists from each department and bring back to the Faculty Advisory Committee. Terry will bring this item back for further discussion.

Announcements

MyRed - Matkin announced that MyRed should show individual class sections now for each faculty member for the thesis hours, independent study, etc. Janice will no longer be entering grades for each of us. Students need to be directed to sign up for your individual section of the class, so that gets brought into your Activity Insights reports.

Power of Red – Yadgarova indicated Power of Red open house is tomorrow and ALEC has three sessions, the first one starting at 10:45. Schoen reported ALEC has own Facebook page up and running now. Bell asked if there was any strategic follow up with those students, who come to the open house, which is consistent. If we “friend” them, it might strengthen our recruitment by having a continuous contact and start tracking those people.

HRTM students – Kang announced the HRTM students have own Facebook page, so they have been posting all sorts of videos and pictures from the Las Vegas study tours.

Meeting adjourned.