

A C A D E M I C S E N A T E
O F
C A L I F O R N I A S T A T E U N I V E R S I T Y
S A C R A M E N T O

Minutes

Issue #13

February 25, 1988

ROLL CALL

Present: Barnes, Barrena, Beckwith, Bess, Brackmann, Colen, Cook, Cordero, Farrand, Figler, Fitzwater, Hamilton, Harralson, Kellough, Kenny, Koester, Lee, Martell, John Maxwell, Moore, Moorehead, Palmer, Phelps, Radimsky, Reh fuss, Rice, Rios, Sauls, Scheel, Shannon, Stroumpos, Sullivan, Summers, Swanson, Tobey, Tooker, Torcom, Van Auker, White, Wycosky, Yousif

Absent: Alexander, Banks, Kaltenbach, Joan Maxwell, Rodriguez, Rombold, Savino, Seward, Stephens, Tzakiri

ACTION ITEMS

AS 88-13/GE, Ex., Flr. GENERAL EDUCATION TRANSFER CURRICULUM

The Academic Senate endorses the position on a general education transfer curriculum as stated in the memorandum (Attachment A) from CSUS Academic Senate Chair Barrena to CSU Academic Senate Chair Ray Geigle.

Carried.

AS 88-14A/Ex., Flr. HUMAN CORPS, RESOLUTION ON THE

Whereas, The State of California has created a Human Corps within the California State University, the principal object of which is to promote community service, particularly as it may benefit and meet the human needs in our society; and

Whereas, The CSU is dedicated to serving the public interest through education; therefore be it

Resolved That the Academic Senate of CSU, Sacramento, endorse the concept of voluntary student community service; and be it further

Resolved That the Academic Senate, CSU, Sacramento, encourage departments and programs to facilitate student

involvement in community service programs where there is an academic rationale that is program-specific, clearly defined, and developed by faculty.

Carried.

AS 88-14B/Flr. HUMAN CORPS

Resolved That the Academic Senate, CSU, Sacramento request that its Chair, Juanita Barrena, send to CSU Senate Chair, Ray Geigle, a memorandum (Attachment B) expressing the sentiments of the body on the Human Corps program and its implementation.

Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Janice L. McPherson
Janice McPherson, Secretary

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: February 25, 1988

TO: Ray Geigle, Chair
CSU Academic Senate

FROM: Juanita Barrera, Chair
CSU, Sacramento
Academic Senate

SUBJECT: #Response of the CSUS Academic Senate to the Proposed
General Education Transfer Curriculum

The faculty at CSUS have supported past efforts to facilitate transfer and will support future efforts. Effective transfer in a large and complex state presents major challenges that cannot, however, be met exclusively through the creation of a common General Education Curriculum. In fact, exclusive or excessive reliance on this one mechanism may do as much harm as good. We are unconvinced that a strategy of focus upon a GE transfer curriculum will yield the desired results of improved transfer. To date, no effective argument that sets general education into the appropriate broader context has been offered.

Your letter of December 10, 1987 claims that the proposed curriculum among other things: "...is deliberately broad to allow campus variability of the kind that characterizes our current program." We are not convinced that in all areas the language of the proposal will "...maintain the essential 'richness' of our current pattern..." Nor are we convinced that the proposal has been carefully enough drafted to eliminate confusion on a number of points such as the ability of any campus to impose its own additional graduation requirements.

We recognize that the basic outline of the common curriculum is quite similar to the pattern currently in place under EO 338. In most areas, adjustment to the proposal would not be difficult or controversial on our campus. One area, that of English Communication, stands out as threatening what we consider to be a significant feature of our current campus GE program. Our program has three courses in the basic subjects category: a speech course, a composition course and a critical thinking course. In our judgment, all three courses have made significant contributions to the training and preparation of our students.

#Adopted by the CSUS Academic Senate on February 25, 1988.

The language of the proposal ("...six units of which must be devoted to written composition") suggests that we must abandon our critical thinking requirement (and slip that subject matter into other courses) or abandon our speech requirement (and slip that material into other courses). We understand the importance of writing within the context of formal composition classes and the need for more writing. We are, however, opposed to building more composition into the general education program at the expense of either the speech or the critical thinking requirement. Three memoranda attached to this document address aspects of this issue. We must emphasize that contrary to your assertion, the language in the current draft of the GE transfer curriculum does not allow campus variability of the kind that characterizes our current programs.

A second aspect of the proposed GE transfer curriculum that is cause for concern on this campus is the omission of a designated area comparable to Area E ("Life-long Understanding and Development") of the current CSU General Education Program. Traditionally, the core of America's higher education has emphasized the acquisition of knowledge and individual personal development. Although the role of a general education program in the "development of the whole person" is addressed nominally in the proposal under "Subject Area: Arts and Humanities," we believe that a category devoted explicitly to this purpose should be included within the core of a general education program. Since the importance of this area is recognized in EO 338, its exclusion from the proposed GE transfer curriculum may constitute an unwritten mandate that campuses offer upper division courses to satisfy this requirement. In our judgment, this would not only limit campus development of the unique character of their GE programs by how they define the nine-upper division unit requirement, but may also result in the elimination of lower division courses from the GE program that contribute to a campus' success in meeting the objectives of Area E.

We wish to comment on three other matters:

1. There must be more consideration of the real nature of the problem. Is the problem significantly within GE or is it elsewhere? If careful examination reveals no significant problem in GE, are there alternate and more appropriate solutions to facilitate transfer and preserve the richness of campus programs? For example, would a lower unit transfer program with campus or system options on remaining lower division requirements better recognize the diversity of campus experience, while facilitating

ease of transfer? In addition, such a model might also address issues of high unit majors. Therefore, the process should be slowed. The issues and relevant data can reasonably be examined this spring. Models, that is to say specific curriculum proposals, should be considered in early fall 1988.

2. In the past, the CSU had changed its GE regulations and campuses have changed their programs. Individuals have expressed the fear that once a statewide GE transfer curriculum is in place it will be come difficult if not impossible to make any changes. The formal adoption of mechanisms for periodic consultation, review and revision concurrent with adoption of the curriculum is in order.

3. The facilitation of transfer cannot rest exclusively upon a GE transfer curriculum. It would be reassuring if we had specific recommendations on (for example) certification procedures, changes in budgetary formulae on staffing of admissions/school college relations, creation of transfer centers, etc., rather than the vague statement concluding the December 8, 1987, memorandum from the members of the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates.

In light of the above and in spite of our strong support for effective transfer mechanisms, we cannot support the current proposal.

CD/JB
Attachments

cc: CSUS Statewide Academic Senators
Donald Gerth, President, CSUS

CALLIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
Department of English
December 9, 1987

FELO 1988

Academic Senate Received
413

TO: Richard Kornweibel, Chair
General Education Committee

FROM: Vernon T. Hornback, Jr., Chair
Department of English

SUBJECT: The GE "Transfer Curriculum"

I hope you will indulge me while I address three issues raised in the past few weeks concerning the proposed new transfer GE curriculum. The Department of English finds itself, like it or not, thrust squarely into the middle of what could develop into another mean and ugly little fight over the distribution of FTE. As English appears to stand to "gain" by the addition of a required second writing course, we will assuredly become a target for the resentment of some people. As I think you know, although perhaps others do not, it does not give the English Department any pleasure to contemplate the imposition upon us of a vastly increased service obligation. We are up to our chins now in a vast sea of composition. Our other English offerings have been reduced despite growth in the number of majors, huge increases in our teaching credential components, and significant growth in TESOL and the MA program. If we were to be burdened with a second semester of required composition without a significant increase in faculty positions and support budget, we simply could not, and would not be willing, to undertake the task. We think the other things we do, teaching literature, linguistics, etc., are important, too--as important as physics, or accounting, or sociology, or whatever--and should not be drowned in a flood of composition service courses.

I should also, however, make another point. It is indisputable that a single 3-unit baccalaureate level writing course is sadly inadequate for most students. We continue to point out that English 1A is not the academic equivalent of a vaccination--you don't just take your composition shot and you're immune for four years. Many of the students who do pass 1A do so with the newly adopted C- minimum grade for GE coursework. Without additional, reinforcing instruction, even students who earn B- grades are likely to have regressed by the time they attempt the Writing Proficiency Exam. Students who pass 1A (or 2B, the ESL equivalent) with a C- and later take the WPE will most probably fail it at least once, and, without follow-up instruction, probably several times. For a very large number of students, instruction in English 1A is largely wasted, in that in three or four semesters they lose what proficiency they have gained. A second semester of instruction could confirm many of them in good writing habits, and even turn the most promising

among them into quite good writers. It would probably be cost effective in the long run. It would certainly produce better graduates. It would make very good sense to establish a second required composition course, probably at the sophomore level. It would be suicidal for the English Department to undertake teaching such a course, however, with our current resources. We do not argue, then, that a second semester of writing is a bad idea. We argue that, without reasonable funding, it is an unworkable idea.

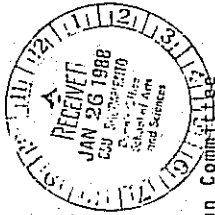
"But if the English Department can't do it," someone is sure to say, "then why not let Department X do it, or Department Y. They need the enrollment" (or they all speak/write English, or some such irrelevant reason). I hope that no one will take such a suggestion seriously. Students deserve the best education we can give them. If we simply can't give them anything better than we are currently providing, for lack of adequate support, then we should be honest enough to admit it, and not offer cosmetically deceptive substitutes. The English Department will adamantly oppose any such expediency.

A final point. If we are going to be required to accept in fulfillment of GE requirements, without question, some 30, or 37, or 38, or whatever number of units with the "right" CAN numbers, transferred from any two-year or four-year college or university in California, then we had better insist from the very outset that those courses be bona fide equivalents of our courses. That is to say, we should be satisfied that, whether they are exact, one-to-one matches or not, transfer courses substantially cover the same subject matter as ours, and assure substantially the same degree of competency. This, of course, is a problem for all departments, not just English.

YTH/em

CC: William Sullivan, Dean
School of Arts and Sciences
Tohru Yamanaka, Associate Dean
School of Arts and Sciences
David Wagner, Dean
School of Arts and Sciences
English Department Faculty

January 26, 1988



To: Juanita Barrena, Chair, Academic Senate
Richard Kornweibel, Chair, Senate General Education Committee

From: Jolene Koestel, Chair, Communication Studies

Re: Oral Communication General Education Requirement

The General Education Transfer Curriculum proposed for all three segments of higher education in California would alter the current CSU basic skill requirement in oral communication. As the language of the proposed transfer core currently reads, students would be required to have two semesters of coursework in written composition and an additional semester of either English reading, critical thinking or oral communication.

The purpose of this memo is to explicate the importance of oral communication as a basic skill. It is unfortunate that the framers of the Transfer Core Proposal have enhanced the written communication requirement at the expense of oral communication and critical thinking. It is even more unfortunate that the proposal creates the possibility of a dichotomous choice, by individual campuses or students, between oral communication and critical thinking.

The importance of basic skill in oral communication has not changed since the requirement was established by Executive Order 338 of the CSU. While written communication is essential, the widespread, formal and explicit recognition of the centrality of oral communication skills should not be abandoned by either the CSU or CSUS, more specifically.

Training to be a good writer is not training to be a skilled oral communicator, and a good writer is not necessarily a good speaker. Writing and speaking are different phenomena, just as reading and listening are different. Speaking competence is not taught in courses on written communication. Higher education in the last decade of the 20th century must continue to recognize the importance of both spoken and written communication skills. The abandonment of the oral communication requirement will deny students an essential skill. The teaching of oral communication skills is consistent with the unique characteristics of contemporary society, informed opinion regarding career preparation and success, conventional wisdom and scholarship regarding learning, and the intellectual tradition of western civilization.

Numerous social critics have labeled contemporary society the "communication society." Richard McKeon, of the University of Chicago, indicates that "the problems of an age arise in what is said...in the communication of an age..." Walter Ong describes contemporary society as the "second orality period." Seventy percent of our communicative time is spent in oral communication, speaking and listening, documenting the pivotal role played by oral literacy. The prediction that by the year 2000 over 2/3 of all occupations will be in the knowledge/information services area, an area dominated by the need for good oral communication

skills, dramatizes the key function oral communication skills will continue to play.

The need for competence in oral communication is already recognized as a fundamental skill for career success. Numerous studies document the centrality of oral communication skills in gaining employment and in success on the job. A nationwide survey of students pursuing careers in business found that "oral" communication skills of business majors are more important than such factors as grade point average, school attended and letters of recommendation for both obtaining employment and succeeding in the job." Another recent study found that 58% of managers reported that weaknesses in oral communication skills hindered the employment success of their employees.

Conventional wisdom and scholarship emphasizes that speaking and listening are essential to the learning process. Ernest Boyer, former U.S. Commissioner of Education eloquently describes the relationship between learning and oral communication skills when he says, "Language is the vehicle by which all other education is conveyed. Good writing and good speaking are simply the external aspects of good thinking. Clear expression is our way of checking whether the complicated process of good thinking is moving forward. Any discussion should emphasize that the communication process goes far beyond the need to read and write, to speak clearly and connectedly, and to learn to decode the messages of others" (emphasis added).

The College Board summed up the relationship of oral communication skills to learning when they identified the broad intellectual skills necessary for effective work in all college fields of study: "The Basic Academic Competencies are reading, writing, speaking, listening, mathematics, reasoning and studying...without such competencies, knowledge of history, science, language, and all other subjects is unattainable." The relationships between learning and oral communication skills has been recognized by Public Law 95-561 which established the Basic Skills Improvement Program and identified reading, writing, basic math and oral communication as basic skills. Thus training in oral communication is considered essential for learning.

Traditionally, western civilization has recognized the need for training in oral communication. From the Greeks, who nurtured the tradition of oral communication, through the Romans, to the middle ages with their liberal arts trivium of logic, grammar and rhetoric, to the 20th century, our educational systems have acknowledged the centrality of oral communication skills which emphasize persuasion, argumentation, strategic organization, oral style and delivery.

To deemphasize oral communication competence now not only ignores educational tradition, but denies the realities of the learning process, and the dominance of oral communication in contemporary society.

The imperative for training in basic oral communication skills is compounded by the number of people with high levels of apprehension about speaking in front of audiences, in groups, in meetings, and even in face-to-face interactions with other people. Research studies consistently describe about 20% of college students as experiencing levels of apprehension that

handicap them in the oral presentation of their ideas. Most importantly, research also indicates that completing a basic speech communication course reduces the communication apprehensive student's fear about communication.

Mandated coursework which recognizes the centrality of oral communication competence should be retained. To disregard, through our formal curriculum, the importance of all communication skills, including speaking and listening, will call into question the integrity of our educational programs.

cc: Vice President Burger
Dean Sullivan
Associate Dean Yamanaka



California State University, Sacramento

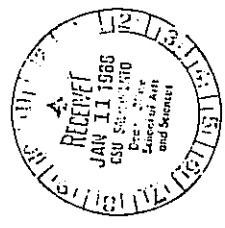
6000 J STREET, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95819-2694

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

January 7, 1987

Memorandum

To: Juanita Barrera, Chair
CSUS Academic Senate
From: *William S. Williams*
CSUS Philosophy Department



Subject: Proposed GE Transfer Curriculum

The proposed GE Transfer Curriculum in its English Communication subject area appears to us to represent an academically unsound departure from Executive Order 338, as it has been understood on this campus as well as most others in the CSU System since the early days of the decade. The objectives of the nine units allocated to this subject area are to encompass "English reading, critical thinking, written composition and oral communication", with primary emphasis on written communication. Nothing further is said about just how or to what extent critical thinking skills are to be taught. Executive Order 338, on the other hand, stipulated in some detail the anticipated goals of instruction in critical thinking:

Instruction in critical thinking is to be designed to achieve an understanding of the relationship of language to logic, which should lead to the ability to analyze, criticize, and advocate ideas, to reason inductively and deductively, and to reach factual or judgmental conclusions based on sound inferences drawn from unambiguous statements of knowledge or belief. The minimal competence to be expected at the successful conclusion of instruction in critical thinking should be the ability to distinguish fact from judgment, belief from knowledge, and skills in elementary inductive and deductive processes, including an understanding of the formal and informal fallacies of language and thought.

In light of these goals the conclusion drawn on this campus, along with many others, was that a course was needed which explicitly studied reasoning processes and the standards of good reasoning. It was feared that the attempt to tack a study of critical thinking onto courses already dominated by other subject matter and goals would only produce superficiality, misunderstanding, or no result at all. Accordingly, we think the decision of this campus to require a course specifically in critical thinking has been much the wiser direction to go. Not all campuses have done so and in the words of Dean Yamanaka "... we have transfer students entering CSUS with Category A completed with English 1A, 1B, and a public speaking course". Under the loosely-worded guidelines of the proposed GE Transfer Curriculum that unhappy outcome is very likely to continue.

We would like to elaborate on some of the differences between a course that is about critical thinking and one that merely involves the use of critical thinking. Any competent academic instructor in any field uses critical reasoning extensively, and his or her example alone serves as an important instructional vehicle of critical thinking. But a course on logic and critical thinking goes well beyond this and requires that the student achieve at least a minimum level of understanding of the following concepts:

- A. Deductive validity, soundness, inconsistency, contradiction, tautology, syllogism, reductio ad absurdum; conditional argument, affirming the consequent, etc.
- B. Analogical inference, statistical inference, inductive strength, theory formation, the hypothetico-deductive method, hypothesis, the method of difference, reasoning to the cause, to a generalization, to the best explanation, etc.
- C. Point at issue, burden of proof, conflict of interest, appeal to authority, argumentum ad hominem, begging the question, presupposition, counterargument, line of questioning, criteria of relevance, etc.

D. Rationality, inference and implication, the principle of charity, persuasive vs. logical force, propaganda, objectivity, bias, the relationship between reason and emotion, etc.

We provide this list only as a reminder that a basic subject exists which is unlikely to be taught adequately when it is only taught alongside other subject matter with significant content of its own. Moreover, the skills acquired in this subject are vital to the student's academic performance in all other fields of study. Accordingly, we recommend that one semester or three units of the nine unit English communication subject area be for a course explicitly devoted to the study of reasoning processes or critical thinking.

cc. Tohru Yamanaka, Associate Dean
School of Arts and Sciences

Richard Kornweibel, Chair
General Education Committee

Vernon Hornback, Chair
English Department

Peter Shattuck, Representative
CSU Academic Senate

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: March 1, 1988

TO: Ray Geigle, Chair
CSU Academic Senate

FROM: Juanita Barrena, Chair
CSUS Academic Senate

SUBJECT: #Response of the CSUS Academic Sente to AS 1759-87 on
the "Human Corps"

In response to your December 7, 1987, memorandum on the Human Corps, the Academic Senate, CSU Sacramento, chose a resolution rather different from AS-1759-87/AA. While the position paper "Student Community Service (Human Corps) in the CSU" does a fine job of addressing certain of the issues, it is inadequate in a few regards, and thus does not receive our complete support.

Volunteer efforts of community service by students (indeed, by all of society) are crucial to our state. Current community service efforts in the CSU (e.g., volunteer programs, fieldwork and internship activities) are substantial, are worthy of praise, and are a source of pride for the CSU. Furtherance of such efforts is a laudable goal for the state. There are several aspects to AB 1820 (Human Corps) that are troublesome, however.

Throughout section 99100, it appears that the program is motivated by the unmet needs and social challenges faced by our state, rather than the education of students. The search for "cost-effective solutions"¹ leads to students as laborers (and this might be a false economy, as academic credit for community service becomes expensive when the cost of educating a student is considered). The lessons of life that are learned through activities of service to the community are no less valuable to the general populace than to the students of the state, the latter are simply more accessible, and immediately beholden to the state government. The act expounds the value of "real world"¹ experiences, as opposed, apparently, to our preternatural academic world. There is another assumption that is implicit in this legislation--students have time, possibly spare time and possibly time spent in coursework, that is better spent in service to the community. This might be true in some cases. However, the large number of part-time students who take reduced loads in order to accommodate other commitments suggests otherwise. Furthermore, the act specifies that an average of 30 hours per year per student is the appropriate level of

¹Adopted by the CSUS Academic Senate on February 25, 1988.

participation and that participation is academically appropriate for all students. Since the act sets a goal of 100% participation, a peculiar sort of volunteerism, the question of whether "a mandatory program should be established" seems to be predetermined.

To the extent that the Human Corps program merges with the academic goals of the CSU, we have a legislature making major decisions about curriculum. They have correctly observed that

"Existing community service efforts have successfully demonstrated that participation in public service is of mutual benefit to participating students and the recipients of their services."¹

They have then concluded that more community service effort would be of greater benefit to students and to the recipients of their services. Whether more is better for the students' education is a decision that is best made by the architects of the academic programs that serve the students.

The position paper of the CSU Academic Senate on this subject correctly identifies the uneven effects of this program on students, depending in part upon their economic and social situation. We are left to ponder the expense and propriety of employing a staff to evaluate the economic and social hardships suffered by students, to determine who is exempt from the program.

The definition of community service provided by AB 1820 begs the question, "Which community service endeavors qualify?" How can the answer to that question avoid becoming a political, religious, and moral platform for the CSU? Only if community service projects are measured against academic programmatic goals can we avoid the mire of political discriminations as to which community service is of genuine value to the community. If the community service projects do not serve academic programmatic goals, then we are left in the mire.

This then is the sine qua non of our implementation of the Human Corps:

Community service projects must have "academic rationales that are program-specific, clearly defined, and developed by the faculty."²

While the CSU position paper correctly identifies this issue, it fails to recognize its significance. For example, to what end would we survey "activities undertaken by public spirited people associated with the CSU, but entirely without formal connection with their student status"²?

Our resolution is not intended to be captious, nor is it in any way in conflict with the ideals of volunteerism and community service, nor is it a fundamental departure from CSU Academic Senate resolution 1759-87. Rather, it is an observation about the primacy of academic matters in the academy.

¹AB 1820

²AS-1759-87

JB:j

cc: President Gerth

CSUS Statewide Academic Senators