

Revised

Student Affairs Committee

September 28, 2007

Minutes

Present: V. Dallas, C. Dove, K. Feathers, D. Head, B. Jones, J. Martin, M. Ronnick, A. Sacco, N. Simon, W. Slater, T. Somers.

Absent with notice: V. Bielat, E. Gilbert, R. Van Stavern

To begin the meeting, members present introduced themselves. There was one agenda item, consideration of the proposal for an Honors College. There was considerable discussion of the proposal that focused on financial support, campus space allocation, resources of and for faculty/colleges, timing of the proposal, impact of all on the students (both those involved in the proposed college and those not involved, and the clarity and completeness of the proposal itself. In preparation for the meeting, members had studied the web sites of the honors colleges and/or programs at other colleges and universities included on the list that accompanied the Honors College proposal. These were referenced as a resource for discussion about the proposed College.

Members expressed the following concerns:

Financial Support

Other honors colleges vary from 3-4 administrative staff to 9. Our proposal is for 12. Questions were raised about how these positions will be funded and why the number is higher than at other colleges. An additional concern was the cost to the individual WSU colleges for offering these classes. For example, might one professor be taken from teaching a lecture class of 70 students to instruct an honors seminar of 15-20? The lecture class might then be taught by an adjunct. The cost of offering these courses could be substantial in terms of faculty and space.

There is no budget plan that shows how the proposed college will be funded. Questions included whether faculty would be part of their current colleges or the new college or both, how credits would accrue to the various colleges for honors courses, whether individual colleges would be provided support to hire additional faculty to provide those needed for this program and other support to develop the courses needed.

The current concerns with state allocations and potential future cuts were discussed in relation to this proposed college. Members questioned whether, given the current budget this is the right time to begin a new program that will involve a substantial amount of funds.

Curriculum

Other programs are for 9-24 credits (with many options in those that require 24 hours). Ours is 36 hours. There are many options in the programs reviewed, but options are not indicated in the proposed program.

This proposal seems to have honors students taking honors classes for much of their general education program. This separates them from the general population with the loss of benefits of interaction for both the honors students and the general population.

The proposal does not include things that were noted in other honors colleges/programs such as study abroad, speakers, coffee houses, etc.

The proposed curriculum seems to be only for those who enter WSU as freshmen and does not include options for transfer students to be part of the honors college as do others that we studied.

Questions about who gets the credit for honors courses, the honors college or the department offering the course.

Other programs offer a variety of possibilities for the honors program while ours seems to offer only one.

Space

Where the proposed college would be located is also of concern. Where is the space to provide many seminar classrooms for this program? If space is to be provided through building, the question remains whether this is the best use of funds. At issue is also that even if funds are provided for a new building WSU then has to add to its budget the cost of maintaining that building.

Overall the committee recommended that the proposal be developed more completely before a decision is made about the honors college. The curriculum is not well thought out, the budget issues need clarification, the operation of the college is not described. Additionally, with the resignation of the current WSU President, it may be best to wait until the new president makes his/her vision for WSU known before initiating an undertaking that will require substantial support from that president.

Submitted 10/09/2007

Karen M. Feathers