

Undergraduate Studies Committee Minutes, 2/14/07 Meeting

Present:

Craig Bertolet (Coordinator)
John Bolton (Coordinator-in-Waiting)
Chris Forhan
Cedrick May
Jim McKelly
Bonnie Jean Shamp

I. General Announcements:

Advising: Craig informed the committee that the department was working on schedules for Summer and Fall Semesters. Registration will take place through Oasis for the Summer Sessions and through Banner for the Fall.

Summer Schedule: Craig discussed the staffing of Summer Session courses. He mentioned that his hope was that 2 upper-division courses would be offered in both Summer I and Summer II.

Fall Schedule: Craig informed the committee that there were several sources of staffing uncertainty for '07-'08—job searches that were still unresolved, anticipated leaves of absence, pending retirements. The resulting high number of possible staffing permutations has made it impossible to have scheduling for Fall Semester ready by advising time. Craig suggested that flexibility and patience would be called for on the part of faculty generally and advisors in particular.

The committee was saddened to learn that Chris Forhan was among those leaving Auburn next school year for greener pastures. We are excited for the opportunities that his move to Butler University in Indianapolis will give to Chris, and send our sincerest best wishes his ways. Thanks, Chris!

II. The Freshman Scholarships

The department makes available two \$2000.00 scholarships to incoming freshman English majors. Craig informed the committee that last year the Scholarships drew 8 serious enquiries. This year, there was just 1 (one). Having reviewed this candidate's application materials, Craig wondered whether the candidate met the criteria of the scholarship. Craig raised the question of how to handle this circumstance. The possibilities: give the candidate a single scholarship and augment the titled departmental awards with the remaining \$2000.00, or give out no scholarships for next school year and augment the departmental awards with the remaining \$4000.00. Craig resolved that he would call for an e-mail vote on the issue in the week to follow.

III. Plan of Study Revision

The committee discussed Craig's proposed revision of the department's Plan of Study (see handout distributed by Craig before the meeting) built around a two-track structure with two possible cap-stone classes.

On the one hand, it was suggested that the proposed Plan would streamline the work load of the Coordinator, particularly at the end of Spring Semester. The Coordinator would no longer have to deal with undergraduates who have neither chosen nor devised a concentration and are clamoring to come up with one at the last minute in order to graduate.

On the other hand it was suggested that the current Plan's offering of specific pre-set concentrations, as well as an open-ended student-advisor-designed concentration, was valuable to students' intellectual development, and that the existing plan seemed generally to be working quite well.

It was agreed that the committee's understanding of the issue would benefit from further discussion involving committee members who were absent.