May Board Report

May 15, 2015

Submitted by Justin P. McBrayer

As the elected faculty representative to the board of trustees, it is my privilege to represent faculty interests. For my final report this academic year, I want to flag a recent concern as well as an opportunity.

General Education Course Approval

Since most of the courses that count for general education requirements are currently 4-credit courses, they each need to be re-designed as 3-credit courses and approved by the local authorities (the faculty and the administration). Additionally, any general education courses that will be gtPathways certified also need to be approved by the state authority (CCHE). All departments submitted proposals, and virtually all of these were existing 4-credit courses already approved by both the local authorities and the state. The administration denied a number of the proposals outright. The stated rationale for denial was delivered to the Council of Chairs on April 13th (see Appendix 1), but the criteria were obviously both inconsistently applied and ad hoc. For an example, see Appendix 2 which looks at courses submitted by the Department of English.

Faculty objected vociferously, many claiming that this was an attempt to trim departments (in ways decided behind closed doors) by manipulating the curriculum. For example, the Philosophy Department went from offering seven courses that counted toward general education to two (!). Furthermore, the manipulation was clearly not a decision made in response to student demand. Where students have a choice in courses that meet general education requirements, there are certain courses and subjects that are in high demand, and yet even these courses were trimmed by the administration when they were not offered by a favored department. Again, as an example, see Appendix 3 which details historical demand for general education courses from the Department of English. And what’s particularly concerning, a disproportionate number of the eliminated courses that were aimed at increasing cultural awareness and diversity, something that should be central to a liberal arts education (see list and course descriptions in Appendix 4).

After a week or so of discussion, the faculty senate voted to accept a resolution decrying this manipulation of the curriculum and asking for both a clear rationale and an appeals process (see Appendix 5). It’s important for the board to know about this scenario and to work with faculty to restore confidence in shared governance.

Student Research

In the next year, the board will work with all campus constituencies to craft a vision for our school over the near future. We need an edge—something that differentiates us from the other college offerings. Many faculty believe that we should focus, among other things, on the importance of student research. Our college already produces some student research. At last month’s Undergraduate Student Research Symposium, we had 29 students make presentations and 54 students prepare posters (hats off to Associate Dean Kim Hannula!). But there is room for much, much more, and such research is important to all of our stakeholders:
It’s important to students. Time and again, students tell me how rewarding it is to work hard on a project with faculty and have that project turn into something worthwhile. We have engineering students floating coconuts all over the globe. We have students floating the Missouri River from the headwaters to the Mississippi tracking water quality along the way. We have English majors who start writing for The Independent and end up published in journals like Metamorphosis. In the last two years we have had students present at conferences from Seattle to Budapest. Students leverage these opportunities to get into internships, graduate school, and jobs.

It’s important to employers. Employers consistently say that they want students who are self-starters and problem-solvers. These are the sorts of skills cultivated when a student takes on a research project guided by a faculty mentor. For example, a recent history graduate who is currently a Marine Lieutenant just emailed a faculty member from Iwo Jima to emphasize how the leadership skills he learned while piloting his research project are helping him in the field. A resource management firm located in Durango just hired an anthropology student largely on the basis of research that she did in Ignacio with one of her professors.

It’s important to faculty. One of the highlights of teaching at a place like Fort Lewis is getting to know the best students and work with them one-on-one. And our faculty take advantage of this opportunity. Last year, two students were co-authors with Professor Julie Korb on a peer-reviewed manuscript in the Canadian Journal of Forest Research, a leading journal in forestry, on their work with understory vegetation responses to Sudden Aspen Decline. One of our anthropologists recently co-presented research with a student that has recently turned into a publication (the student went on to graduate school). Professor Heidi Steltzer co-presented some ground-breaking work in climate research to the American Geophysical Union with some of her senior seminar students. I myself have co-authored reviews in leading with philosophy seniors for each of the last three years.

It’s important to our local economy. Innovations and discoveries by our students can help fuel local business. For example, student research is currently being used in the NPS ranger training program at Mesa Verde and another research project uncovered new information used by the park service in the 50th anniversary of Canyonlands National Park. This year, eight FLC students will be presenting their senior research at the Colorado Plateau Biennial conference in Flagstaff, Arizona on biotic responses to forest restoration treatments in warm, dry mixed-conifer forests in southwestern Colorado. Visitors who picked up the La Plata County Driving Tour of Historic Cemeteries last weekend have a senior seminar student in history to thank.

It’s important to our staff working in enrollment management. One of our primary strengths when recruiting students is the promise of personal attention by expert faculty. We show off the successes of student researchers and vaunt the things that students can do at Fort Lewis that can’t be done at a school of all adjuncts or a school with class sizes of 400 people. Investing in student research is a way to boost our recruitment efforts.

Given this importance, it is naturally to look to student research as a strength and a way to craft an innovative educational product at Fort Lewis College.

However, good student research requires many things. It requires a professionally active group of faculty who have both the time and the skills to work with promising students. This means that the trend of relying on overworked, non-tenured adjuncts hurts our ability to produce student researchers.
Appendix 1: Liberal Arts Core Proposals as Presented to Council of Chairs

Summary of Liberal Arts Core course proposals

Criteria for approving a LAC course proposal for consideration by the Liberal Arts Core Council:

1. Course must be offered at least once per academic year
2. Course must be staffed by a permanent instructor/faculty member
3. Course must be included as a core course for a major
4. Course must be included in a state-wide articulation agreement

LAC course proposals approved and sent to Liberal Arts Core Council for review:
ART 262, 263
SPAN 215, 216
FR 247, 248
COMP 150, 250, 252, 253, 350
SOC 100, 210
FMP courses: MATH 1XX, 105
ANTH 151, 236, 210, 246
PS 101, 110, 221, 241, 280
PSYC 157
PEAC 101
CHEM 151, 150
THEA 240, 101, 126
PHYS 106, 145, 146, 217
PHIL 141, 252
ENGL 268
MATH 113, 222, 121, 221
GWS 101
GEOG 235, 110
GEOL 113, 170, 105, 107, 106
NAIS 123, 110, 280
HIST 150, 151, 160, 261, 270, 271, 280, 281, 181

LAC course proposals in review or revision:
BIO 110, 202, 234, 125
CHEM 123, 125
GEOL 106
ENGL 116, 175, 176, 180, 265, 363, 231, 232, 245, 246
MUSIC 101, 102, 120
BIO 250, 1XX

LAC course proposals not approved for consideration by the Liberal Arts Core Council at this time:
ENGL 128, 174, 221, 270, 280
PHIL 251, 244/1XX
HIST 131, 141, 171, 263
GEOG 120
ANTH 171, 215
SOC 279
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>gtPathways category</th>
<th>Core requirement?</th>
<th># of faculty who teach the course</th>
<th>Part of State Wide Articulation agreement?</th>
<th>Taught at least once per year?</th>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 116</td>
<td>Intro to Mass Comm</td>
<td>AH2</td>
<td>Yes - Comm Option</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes - at least two sections</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>In a meeting with the Dean on Monday, April 13, the dean explained that this course was accepted because &quot;everyone teaches it.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 128</td>
<td>Bible as Literature</td>
<td>AH2</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, 1 section</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 174</td>
<td>African American Literature</td>
<td>AH2</td>
<td>No - 1/5 courses in non-canonical requirement, all options</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 175</td>
<td>Women's Literature</td>
<td>AH2</td>
<td>No - 1/5 courses in non-canonical requirement, all options</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, at least 2 sections</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Code</td>
<td>Course Title</td>
<td>AH2 Description</td>
<td>Options</td>
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<td>Acceptance</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 176</td>
<td>Native American Literature</td>
<td>AH2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, 1 section</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 180</td>
<td>Literature of the Environment</td>
<td>AH2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, at least 2 sections</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 221</td>
<td>Classical Literature</td>
<td>AH2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 265</td>
<td>Semantics</td>
<td>AH2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, at least 2 sections</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
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</table>

This course is also 1/6 courses that can satisfy the Ideas and Expressions requirement in the ENVS major.

In the recent past, this course was taught every other spring term. Presently, it is scheduled to be offered every spring term.

FLC is the only institution to offer this as a gtPathways course.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>AH</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Offered</th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Section Count</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 270</td>
<td>History of Film</td>
<td>AH1</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, at least 2 sections</td>
<td>This course is eligible to be included in the State-Wide Articulation Agreement because it is not a literature course. The State Wide Transfer Agreement specifically prohibits students from taking AH2 credits to fulfill the GenEd AH requirements. ENGL270 is an excellent alternative for this requirement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 280</td>
<td>Literature of the Southwest</td>
<td>AH2</td>
<td>Non-canonical</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, 1 section</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Decision</td>
<td># of faculty who teach the course</td>
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<td>W11</td>
<td>F12</td>
<td>W12</td>
<td>F13</td>
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<td>ENGL 116</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>41/43/41/33</td>
<td>38/42</td>
<td>39/40/39</td>
<td>37/38</td>
<td>40/42</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37/38/42</td>
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<tr>
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<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 175</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 176</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 180</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 221</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>ENGL 265</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>37/36</td>
<td>38/37</td>
<td>32/34</td>
<td>25/40</td>
<td>38/33</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 270</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>ENGL 280</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
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</table>

This course is cross-listed with NAIS. These numbers are students enrolled in ENGL 176.

Although in the past this course was scheduled for every other spring, it is now scheduled for every spring.
Appendix 4: Courses denied gtPathways status by the FLC administration – April 2015

(Most of these courses address the FLC Liberal Arts Core Outcome of knowing cultural diversity, which is proportionately lower in the courses approved to go forward and which has been demonstrated to be lacking in FLC graduates, as per NSSE data. In addition, for majors such as Anthropology, Philosophy, and Sociology, which students likely know little about from their high school education, the attractiveness of these courses helps to address the comparative disadvantage non-high school subject matter has when students are increasingly pushed to choose a major early—often before they have taken one semester’s-worth of courses.)

1. **ANTH 171 – World Prehistory** - An introduction to cultures of the past. Students study the fundamental role that technology, as evidenced in the archaeological record, has played in the evolution of humans, from the earliest hominids to the rise of states in the Old and New Worlds. The interconnection between technology and society is emphasized, as is the scientific method and its historical and cultural contexts.

2. **ANTH 215 – Magic & Religion** - “Magic” (the application of spiritual beliefs to problem solving) and “religion” (institutionalization of belief and rituals) are linked conceptual centerpieces in this course about the roles transcendent phenomena play in everyday, extraordinary, and often conflict-ridden human existence carried out in multiple realities. We concentrate on anthropological approaches to belief, symbolism, and ritual, which emphasize firsthand knowledge and cross-cultural comparisons.

3. **ENGL 128 – The Bible as Literature** - A study of both the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Bible, as literature itself and as a major influence upon literature. Course will cover mythological, historical, archeological, and cultural contexts and backgrounds. The course takes no doctrinal position, and doctrinal debates are only appropriate as explorations of the manifold interpretive possibilities of the text.


5. **ENGL 221 – Classical Literature** - A study of ancient Greek (Hellenic) and Roman (Italic) literature and at least one of the following ancient literatures: Germanic, Celtic, Balto-Slavic, Indo-Iranian, or Albanian.

6. **ENGL 270 – History of the Film** - An overview of the history of international and Hollywood narrative films. Students will be expected to attend scheduled film screenings each week.

7. **ENGL 280 – Literature of the Southwest** - The American Southwest seen through fiction, poetry, biography and other works by European Americans, Native Americans and Chicanos/as.

8. **GEOG 120 – The North American Landscape** - A study of the cultural and physical landscapes of North America, specifically the United States and Canada. Emphasis is placed on the two countries’ geographic regions, the different cultures and populations, natural and physical
environments, land use patterns, resources, economics, border politics, and human activities that modify the natural landscape. Regional field trips and map work are required.

9. **HIST 131 – History of the Southwest** - A broad introduction to the Southwestern history and cultures with lectures and research on history, archaeology, literature, art, and other related topics.


11. **HIST 171 – Survey East Asian Civilization II** - This course studies modern East Asia from the mid-19th century to the present. It examines the interactions between Western power and influence and Asian nationalism. An important theme is to discover why Japan and China took different paths in modern times.

12. **HIST 263 – Medieval Life in Modern Film and Literature** - This course covers aspects of the historical European Middle Ages (nobility, knighthood, religion, gender relations, etc.) through modern films and texts, using these resources to pose questions both about the medieval past and our modern need to revisit it in our own media.

13. **PHIL 251 – Moral Philosophy** - This course introduces students to the philosophical study of ethics. Students explore a variety of theories that attempt to explain morality and to establish standards for making and assessing moral judgments, including utilitarianism, deontological ethics, virtue ethics, care ethics, and biocentric ethics. Students will critically analyze each theory and explore how each offers a different perspective on contemporary moral problems.

14. **PHIL 244/1xx – Chinese Philosophy** - This course investigates the distinctive character of classical Chinese thought, focusing on the three primary schools of philosophy, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. The theories of human nature, knowledge, and reality embraced by these philosophies, as well as their conceptions of ethics and politics, are examined and contrasted with rival Chinese systems and with Western philosophical views.

15. **SOC 279 – Ethnicity, Gender, & Class in the Southwest** [this course is changing its title, however, to be a broader study including race and inequality] - A descriptive analytic inquiry into the historical, social, and economic position of the Hispanics, Native Americans, and women of the Southwest.

* Note – these descriptions are based on the 2014-2015 catalog. Most courses are only changing from four to three credits, which will reduce the amount of material that can be covered but will otherwise minimally affect the subject matter. In addition, knowing that these particular courses were going forward for State of Colorado re-approval, departments changed them very minimally, not wanting to create something significantly different from what the state had previously approved.
Appendix 5: The Resolution on LAC Proposals passed by the Faculty Senate

Whereas the process by which the administration has approved LAC proposals has been uneven and lacked transparency;

Whereas faculty are concerned about the quality of our LAC courses, especially in light of FLC’s mission to provide a liberal arts education;

Whereas the criteria used for LAC course approval have not yet been finalized by CCHE;

Whereas these draft criteria nevertheless were used to determine the status of proposed LAC courses;

Whereas the CCHE has not yet approved policy that requires all gtPathways courses to be included in the Liberal Arts Core, yet this requirement has been used to determine LAC course status,

Be it resolved regarding gtPathways course approval:

1. That the administration make their full set of criteria transparent and clear; including any additional criteria not explicitly required by the state;

2. That the administration provide a clear explanation of how those criteria were used in evaluating LAC proposals if a department/program requests that explanation (perhaps in the form of a simple check sheet listing all relevant criteria and "yes" or "no" in response);

3. That all courses approved or denied by the Dean, with titles and course numbers, be made public;

4. That an appeals process be established for a reconsideration of an individual course’s candidacy for gtPathways consideration; and that

5. Recommendations from an appeals committee, made up of Liberal Arts Core Council faculty members, be part of the appeals process.