

Task Force on Global Education
February 6th, 2009
Babbitt Administrative Center, Room 206

Present: Tom DeStefano, Michael Vincent, Karen Plager, Blase Scarnati, Kathleen Schmand, Todd Sullivan, Brandon Pitt, Jeane Olson, Harvey Charles, Eck Doerry, Susan Johnstad, Mary Lane-Kelso, Sara Sullivan

Agenda:

1. Student Development Sub-Committee Report
2. Curriculum Sub-Committee Report
3. Report from Dr. Harvey Charles
4. Other Items
5. Future Direction of the Committee
6. Adjourn

Minutes:

Tom Destefano began the meeting by letting everyone know that there will be an additional agenda item. The community engagement subcommittee will also present their recommendations. Tom then introduced Blase Scarnati, the chair of the Global Learning Subcommittee.

Blase began by saying that the subcommittee decided to expand its membership to include 40 faculty and staff members. They also decided to change the name of the subcommittee from the Curriculum Subcommittee to the Global Learning Subcommittee. The group had in total 8 meetings and a half day retreat.

Harvey Charles added that he thought that the recommendations from the Global Learning Subcommittee would receive the greatest interest and needed the greatest level of participation. Early in the process the subcommittee defined three questions:

1. What should be the characteristics of a globally competent NAU graduate?
2. What are the principal global learning outcomes that students should demonstrate?
3. What should be the principal sites in the curriculum for such learning?

The subcommittee also expanded the concept of global learning to include diversity and environmental sustainability. These themes are embedded in the NAU strategic goals and are values within the NAU culture.

The subcommittee began by discussing student learning outcomes around these themes. From these outcomes, the subcommittee created draft recommendations. They have presented the draft recommendations to the Deans, the Provost Leadership Council, and the Environmental Caucus. They will still need to present to the Academic Chairs Council and the Faculty Senate.

The subcommittee also identified two sites in the undergraduate curriculum where such learning could occur:

1. Liberal Studies
2. All Majors

Blase said that architecturally the three themes would be infused gradually and that it would build upon the work that is currently being done. He also said that it is a difficult time to present these items because faculty may perceive them as one more thing they are asked to deal with. However, the faculty cannot control what the economy or the legislature does, but this recommendation process may be an opportunity to put the people back in the process. These themes are grounded in institutional values. These recommendations can enhance what NAU does. It is an opportunity to bring us together during a difficult time.

Blase then went through the recommendations. He mentioned that the subcommittee did not believe that a student can become globally competent with only a single course. The subcommittee is not proposing to introduce new courses, but rather refocus some of the current courses.

He also added that the subcommittee's recommendations hope to enforce the importance of education abroad, and help to make it easier for students to make a semester abroad possible without it delaying their graduation.

Harvey also mentioned that in the appendix of the recommendations, the subcommittee defined the core themes and other important concepts.

The floor was then opened for questions.

Todd Sullivan proposed a concern about incorporating all three themes within a specific discipline. He used the example of his department, Music, and the difficulty of incorporating environmental sustainability themes.

Blase said that the three themes are interdependent, and that environmental sustainability does not have to encompass just biological elements.

Harvey said that the subcommittee tried to avoid making the recommendations prescriptive. They should be a broad guide. The subcommittee hopes that the Provost will appoint an implementation committee that would help departments conceptualize how to implement these changes.

Blase said that this would not be just a top down decision. He hopes that these changes would invite conversations and connect values.

Michael Vincent said that these changes would be seen by faculty as just another obligation. He said that people should be able to make suggestions. He suggested that on

page 5 he would like to add the words “linguistic diversity.” He suggested adding “language” on page 6.

Blase said that the subcommittee will add in the suggestions. He also said that in order for these recommendations to be successful it needs to be a grassroots process. The faculty need to be engaged or the recommendations won't be successful.

Michael presented another point that some departments will come back and say that they are already doing much of what is recommended.

Blase said that the implementation committee can aid with this process.

Karen Plager said that she applauds the work that the subcommittee has done. She has one concern regarding recommendation #4 (that each major will modify their curriculum to accommodate one semester of education abroad). She said that this is a great goal, but for nursing it may be difficult because they have to go by the state board requirements. She said that for other departments, it may also be a challenge because of profession regulatory bodies. She mentioned the example of the Kenya course that nursing has developed. If students want to take this course, they have to take it for extra credits, not as a course that is part of their regular academic plan.

Harvey said that this may be an issue for a number of departments. It is an ideal for all students to have the option of studying abroad. There have been cases where students express interest in studying abroad but could not because it would delay their graduation. He emphasized that departments could find ways to integrate education abroad so that if a student wants to study abroad, they won't have to spend an extra semester at NAU. The departments could identify even a couple of institutions abroad that have courses that would fit into their current curriculum and have their students study there. The student would have limited choices on where to study abroad, but they would still have the opportunity.

Todd asked is the CIE faculty summer programs are outside the semester structure the subcommittee is proposing.

Harvey said that the subcommittee determined that summer courses are not long enough for cultural immersion to occur. The subcommittee cannot equate a summer program with a semester long experience.

Tom then emphasized that the group needs to think about how these recommendations are going to be implemented. The group needs to seek out allies, both new and old.

Blase said that that process has already started. Many of the subcommittee working group members are key members of departments that can be allies.

Tom then asked how the subcommittee is going to prioritize and accomplish implementing the recommendations.

Harvey then emphasized that he does not see the subcommittee's role to be that of an implementation force. The subcommittee first needed to articulate the recommendations and work to have support from key constituencies. Then the Provost and the deans will help to implement the recommendations.

Brandon Pitt then asked how the student learning outcomes are to be assessed.

Blase said that assessment of the student learning outcomes will be done as all curriculum assessment is done-which is through the current assessment structure. He also added that individuals from the assessment department were part of the subcommittee working group.

Eck Doerry said that it is important to have the support of the upper administration in regards to these recommendations.

Michael said that implementation may be a challenge. Yesterday he had challenged his modern language staff to start implementing some of these ideas and they challenged right back. There may be many difficulties and some natural allies may not even be sure bets.

Eck mentioned the idea of creating incentives for departments to adopt these recommendations. He also said that departments might not realize how flexible they can be in terms of implementing these recommendations. For example, in engineering, students are asked to design a bridge. Faculty could place the bridge site in Africa instead of the United States. By changing the bridge's location, student would need to think about local building materials and other issues that may come up. It is a matter of refocusing courses.

Harvey said that what we are asking for is political will. The subcommittee did an audit of globally focused courses at NAU and they discovered that there are already many courses and departments on campus that are already doing what we are asking.

Harvey then talked of the next steps with the recommendations. First the Task Force would need to endorse the recommendations. After the endorsement, the subcommittee will share the recommendations with the appropriate constituencies. If these constituencies have revisions, then the subcommittee will include those revisions and bring the updated version back to the Task Force. Once this process is finished, the Global Learning Subcommittee recommendations will be incorporated into a document with the rest of the subcommittee's recommendations. This document will then be presented to the President and the Provost. If they adopt the recommendations, then the Provost can charge an implementation group with helping departments adapt/infuse the recommendations into their departments.

Blase mentioned that the subcommittee will work with the Faculty Senate since all curriculum changes need to be approved by them.

The group then voted to approve the Global Learning Subcommittee's recommendations.

Due to time constraints, the group decided to review the other subcommittee's recommendations at another time. They scheduled the next meeting for February 20th at 8am.