



Southern Oregon University Board of Trustees

Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Thursday, May 28th, 2015

DeBoer Boardroom, Hannon Library, 3rd Floor, #303

Minutes

Committee Members Present

Les AuCoin, Filiberto Bencomo (by phone), Teresa Sayre, Joanna Steinman, Steve Vincent, Susan Walsh (ex officio)

Committee Members Not Present

Judy Shih, Shea Washington

Other Trustees Present

Dennis Slattery

University Staff Present

Ryan Brown, Mark Denney, Craig Morris, Roy Saigo, Liz Shelby

Guests

None

Call to Order

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Adoption of Committee Board Minutes of April 28, 2015

Chair Sayre asked for adoption of the minutes from the April 28 meeting. Steinman noted that in the section where Scott Rex was speaking, “math teachers” should be corrected to “MAT teachers.” Dennis Slattery should be listed as another board member present. Sayre said that in the section where Kelly Moutsatson was speaking, in the paragraph “When I started here. . .”, the second to last sentence should say “Being 14 miles from the California border . . .” And in Moutsatson’s paragraph that begins “Where do we recruit?”, the second sentence should say “We recruit at every high school in the state.” Steinman said that in Jennifer Fountain’s section, in the paragraph that begins “Orientation to campus: Student Track: the second sentence should say “The advising and registration piece includes faculty integration showing our students the approachability of our faculty.” Sayre called for adoption of the minutes; Vincent so moved and AuCoin seconded; the motion passed unanimously and the minutes from the April 28 meeting were adopted as corrected.

University Studies Goals within University Seminar, House Seminar, and Honors Seminar

SOU students, faculty and staff joined in a discussion of SOU’s first-year (freshman) seminar programs. Provost Walsh gave some background on the programs and asked visitors to introduce themselves. Dr. Deborah Brown has been at SOU 19 years. She taught in the former Colloquium and is the current Director of University Seminar (USEM). Dr. Ken Mulliken is Director of the Honors College and is completing his second year; he was accompanied by Honors College student Ben Barnes. Dr. Lee Ayers is Director of the Division of Undergraduate Studies. She has been at SOU for over 17 years. Dr. Vincent Smith is an assistant professor in sociology and environmental studies, and is “captain” of the Green House; he invited two of his students, Garrett Graves and Sydney Lund, to accompany him. Les AuCoin introduced himself as a member of the Board of Trustees; he is a former faculty member and U.S. congressman. Steve Vincent is a Trustee and received undergraduate as well as graduate degrees from SOU. Joanna Steinman is a Trustee and has been employed at SOU for nearly 23 years. Teresa Sayre is a Trustee and is the Superintendent of Phoenix-Talent School District; she received undergraduate and graduate degrees from SOU. Dennis Slattery is a Trustee and received undergraduate and graduate degrees from SOU. Dr. Roy Saigo is President of Southern Oregon University. Dr. Ellen Siem teaches Physics and in the Green House; she brought two students with her, Kaitlyn Stewart and Ashleigh Anderson.

Walsh gave some background information on the SOU Board of Trustees. Currently SOU is part of the Oregon University System (OUS) but the system will disband on June 30. We are in transition to having our own institutional Board which will officially take over on July 1.

Lee Ayers: Undergraduate Studies

Dr. Ayers distributed handouts and described the umbrella of Undergraduate Studies. She described the different Strands included in the University Studies program, including the first three Foundations (oral and written communication, information literacy, critical thinking), quantitative reasoning, and Exploration and Integration courses.

Vincent Smith: Green House

Smith distributed handouts and said Green House tries to scaffold requirements over a three-year period, and to layer in a specific content area focusing on sustainability, environmental issues, and applied research. Each Friday Green House students volunteer to work on a local or regional problem. This has included working with Mt. Ashland on how they can cut costs and be more sustainable in their water and electricity management, and working with a local farm. Students do all their writing and communication on that problem. Smith introduced his student Sydney Lund, who has been involved with the Green House all year. Lund is an accelerated baccalaureate business major concentrating in accounting. She said participating in the Green House enables her to study an area outside her major. She said the Friday field trips have changed the way she feels about everything, and that everything she writes about is something that will correlate to her future career. Garrett Graves is a student from southern California; he commented that Oregon is beautiful and the Green House helped him with his general education requirements. He added that Green House fits perfectly with his interests and has helped him learn how to fix problems.

Sayre asked Graves whether the Green House gives him direction; he replied that it does, and that some friends in the more traditional University Seminar classes say that USEM is structured more like an English class. Steinman asked about larger world problems and how these change in the program. Smith replied that they try to work on a couple of problems in the course of the year, but specific work on the problem will vary from week to week. He added that there are currently 31 students in Year 1 of Green house, and 15 students continuing in Year 2. Steve Vincent asked Graves how he chose to participate in the Green House; Graves said the WUE (Western Undergraduate Exchange) program was attractive, but he is also interested in outdoor activities.

AuCoin asked what kind of student is not a good fit for the Green House. Smith said students in Green House are outside all the time, in all kinds of weather, so they must be able to participate in that kind of environment. They are in Green House classes 7 hours per week. Ayers added that parents ask about pathways; we try to create pathways that provide meaningful experiences for students' general education.

Ellen Siem: Green House and Physics

Siem described some of the topics students study in the Green House, including greenhouse gas, global warming, and energy. She explained the courses of study for first-year students and second-year students; next fall they will focus on science, technology and society. Kaitlin Stewart, a psychology major, said that the Green House provides opportunities she would not have had, and has given her more of a purpose. Another student Ashleigh Anderson, is a financial accounting major but chose the Green House because she wanted to do something that allowed her to be with a group of students before the academic year began. AuCoin asked about the faculty teaching in the Houses; Walsh said professorial faculty teach in the House programs, but University Seminar faculty teach only in USEM. Smith added that he has incorporated good pedagogical techniques learned from USEM faculty.

AuCoin asked how we measure whether the educational experience for House students is better than before we offered House Experience. Brown said she is invested in University Seminar but also teaches in the Social Justice House, and that House Experience offers a chance for students to continue their general education with a longer cohort than University Seminar, through second year and beyond. Ayers added that we need to be mindful of the retrenchment goals, and that pulling faculty out of their academic program [to teach in Houses] must be managed carefully. Ayers also pointed out the University Studies green sheet that was included in the packet, which helps students think about what kind of learner they are. Brown added that University Seminar does offer students choices through themed classes and that students' University Seminar instructor serves as their advisor in the freshman year.

Smith said there are challenges to the House Experience, and faculty are considering how to get students in the third year of House Experience to be able to do their House courses when they are concentrating on their major in upper division courses. Other issues include the cost of delivering the House program, which requires intense commitment of faculty and students.

Ken Mulliken – Honors College

This is the third pathway for fulfilling general education. Mulliken has worked in higher education for over 20 years. He is completing his second year at SOU and has never met a group as dedicated to education. Mulliken said the Honors College is both similar and different from the Houses and from USEM. Honors College accepts 25 new freshmen each year, but receives about 110 applications. The Honors College curriculum includes 50 general education credits; Honors College students choose any major, but take Honors College courses to fulfill University Studies requirements. Honors College student Ben Barnes is a biochemistry major and a student ambassador. He described the requirements and different types of learning opportunities offered by the Honors College. Mulliken provided information about the first-year

Foundation course sequence and the high level of group conversations that occur. He said that Barnes is participating in the Democracy Project and will travel to India with other Honors College students and faculty in September. Mulliken said the Honors College students are service-oriented and they transform themselves from learners to leaders.

Mulliken said Honors College students must have a 3.75 high school grade point average (GPA) to be admitted, and must maintain a 3.25 GPA in Honors College courses, plus a 3.5 GPA in their cumulative SOU coursework. There has been some attrition in the first year cohort (two students left the program). Walsh said that Honors College instructors are from the regular SOU faculty, pulled from across the university.

General Discussion

AuCoin asked whether any of these courses are team-taught; Smith said that in the Green House, first-year courses are taught by three instructors and they teach together all three terms. Siem described the teaching methods and the value of the Teaching Institute last summer, plus benefits of cohort instruction. Smith said Green House students pay \$100 per term as an extra fee to support activities, but this provides 30 weeks of activities. AuCoin said he is excited to learn about the interdisciplinary nature of these courses, and recalled a course he team-taught some years ago about the Northwest Salmon Crisis. He thanked the presenters, especially Lee Ayers. In answer to an earlier question from Steinman about whether there is an ideal split between House, USEM and Honors College, Mulliken said that for the Honors College, it can handle 25 new students each year. This number can either stay the same or double; he admitted that financial stability is a challenge.

The back of SOU business cards includes the Mission Statement of the university: Southern Oregon University is an inclusive campus community dedicated to student success, intellectual growth, and responsible global citizenship. The three general education programs described contribute to achieving these goals.

Chair Sayre thanked the students and faculty who participated in the meeting. She encouraged the trustees to send her questions and suggestions for future meeting topics.

Action Items

None discussed

Adjournment

With no further business for the Academic and Student Affairs Committee meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm.