

Liberal Education Committee Annual Report 2017-2018

Composition

Domain Representatives for the 2017-2018 academic year were:

American Experience: Llana Barber (American Studies - U)
Basic Communication: Jacqueline Emery (English - U)
Creativity & Arts: Patricia Harris (Visual Arts - U)
Diversity: Sarah Smith (Public Health - U)
Foreign Languages: Ángel Lara (Modern Languages - U)
Humanities: Nicholas Powers (English - T)
Math: David Ralston (Math - U)
Major Cultures: Edislav Manetovic (PEL - U)
Natural Science: Bright Emenike (Chemistry and Physics - U)
Social Sciences: Dana Prewitt (Sociology - U)
Western Tradition: Laura Limonic (Sociology - U)

While the new faculty bylaws only include the domain representatives as voting members of the faculty, other regular LEC meeting participants included Yumi Nicholson, the Administrative Coordinator of General Education, and Rachel Littenberg, the Registrar's Office Transfer Articulation Manager, and Shalei Simms, Academic Affairs.

The LEC met seven times over the course of the 2017-2018, four times each semester, except for one canceled meeting in the spring. Meeting dates were 9/15/17, 10/13/17, 11/10/17, 12/8/17, 2/9/18, 4/13/18, and 5/11/18. Llana Barber served as chair.

The faculty elections were not completed in time for next year's LEC to convene to elect a chair for the upcoming academic year. As the current chair's term on the LEC is expiring, J. Emery volunteered (without anyone's objection) to convene next year's first meeting to elect a chair. The committee expressed concerns that untenured faculty consistently make up the bulk of this important committee, placing substantial pressure on junior faculty to take on politically sensitive and labor-intensive service, particularly when serving as chair. This reflects a structural and cultural overreliance on the most vulnerable full-time faculty to effect campus governance at Old Westbury. The LEC is aware that the Senate has been exploring this issue and encourages those efforts.

Curriculum

The LEC approved the following courses for inclusion within the Liberal Education Curriculum, or for a second domain within the curriculum. With the exception of Diversity courses (a local requirement), these courses were then sent to SUNY for system approval as General Education courses:

- CR3117: Policing Bodies (Social Science and Diversity)
- EL 1298: ESOL IV English Composition for ESOL and Writing Workshop (Basic Communication)
- ED3700 Child Development (Social Science)

- ML3430 Intro to Pre-Columbian Cultures (Major Cultures)
- ML 3750 Themes in Afro-Cuban Cultures for (Major Cultures and Creativity & the Arts)

Domain representatives also worked with the LEC chair and R. Littenberg in the Registrar's office throughout the year to give students domain credit for qualifying transfer courses.

SUNY now requires that ASL be considered for the Foreign Language domain for all students, so the Modern Languages department will work with the LEC in the fall to bring ASL into the LE curriculum.

Liberal Education Curriculum Development Stipends

The Provost approved another round of funding for Liberal Education Curriculum Development Stipends, as a means of encouraging full-time faculty to develop new, innovative, dual-designated LE courses. The LEC solicited proposals from the faculty over the course of the academic year. The committee received and approved with enthusiasm two faculty proposals:

- SY2222: *The Work of Caring* from Jillian Crocker (Sociology) for the Social Science and Diversity domains.
- PE1650: *The Politics of Comics* from Carolyn Cocca (PEL) for the Creativity and the Arts and Diversity domains.

These faculty will now have the opportunity to develop these courses over the summer and submit completed syllabi to the LEC by September 1st, in order to gain final domain approval and receive the stipend (when course is taught).

Assessment

The LEC assesses the LE curriculum through the ongoing process of domain review on a five-year cycle. In addition, domain representatives work with the Director of Academic Assessment to conduct student-learning assessment.

In domain review, the domain representative collects syllabi for all sections of all courses offered in the domain in a given semester, and analyzes the syllabi to get a sense of the course offerings in the domain (see appendix). This year, domain review was conducted in the Math, Western Tradition, and Foreign Languages domain (by D. Ralston, L. Limonic, and Á. Lara, respectively). The LEC discussed and approved all three domain review reports during our May meeting. The committee also approved the Humanities report from Spring 2017.

The LEC also discussed draft reports of Student Learning Outcome [SLO] assessment in the Foreign Language and Math domains conducted in Spring 2017. The Foreign Languages domain representative, Á. Lara, worked with the Director of Academic Assessment to facilitate the assessment process, but Math assessment was supported by the Coordinator of the Math Redesign program.

Coordination

The LEC consistently weighs in on campus initiatives related to the curriculum, and domain representatives serve as liaisons between the committee and the departments in their domains, helping to ensure broad faculty knowledge about the LE curriculum. This is particularly

important given the recent changes in the LE curriculum precipitated by SUNY's Seamless Transfer initiative.

Y. Nicholson reviewed with the committee how to advise students within the new curriculum, so that domain representatives could best serve as a resource for the faculty in this regard. R. Littenberg reviewed with the committee the difficulties and inequities posed by OW's requirement that transfer courses be at least 3 credits to receive LE domain credit, and the inconsistency of this policy with SUNY's. The LEC voted to remove the blanket 3-credit minimum for transfer courses to receive LE credit, and to evaluate each course on its own individual merits.

The LEC met with members of the Applied Learning Campus Team, and sent a representative (J. Emery) to serve on the Applied Learning Task Force. J. Emery reported back to the LEC that the Task Force will recommend to Faculty Senate that a faculty committee and a larger college committee be utilized to oversee applied learning (including course-tagging).

Finally, the Math domain review and SLO assessment indicated that many students were being advised into MA1020 who likely would have been better served by one of the other proficiency courses, such as MA2050 Quantitative Reasoning. In response, D. Ralston solicited information on Math requirements in a range of majors and drafted an advising flow chart to help advisors suggest the math proficiency course for which students will be best suited. The LEC discussed the draft and offered feedback at our April 2018 meeting, and the final version should be approved and distributed in the fall.

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