

Minutes of the Faculty Senate
Friday, March 28th, 2003
SC 214, 3:30 p.m.

Members present: Senators, Bradie, Cartwright, Game, Gray, Keeling, Kidd, Marshall, Purtle, Schell, Siochi, Underwood, Weiss, Wheeler, and Winder

Members absent: Senator Doyle

- I. Faculty Senate President Tim Marshall called the meeting to order at 3: 36 p.m.
- II. President's Report
 - A. The next General Faculty meeting will be held April 16th in Gaines at 4:00 p.m. The final Faculty Senate meeting will be held on April 18th at 3:30 p.m. in SC 233.
 - B. Registration starts next week. IDEA surveys will be conducted April 7-19th. The deadline for Paideia is today. The Paideia conference will be held at CNU on April 25th and 26th. Admitted students day is April 25th.
 - C. President Marshall spoke with Diane Catanzaro about the Administrative Evaluation Committee. He will ask people to serve on the committee and will pass along the information provided by Dr. Catanzaro.
 - D. The administration is still taking applications for Summer Stipends.
 - E. Senator Doyle is on maternity leave, creating a need for another Senator from the Liberal Arts to serve on the Nominations Committee. Senator Underwood agreed to serve.
 - F. There were questions about proxy voting at the Special Faculty Meeting. President Marshall did not invite proxy voting because we are to conduct meetings according to Robert's Rules of Order, and the rule strongly discourages proxy voting as it interferes with the deliberative nature of votes by assembly.
 - G. Yesterday EPC met. The SGA president noted that Springfest and SGA elections are coming up April 11th. April 4th is Grounds Day. President Tribble is appointing an ad hoc committee largely made up of students to encourage student participation on campus - especially on weekends. Chief of Staff Perry reported that the governor did not amend the budget so the tuition increase will be fixed at 5%. If there is another round of budget cuts, universities can increase tuition to cover those costs. She also mentioned that the governor will ask for a 2.25% salary increase for all government employees to take effect November 25th. This recommendation may not survive legislative veto. The BAC is now meeting weekly again. SCHEV will soon tell universities how much they will need to change enrollment projections to meet needs later in the decade. Executive Vice President Brauer talked about safety on campus. Housekeeping and Grounds will have to carry picture IDs. There is also a move to get uniforms for Housekeeping and Grounds and move to hourly or classified workers rather than temporary workers. They are also looking at card swipes to enter closed buildings. Vandalism has become more of an issue. The bids are out for the new residence hall. The bids for

the parking deck will go out in June. Provost Summerville spoke about talking with students and parents about denying the request of RSWM student to walk at graduation prior to completing graduation requirements. He shared his letter. He commented that he has had several phone calls from unhappy parents since the letter came out. The provost also talked about faculty recruitment. All are replacement positions. Five are complete and three are pending. One is being converted to a restricted position. Dean O'Connell commented that 500 students have been admitted in the last week (they have not yet accepted us).

- H. Linda Johnson will co-chair The Family Weekend Committee with Donna Eddleman.

III. Approval of the Minutes from 2/21

- A. Senator Kidd moved to approve the minutes. Senator Wheeler seconded the motion.
- B. Senators, Bradie, Cartwright, Game, Gray, Kidd, Purtle, Schell, Underwood, Wheeler, and Winder voted to approve Senator Siochi abstained. The motion passed.

IV. Report from the Task Force on Curriculum and Academic Life:

- A. Co-chair Susan St. Onge spoke to the Senate on the Progress of the Task Force. She gave an overview of where the Task Force has been and where it is going. The Vision document was distributed and Dr. St. Onge added context. This is her 4th curricular reform. She is impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the Task Force members to CNU. The Task Force is working on proposals worthy of the faculty and worthy of the institution CNU has become. The Foundations of Liberal Learning document has also been distributed. (A copy is attached to the end of the minutes as well.) This FLL document is not a template for what is or is not going to show up in the core curriculum put forth by the Task Force. Many of the ideas have been inspired by the Greater Expectations document put forth by the American Association of Colleges & Universities. It asks the place of liberal learning in the world we now live in. A great deal of the FLL was also inspired by the Academic Culture reports from the departments. One of the recurring themes was that the laundry list approach was no longer an approach to liberal learning that did any justice to our institution or to student learning. The FLL is the preamble.
- B. Beyond that the Task Force is working on proposals in 4 areas: (1) The Signature (This will be CNU's niche - something that defines the CNU experience. It would set out curriculum apart from other institutions. The Task Force wants to stress scholarship, leadership and service in some manner.); (2) The First Year Experience (This might involve an academic component to orientation or Freshman seminars with follow-up faculty/student interaction in the Spring); (3) The Core Curriculum (There are at least 4 models circulating in the Task Force now.) There will be some set of required courses combined with Areas of Inquiry that will allow the students greater choices in how to fulfill their liberal learning requirements at CNU. It moves away from the laundry list approach; (4) The Integration of Liberal Learning Principles Across the Curriculum and

Across the 4-years (The Task Force wanted to preserve departmental autonomy without divorcing the ideals of liberal learning embedded in the core from work in the major.) All proposals are just that - they are proposals. They are not set in stone. Meetings with department chairs and departments will begin in the Fall, as will discussions in General Faculty meetings. The Task Force wants as much broad input from the faculty as possible. Input necessary to get these proposals ready to go through the proper channels. The timetable right now suggests that final proposals will be ready mid to late fall. All of next Spring should be dedicated to implementation issues. Our consultant, Ann Ferren will help us determine the implementation timeline. Some ideas may need to be phased in over time. This isn't just about curriculum - it is about the heart and soul of the institution.

Senator Keeling arrived at 4:05.

Senator Weiss arrived at 4:25

The Task Force chairs will come back in October to discuss progress and input.

- V. Committee Reports:
 - A. Nominations committee: Senator Cartwright circulated copies of the e-mail distributed by the committee and the current committee make ups along with a list of Senators who are up for re-election and those who are finished with their terms. One change is that Senator Purtle is up for re-election. More nominations are needed for the Faculty Senate. Changes to the Handbook and Faculty Senate elections require a quorum and a vote at the General Faculty Meeting.
 - B. Elections committee: They need the nominations as soon as possible.
 - C. Senator Wheeler spoke about the committee to establish criteria for Distinguished Professor. They are currently researching information from other institutions. They will report on April 18th. President Marshall indicated that the Dean of CLAS was concerned that the Handbook was changed in 1990 without FS collaboration. The Dean wants us to investigate how this came about and who authorized it.
 - D. Senator Winder spoke on the Post-tenure review procedures committee. The committee has been meeting regularly and productively. There is some agreement, but no formal proposal. There is a sense that all faculty should face a regularly scheduled post-tenure review that would involve peers. It would probably come around every 6 years. In addition, there is an agreement that there should be an option for non-scheduled post-tenure reviews. Such reviews should not come suddenly or as a surprise. Such reviews would be triggered by an unsatisfactory annual review for 2 out of 3 years - not just 1 unsatisfactory review. All of this is on top of the annual Eval-6 review. The committee expects to have a recommendation soon, but implementation is not planned until Fall 2005.

Senator Kidd left at 5:00

- E. Senator Keeling spoke on the Farewell Reception Committee. Students in

RSWM are helping as a class project. The current thinking is it will be done at the Mariner's Museum the Weekend before graduation. (There are a number of conflicts for that time - Paideia and the ODK ceremony.) Senator Keeling will be sending out notifications to the Faculty being honored and will request input from them.

VI. Old Business

- A. Finalizing the Family Weekend Committee: President Marshall reported that Mary Best, Linda Johnson, Tanya Sweet, Tarek Abdel Fattah and Donna Eddleman will serve.
- B. Discussion of Handbook Changes Regarding Phone and On-campus Interviews and Grievance Procedures:
 - 1. Instructional Faculty Personnel Regulations: The Faculty Senate's concerns were discussed with the administration. Telephone interviews can be forgone if you talk to the provost or appropriate person. There were concerns about the number of candidates and how that is determined. It was rewritten to allow for more flexibility. The other concern was that the provost was left out of the list of individuals who could approve exceptions, he is now included. The Faculty Senate can make a counter proposal to the provost if we are unhappy with the modifications. There have been substantial changes that address our original concerns. The sense of the Senate is to recommend that the changes proceed as amended.
 - 2. Changes to the Grievance process: The Faculty Senate's request for 20 working days is too long according to the provost. The provost wants to cap it at one calendar month. The move is from two weeks to one month for grievance. Our original recommendation would have allowed the process to go on for up to two months. The provost feels this is too long. President Marshall inquired as to the sense of the Senate on this issue. The time has essentially been doubled. Question; Why is two months too long? We don't know. We could suggest that the first 15 days become 20 and the second 15 days become 10. Senator Keeling moved the change. Senator Purtle seconded. This still keeps the process within one month. The result would be 20 days for the informal process and 10 days for the formal process.
- C. The senate discussed nomination for the SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award: President Marshall explained that in the past, the Senate (or SEC) has approved the nominations and asked the nominees to prepare a dossier over the summer for submission to SCHEV in the Spring. The Senate elected to take this course and therefore approves the recommendation of Dr. Quentin Kidd.

VII. New Business

- A. Emeritus Recommendations from the School of Business were considered.
 - 1. Jack Anderson: Senator Weiss moved to approve the nomination,

Senator Keeling seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Sang Park: Senator Weiss moved to approve the nomination, Senator Siochi seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. UAC Recommendation on Part-time Student Policy: Discussion: The 6 year limit on graduation seems to conflict with President Tribble's remarks concerning part-time students. His remarks suggest that students may be admitted as part-time students and may take as long as necessary to complete their degrees. This is a reasonable policy. We want students to make progress toward graduation, but we want to be sensitive to the needs of part-time students. We don't want to make a policy that would prohibit part-time students (including CNU staff) from working toward their degrees at a pace that fits with their work schedules. Senator Weiss moved to have the 6-year limit apply only to full time students. Senator Keeling seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Senator Weiss moved to approve the remaining changes to Handbook language concerning the part-time student rule. Senator Keeling offered a friendly amendment to approve the changes, given that they will be placed in a grammatically correct format. Senator Weiss accepted the amendment. Senator Underwood seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. UAC Recommendation concerning the 5-year MAT program. Senator Weiss moved to approve the recommendation. Senator Schell seconded the motion. Discussion: President Marshall shared a faculty member's concerns about the program meeting all accreditation requirements and about having individuals without Ph.D.s teaching in a Master's program. Senator Keeling explained that the majority of courses would be taught by Ph.D.s in the various departments and that the individuals from NNPS who would be chosen to teach the remaining courses would have distinguished careers of substantial length. The Senators observed that such a level of experience would offset the lack of a Ph.D. Senator Keeling also pointed out that CNU may hire faculty into the departments in the future whose primary doctoral degree is in Education. There is precedent for this. The question was called. The motion passed unanimously.

D. UCC Recommendation on the 42-Hour Rule: Discussion: What is the purpose of this change? To make the 42-hour rule a limit on what departments may require, not on what students may take. Does allowing students to take their electives in their major field really do justice to the idea of a broad liberal arts education? Isn't breadth what students get for General Education? No, they need breadth at the upper level as well. Some of these concerns may be addressed by recommendations coming out of the CAL Task Force. Why are we considering this now if CAL Task is considering it? Because the rule we have now does not seem to make sense. It seems poorly justified. What are hours in the major? Is it hours taught by the department in which the major is housed? Is it any hours required for the major, no matter in what department they are taught? Do support courses count in the 42-hours allowed? Who determines whether 100 & 200 level courses will be counted? The department or the student may decide. This needs to be clarified. Senator Gray moved to approve the recommendation,

given that it may be revised in light of the work of the CAL Task Force. Senator Schell seconded. Senator Siochi offered a friendly amendment to Senator Gray's motion to amend the recommendation to read under ***Declaration of Major: Introductory (100- and 200-level) courses need not be counted in the 42-hour maximum requirement, at the discretion of the department housing the major.*** The question was called. Senators Bradie, Cartwright, Game, Gray, Keeling, Wheeler and Winder voted to approve. Senators Weiss, Purtle and Siochi voted against the motion. The motion passed.

- E. **Recommendation from the Elections Committee for Changing the Date of Senate Elections in the Handbook:** It was suggested that the date be moved to the end of the third full week of April. Senator Underwood moved to approve. Senator Weiss seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Adjournment: Senator Keeling moved to adjourn. Senator Siochi seconded the motion. The Senate adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Lori J. Underwood, Faculty Senate Secretary

**Task Force on Curriculum and Academic Life
Interim Report
Submitted to CNU Faculty Senate 03/26/2003**

Campus Vision/Campus Context: Our Mandate

The dramatic changes at CNU in the last decade are undeniable: the campus has evolved rapidly into a four-year school of choice for Virginia students who seek a liberal arts education with the option of a dynamic on-campus experience. The physical plant of the University obviously bears the stamp of those changes, as the extensive building projects on campus testify to a redirection in the campus vision and its mission. CNU has become a vital center of student activity and will increasingly become a center of cultural activity, as new students take advantage of the facilities being constructed and the University builds a cultural program to engage their minds and bodies outside the classroom.

The core elements of the CNU educational experience remain largely unaffected by these changes: professors remain committed to high quality pedagogy; students encounter a community of professionals both in the classroom and in all areas of the University's administration and student services divisions; and faculty and students together have found increasingly creative and productive ways to work to engage themselves in intellectual growth.

While there have been substantial changes in the physical layout of the campus, and recent dramatic changes in the demography of the student body, the curriculum at CNU has remain largely unchanged during this period. If CNU is to pass through this period of tumultuous change with momentum, the faculty at CNU must take this opportunity to re-imagine the curriculum as an engine for the vital renewal of the campus intellectual experience, including the entire campus community, from faculty to students to administrative staff to the athletic department. Every aspect of a CNU student's campus experience should reflect the central values of the institution, not just the seat time in which students engage directly with faculty. If our transformation is to be successful, organs of the University that are not directly connected with the curriculum will need to re-orient themselves toward active support of the intellectual life of the campus.

The mandate for transforming the curriculum may have come from the President and the Provost, but the need has been evident for some time to faculty members who regularly teach in the current general education program. Indeed, though our deliberations over the past year have unearthed considerable anxiety about the final outcome, they have also revealed a near-universal sense among the faculty, both on and off the Task Force, that reform of the curriculum is necessary. It is the shared belief of the Task Force that the current curriculum, while functional for its time and place, neither reflects the goals of the present campus nor offers the important opportunity for productive change necessary to renew the pedagogical purpose of any institution of higher learning.

The Task Force on Curriculum and Academic Life is not primarily an organ for proposing to the faculty specific curricular reforms for approval. Rather, we have been, and will continue to be, the locus of an active and vital debate about the what the University can do: to take best advantage of its faculty talent; to support and encourage the most innovative and successful pedagogical strategies; and to encourage both faculty and

student research that extends beyond the classroom. From that discussion have emerged a wide range of proposals, which share the common intent of realizing the goal of transforming the CNU curriculum into a dynamic, learning-centered device for student growth and development across four years. We have discussed substantial impediments to change and are well aware that problems remain to be resolved. We believe, however, that the widespread awareness that the current curriculum no longer best serves our students or are faculty necessitates changes.

The material that follows will outline the major areas of work in which the Task Force has been engaged. Copies of this report will be available for distribution through departments, as well as on the Web, http://www.cnu.edu/clas/cal_index.htm, where supplemental materials, including notes from Task Force meetings, are already available. The proposals intend to advance the goal of CNU's change toward a dynamic, learning-centered educational environment in which both students and teachers remain vitally engaged in intellectual growth and development. These proposals are not a blueprint, but rather an invitation for discussion, in which all CNU faculty must take part in for the University to change productively. The Task Force will hold open meetings on these ideas in the Spring and next Fall and we hope all faculty will attend and ask questions that will promote effective and productive change at CNU.

Narrative of Task Force Work

The Task Force was convoked in January, 2002 by President Paul Tribble and given its mandate by Provost Richard Summerville in February (see Task Force web page). Dean of Faculty Douglas Gordon assembled the Task Force for its first full meeting on April 9, 2002, where President Tribble repeated the mandate of the Task Force to imagine a "dramatic transformation" of the educational experience at CNU. Since that initial meeting, the Task Force has met as a full deliberative body seven times. Notes from these meetings are available on the Task Force web-page: http://www.cnu.edu/clas/cal_index.htm.

In the spring of 2002, the Task Force met twice to discuss the academic culture reports and to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the present curriculum. The purpose of those meetings was largely to begin working as a group to determine those elements of shared intellectual and pedagogical principle, which could then form the basis of further debate and exploration as the Task Force continued in its work.

Over the summer of 2002, the Task Force divided into five research groups, each of which studied 5-8 different curricular models from universities nationwide. The research groups submitted reports at the first full Task Force meeting of the Fall semester, identifying those aspects of innovative and experimental curricula that looked useful to consider further. The research groups also identified curricular initiatives that seemed less successful and/or less compatible with our student and faculty population. Reports from the research groups are available on the Task Force webpage.

At the end of the summer, Dean Gordon appointed Dr. Susan St. Onge and Dr. Ashby Kinch as faculty co-chairs of the Task Force. Drs. Gordon, St. Onge, and Kinch then divided the Task Force into five subcommittees, each headed by a chair and grouped according to the following areas of attention: 1) General Education/First-Year College (Chair: Quentin Kidd); 2) Liberal Learning Across the Curriculum (Chair: John Hardie); 3) Teaching, Research, and Scholarship (Chair: Bobby Bartels); 4) Faculty and Student

Commitments (Chair: Tom Berry); and 5) University Governance and Academic Community (Co-Chairs: Ronnie Cohen and Cheryl Matthews). Throughout the fall, subcommittees met bi-weekly to discuss strengths and weaknesses in the current curriculum and academic culture and to generate ideas about how best to augment strengths and address weaknesses. Subcommittees posted interim reports on the Web CT component established for the Task Force.

Dr. Carol Schneider, President of the AAC&U, visited our campus on Friday, October 3. She delivered a talk for the entire campus community in Gaines Theater on the state of curricular reform proposals, entitled, "Liberal Learning: The View from the American Association of Colleges & Universities." She then met with the Task Force for a question and answer session on general issues in curricular reform.

Due to the tumultuous events of the fall, the Task Force was greatly impeded in its work by the commitments of faculty members to University committees and Senate deliberations on the budget crisis. In addition, the elimination of three departments resulted in the resignation of three Task Force members. Despite the strain, the subcommittees continued to meet and generate ideas, which were synthesized in a meeting in November.

In addition, in the Fall each University Department was assigned one-two Task Force members, who were asked to visit a department meeting to field questions and solicit feedback about changes in the curriculum. A little under half of these visits took place: some Department Chairs failed to respond to invitations, and in a couple of cases Task Force members were unable to find compatible times. Those visits that did take place were enormously successful and played a direct and productive role in Task Force discussion, as they frequently identified problems, concerns, and even potential solutions to specific curricular problems. Reports from Department Visits are available on the Task Force webpage.

By this time, the intentional overlap in certain areas of responsibility had led to a need to re-organize the Task Force. We waited to re-organize, however, until the subcommittees, which had developed considerable rapport within themselves, had a chance each to speak with our consultant, Ann Ferren, who met with the Task Force as a whole for a morning session on Friday, January 9, 2003, and with each subcommittee for one hour. On Saturday, January 10, 2003 Dr. Ferren met with the whole Task Force for 3 hours in a seminar devoted to making curricular decisions. At the end of this meeting, Dr. Ferren charged individual Task Force meetings to generate their own model curricula, based on their experiences thus far and their understanding of the vision of the University.

The Task Force reconvened on January 25, 2003, to discuss these model curricula, a meeting which resulted in the creation of three proposal committees: 1) The First-Year Experience and the CNU "Signature"; 2) The Liberal Learning Core; and 3) Liberal Learning in Upper-Level Courses. These committees met on a weekly basis to create a set of proposals to distribute to the whole Task Force in two work sessions on February 7th and February 14th in preparation for Ann Ferren's visit on February 20th-22nd.

Ann Ferren's second visit to CNU allowed her to meet individually with each of the subcommittees, which had submitted to her proposals in advance of her visit so that she

could come with feedback and suggestions. Dr. Ferren also met with the Honors Council, chaired by Dr. Jay Paul; the Ad Hoc Committee on Teaching Evaluation, chaired by Scott Pollard; the Office of Student Life; and the Provost. In an extended session on Academic Culture, she also met with 50+ people from across the University, representing every major campus constituency, including, among others, the Offices of Admissions, Campus Police, Financial Aid, Plant, the Registrar, Student Life, and University Advancement.

Summary of Academic Culture Reports

The process of curricular reform actually began with the campus-wide discussion of liberal learning entrusted to each department in the Fall of 2001. The product of that discussion, the Academic Culture Reports, were essential to the initial phase of Task Force deliberation. In an early meeting, we read and discussed the shared themes and ideas in those reports in an effort to determine what the commonly-held pedagogical and intellectual values are. Our intent has been to focus on building from the common ground we as a university community share already. Below is a statement that attempts to summarize briefly those commonly-shared themes of the Academic Culture Reports. It is followed by the analyses of the Reports written by Dr. Kelly Cartwright.

Statement of Common Values

We believe that the relationship between faculty and students is the heart of the intellectual experience at CNU. We seek to sustain a vibrant culture of learning in which students and faculty spur one another to the higher goal of maximizing personal and intellectual development. Though we span diverse academic disciplines, all our programs share common intellectual and educational values. Students will find faculty who:

- ❖ promote education as a means of attaining a quality of life beyond material success;
- ❖ recognize the importance of framing present experience within the traditions of the cultural past;
- ❖ value the impact of global culture on the life of the modern individual;
- ❖ approach technology critically and use it effectively in their teaching and research;
- ❖ emphasize thought process as well as product;
- ❖ develop a variety of modes of thinking (creative, communicative, and analytic);
- ❖ urge students to set for themselves high standards and expectations for intellectual growth and performance;
- ❖ encourage students to explore ideas beyond their chosen disciplines.

Summary of Major Themes in Academic Culture Reports (Dr. Kelly Cartwright)

The following paragraphs describe eight themes that emerged from reading, analysis, and the discussion of the Task Force.. Each theme represents a recurring issue that departments and individual faculty deemed an important aspect of a Liberal Arts curriculum. The themes include the following: Student Competencies, Treatment of Freshman Students, Professional and Academic Life, Teaching, Involving Students in the Academic (and Greater) Community, Curriculum, Students' Cognitive Development, and Interdisciplinary Connections.

1. STUDENT COMPETENCIES

Many departments focused on the skills and competencies that a liberally educated student should exhibit, emphasizing that student skills and competencies were more important to a LA curriculum than specific courses (that is, that the process of learning

was more important than the content). Some examples of such competencies included flexibility; open-ended thinking; the ability to make choices based on ethics; critical thinking; analysis, integration, and synthesis; written, oral and technological communication skills; the ability to articulate well-reasoned ideas; the ability to see coherence and commonalities in the major and other disciplines. In essence, according to Provost Summerville, the liberal arts curriculum is the “engine that produces free minds.” Stearns (2002, p. 44) writes that a curriculum “instills habits of mind” so that students can “appreciate a variety of issues,” “think independently and critically,” and “learn independently, outside as well as within their ultimate area of specialization.”

2. TREATMENT OF FRESHMAN STUDENTS

Many departments emphasized the need to provide special experiences for freshmen students, such as freshmen seminars, to introduce them to the kinds of thinking that will be required throughout their academic careers. Additionally, some departments suggested that this process would be facilitated if we (the faculty) know something about the students. Some suggestions to facilitate this process were to listen to the students, to have students write personal autobiographies, and to gather information and statistics on the freshman class to distribute to faculty before the beginning of the academic year. Common academic experiences were also emphasized as important to shaping the academic lives of freshmen. For example, providing a “reading list” for entering freshmen was suggested to provide a common ground for instructional purposes and facilitate interdisciplinary connections. Having smaller class sizes for introductory courses would facilitate faculty-student interaction and face-to-face time with students; and engaging students in reading and writing, even at the introductory level, would begin to foster these abilities at the beginning of the academic career.

3. PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC LIFE

In order for faculty to provide the kind of environment necessary for students’ intellectual growth, many departments emphasized the need for faculty to continue to develop intellectually as well. Active scholarship feeds and nourishes teaching. Thus, faculty should receive support for scholarship and professional development – both financial support and released time. Additionally, departments suggested several other ways to aid faculty professional development such as support for student research, paid office and teaching assistants; rewards for good teaching and scholarship; a reduced teaching load; funded conference travel.

4. TEACHING

Several departments viewed certain aspects of teaching as important to the liberal arts experience such as rigor, common goals in multiple section courses, small class size, insuring face-to-face time with students, making connections across courses, and creating opportunities to share pedagogy and team teach courses. Interdependence and cooperation of faculty were deemed essential to the liberal arts educational experience.

5. INVOLVING STUDENTS IN THE ACADEMIC (AND GREATER) COMMUNITY

Several departments emphasized that liberally educated students should be involved in the life of the university outside the classroom. Several suggestions were made to accomplish this goal such as establishing a university-wide undergraduate journal, providing undergraduate research opportunities and funding, engaging students outside classrooms in informal interactions like “brown bag lunch talks,” and providing

opportunities for service learning. Practicum experiences, internship experiences, and service-learning experiences (such as that offered by the United Campus Ministries Praxis program at CNU), especially when linked to the academic curriculum in tangible ways, may all serve to foster student involvement in the greater community.

6. CURRICULUM

Departments suggested several features that they believed to be essential to quality liberal arts curricula. For example, many suggested that “educational coherence” was essential and was not accomplished with the current “menu” system of general education courses that we offer. Others suggested that we must provide students practice with the essential skills and competencies that we wish them to learn and that opportunities for such practice should extend across courses. Some suggested that we offer “blocks” of courses that develop essential skills and competencies rather than a “laundry list” or “menu” of courses. Moreover, it was suggested that we consider evaluating students on demonstrated competencies rather than on number of credit hours completed in a particular content area. Some departments argued that students should have more freedom in designing their own curriculum because such freedom will provide students a sense of ownership and intrinsic motivation for their academic work. The curriculum should provide both breadth and depth of knowledge. Some departments suggested taking a “top-down” approach in which students take courses in a particular topic (as an example of content in a discipline) before taking survey courses. The curriculum and its structure indicate to students what the faculty deems important. It reflects our goals. Essentially, the curriculum is the way that we will represent the world to students. Finally, the curriculum should not be viewed as static. Instead, we should ensure that a mechanism is in place to review and revise the curriculum in the coming years.

7. STUDENTS’ COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Many departments emphasized the notion that a quality liberal arts education teaches students HOW to think (process) as opposed to WHAT to think (content). Although certain content area competencies are important, we must also emphasize the processes of learning and thinking. We are shaping minds. Thus, we must understand how students think and learn, and then structure the curriculum to support and foster such processes. One department (PCSE) suggested that Task Force efforts must be guided by what is known about how people learn, and recommended we read a report by the National Research Council entitled “How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School.” Confrontational and experiential learning were also suggested as methods by which cognitive development can be fostered in students.

8. INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

Finally, in order to foster students’ ability to see coherence across domains and think flexibly, some departments urged that the new curriculum provide opportunities for collaborative and cooperative teaching, especially across different academic disciplines. Departments noted a “lack of transfer of knowledge” from one course to another within a discipline (as well as transfer across disciplines) as a problem commonly seen among students. Other suggestions to help alleviate this problem included team-taught courses, freshman seminars, opportunities to share pedagogy, and presenting connections between domains within classes.

Foundations of Liberal Learning at Christopher Newport University

This document is *not* intended to correlate with specific curricular changes. It is, rather, a statement of the general principles and goals on which the Task Force believes curricular change must proceed. These goals are written specifically to focus attention on pedagogy and learning; the underlying pedagogical goal of all liberal education is the principle of *active learning*. Specific Task Force proposals that attempt to realize these goals will be forthcoming in the weeks ahead, but we believe that the University needs to come to some clear consensus about what ideas should drive curricular change. Task Force discussion about ways to realize these goals has been varied and led to many alternative strategies for implementation. As we share this material with the campus, we hope individual faculty will share their ideas on innovative ways to realize these goals.

Principles of Liberal Learning

A liberal education emphasizes breadth and balance in a student's academic experience. The program of study developed by the CNU faculty invites students to participate in a rich, multi-faceted tradition of intellectual exploration grounded in the common principles of liberal learning. Our students are actively encouraged to empower themselves intellectually and practically and to be aware of and accept responsibility for the world in which they live.

Goals of Liberal Learning

To be empowered intellectually and practically, CNU students should be able to:

- effectively communicate orally, visually, in writing
- demonstrate competency in a second language
- solve problems using quantitative and qualitative tools
- interpret and evaluate information from a variety of sources
- understand and work with diverse groups
- transform knowledge and beliefs into action
- engage in the creative process and cultivate one's imaginative powers
- develop the habits of mind that are part of a lifelong pursuit of knowledge

To be aware of the world in which they exist, CNU students should understand:

- the historical and philosophical traditions that have shaped the world
- the interrelations within and among global and cross-cultural communities
- the means of modeling the natural, social, and technical worlds
- the principles and histories of liberal democracies
- the depth of knowledge that allows one to make a significant contribution to society
- [the variety of] ways of using appropriate media to present knowledge gained from the synthesis of critical research and critical thinking.

To be responsible for the world in which they exist, CNU students should value:

- intellectual honesty, moral identity and social justice, and the discernment of the ethical consequences of actions
- active participation as an ethical and engaged citizen of a diverse society

- a deep understanding of one's self [and] recognition of the complex identities of others, their histories, and their cultures
- their own physical and emotional well being

Practice of Liberal Learning

The curriculum at CNU allows student to accomplish these goals through their coursework, their scholarship, and their experiences outside the classroom in activities on campus, in internships, and through service to the broader community.

Proposal: First-Year Experience

Curricular Rationale

Beginning last spring when the Task Force began its work, a consistent theme in our discussion has been the importance of addressing student preparation for college-level reading, thinking, and writing. The Academic Culture Reports from Fall 2001 continually re-iterate departmental concerns that students were not adequately prepared and/or faculty pedagogy did not adequately address student transition from high school level work to college-level engagement.

Three separate, but inter-related needs continually reappear in faculty discussions: 1) a need to stimulate student self-awareness of the learning process to cognitive development; 2) a need to encourage student involvement in the wider intellectual culture of the University; and 3) a need for common intellectual experience. In the current curriculum, responsibility for addressing these issues is dispersed: first to the two departments who teach University-wide courses in the general education (English and History); and second, to the departments, who seek to remedy perceived deficits through focused pedagogy in Introductory courses.

Attention to student transition is part of a nationwide trend, emphasize by the AAC&U in all its work, but evident as well in a broad trend in universities nationwide: in 2001, 71% of 4,000+ accredited campuses offered a first-year seminar.

The Task Force has widely agreed that substantial changes are required to encourage a more productive transition for first-year students. This document outlines two proposals: 1) an adjustment in Academic Orientation to emphasize that student transition to college is both a social and an intellectual transition; and 2) a new, first-year seminar specifically addressing the needs outlined above.

Academic Orientation: Welcome Week

In conjunction with the First-Year Seminar (outlined below), this proposal outlines some possible changes for First-Year Student Orientation. As Ann Ferren stressed in her presentation to the Task Force, all members of a good organization know the way in which their specific labor contributes to that institution's purpose. This proposal is predicated on the assumption that CNU's primary aim is cultivating the intellectual growth of our students.

- 1) Establish a common reading for the incoming class of students, chosen by the committee overseeing the first-year seminar in consultation with the relevant campus organizations who will participate in both Registration and Orientation (Registrar, Academic Advising, Student Life). The reading should have the following qualities: 1) that it intersects with the on-campus theme for the following year (see below); 2) that it is selected with attention to the appropriate reading and thinking skills of incoming students: the reading should challenge, but not daunt; 3) that it has the potential to be developed or expanded through further readings in the First-Year Seminar.
- 2) Build into Welcome Week activities one-two days to provide space for lectures, symposia, discussions;
- 3) Establish Discussion Groups for Welcome Week to discuss the common reading. Ideally, these discussion groups would include all interested members of the CNU community: professors, staff, administrators at all levels, including the President.

Indeed, an ideal form of interaction with our community would also involve extending an invitation to the Lifelong Learning group, to local community leaders, and to interested alumni. If our common tie is intellectual growth, then we need to access all our resources and demonstrate our commitment to a lifetime of intellectual inquiry.

- 4) Establish a relevant culture series to begin during Welcome Week with a film, concert, play, or other public presentation.

As a practical matter, the text would need to be announced early enough to give Academic Advising an opportunity to build this into the Summer Registration and Orientation Program. The book could actually be presented to students by their advisors during Welcome Week, with the cost of the book built into the fee. Students would need to be reminded of the reading in a mailing (preferably signed by the President as an encouragement to intellectual growth), at Summer Registration by advisors, and probably again during Welcome Week. Convocation Speakers might usefully allude to it, and faculty might be encouraged to integrate discussion of the common reading into courses during the first week to spread the culture of learning campuswide.

First-Year Seminar

We propose a first-year seminar taught outside of departments by faculty from across campus. Capped at 20-25 students per class, the core course would help students to develop an intentional approach to their learning, thinking and communication. The seminar would focus on cultivating student attention to the expectations and culture of the academic community, as well as encouraging participation in the broader culture of the University.

This plan would require roughly 48-60 sections per semester to meet an incoming class of 1200 students. The course theme would be announced, and syllabi submitted and reviewed, early enough to insure inclusion in the Catalogue for the subsequent year and to guarantee that the Registrar had adequate time to include specific course proposals for freshmen registration. While the dedication of faculty resources to this seminar would be substantial, the value is equally great: a focused, idea-centered transition for our students into our intellectual community.

A robust version of the seminar would include a year-long mentoring role for the faculty who teach students in the fall. Faculty might engage in one or more of the following activities in the spring semester:

- ❖ meet one-on-one with each student at least once in the following semester to discuss transition issues, as well as long-term intellectual development;
- ❖ maintain regular contact with the group via e-mail or Web CT;
- ❖ meet with the group to attend cultural or sporting events.

Although it would be practical and expedient to link this role to the academic advising and registration process, it need not be. Indeed, having a *separate* mentoring relationship with a different faculty might be advantageous for students, who need to develop a broader perspective of the institution.

A longer document, to be completed in the next few weeks, will outline the primary curricular elements for the Seminar, as well as provide a richer context for the developmental justification of such a curriculum.

Conclusion

The First-Year Seminar would thus help:

- 1) to socialize students to the expectations and culture of the academic community;
- 2) to integrate them into the university as a whole;
- 3) to help them develop the skills of empowered, informed, and responsible learners;
- 4) to create strong connections with faculty members;
- 5) to emphasize the connectedness of knowledge and inquiry; and
- 6) to demonstrate interdisciplinary learning.

The Task Force wishes to stress, however, that this course proposal will not achieve the general goals of liberal learning alone. This course must be coordinated with efforts throughout the Core Curriculum to emphasize the basic values iterated in the Foundations of Liberal Learning document. Indeed, as the Academic Orientation Proposal stresses, the ideal outcome of curriculum reform ought rightly to be a re-alignment of values across the campus so that students encounter positive re-enforcement of central principles in all of their educational experiences.

Subsequent proposals in the areas of the Liberal Learning throughout the Curriculum and the CNU Signature Experience will emphasize the need for a developmental curriculum, in which students encounter important non-disciplinary ways of thinking throughout the four years at CNU, rather than clustering all their so-called "general education" experiences in the first two years.