

Office of the General Faculty Organization

April 13, 2010

Susan Jeffords
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
University of Washington Bothell

Dear Vice Chancellor Jeffords:

As you know, in response to a third-year review of the Center for University Studies and Programs by a Task Force appointed by you and the Chair of the General Faculty Organization, the EC took up the review in fall of 2009 by having all programs read and discuss the review in their respective programs. The EC then began in winter quarter 2010 its own discussions, including a General Faculty Organization meeting devoted exclusively to CUSP.

We want to formally thank the CUSP Review Task Force for its work, the programs for devoting time in meetings to discuss this issue, and to you and your office for patience and support as we work through one of the most important issues facing our institution.

We have formulated our response to the review in a series of recommendations to your office. These recommendations represent to the best of our ability a sense of the faculty as a whole. The EC approves and recommends the continuation of a first-year program that is consistent with the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

The EC recommends that there be a common first-year experience for all first-year students admitted to UWB. This experience could utilize or combine several different forms: Discovery Core courses as now, first-year seminars, Focused Interest Groups (FIGS), or other common experiences supported by current pedagogical research. This first year experience should not exclude or conflict with other pathways to degrees. In particular, to facilitate majors that have highly structured lower division components, any required common experience courses should not generally exceed five credits during any term of the first year.

Recommendation 2

Lower division disciplinary courses should be the responsibility of programs that have faculty with expertise in that area. This does not preclude joint responsibility where expertise is shared across more than one program or where expertise does not currently exist on this campus.

The EC recommends that a unit like CUSP continue to exist to oversee and coordinate the particular needs of first- and second-year students. The Administrative Unit should work closely and collaboratively with the Programs to maintain coherence for students through all four years of their UWB experience.

Recommendation 4

The CUSP Administrative unit, however, should not have independent faculty lines attached to it but continue to use existing faculty in the programs and pursue joint appointments with those programs, especially of full-time faculty. The VCAA should work with the academic program directors to identify incentives and resource models that assure enthusiastic participation of the academic programs in the lower division curriculum. These incentives could include a plan for program participation in lower division as a requirement for approval of new faculty lines.

Recommendation 5

While no specific consensus over the exact structure of CUSP was reached, it was the general sense of the faculty that CUSP should be overseen by a faculty group composed of tenured and full-time faculty with broad knowledge of the campus and the variety of curricula offered at UWB. In particular, membership on the faculty governing group for CUSP, presently FOCUS, should draw on a wide range of program faculty and not be limited to faculty who have previously taught in CUSP.

The EC recommends that a task force be charged with overseeing the implementation of these recommendations, with charge to identify those changes that can take place immediately and those that will require the 2010-11 academic year to fully implement. This task force should include representation of the Executive Council of the GFO, the Academic Council, and the CUSP administration.

Recommendation 6

Admission standards for pre-major students should continue to be the responsibility of the GFO Executive Council.

Recommendation 7

CUSP, as re-authorized consistent with these recommendations should be reviewed again in three years by the Executive Council of the GFO and the VCAA.

Charles Jackels, Chair of the General Faculty Organization _____ Date _____

Bruce Kochis, Vice Chair of the General Faculty Organization _____ Date _____

- Cc: Chancellor Kenyon Chan
Andrea Kovelesky, Ph.D., Interim Director of CUSP
Mary Baroni, Ph.D., Director of Nursing
Warren Buck, Ph.D., Director of Science & Technology
Bruce Burgett, Ph.D., Director of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences
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