

School of Architecture meeting was held at 11:00 – 12:30 on February 23, 2006

Present: Melva Harbin, University Education Policy Committee
 Marilla Svinicki, University Education Policy Committee
 Larry Speck, Member of the Task Force on Curricular Reform
 Geoffrey Levenworth, Special Assistant to the President
 Evan B. Carton, Member of the Task Force on Curricular Reform

Faculty/

Staff: Nancy Kwallek, Louise Harpman, Simon Atkinson, and Jeanne Crawford.

Started out **Nancy explaining the Signature Courses** (Inquiry Across Disciplines: Nature)—key changes for curriculum reform. (Every student would take their freshman year. Then they would take another course to satisfy the general education requirement that would substitute for art or history, or one of those areas that they would normally take their sophomore year.)

Larry Speck Presented an Overview of the Task Force on Curricular Reform

1. Establishment of 2 **signature courses** for undergraduates that would translate into a shared identity about UT
2. Organizing the 42 hours of general education requirements into **strands**
 - a. –Not just a vast ala carte selection.
3. Internal content of courses will relate to culture, writing competency, etc.
 - a. Flags will certify that you have exposure to variety of liberal arts areas, other cultures, diversity, etc.
4. Development of a **University College** that will manage the students earning the flags and the core curriculum
5. **Dual Citizenship** in the University College their Freshman year with pre-approved residence in the SoA as a sophomore. They would still take an orientation in the SoA, as well as a general orientation.

Discussion of what it means for SoA to have a University College:

Advantages

1. Could be better management: No one is managing the 42 hours very well;
2. Could be better organization: 42 hours not now organized in a coherent way.
3. Strands assist/work this way:
 - a. If a student had an interest in a general area like the environment or sustainability, they might be advised to take a science course that emphasized it as well as a social science course, a history course that emphasized that, etc., so that you could apply your general education core to something that you were really interested in.
 - b. There's no way that the SoA could organize these, but the University College could organize and would have the clout it needed to make adjustments.
4. Could be much better advising all around: for the 42 hours and students would not just check off boxes; University College could help students organize the strands into a more relevant path for them; SoA can focus on SoA courses
5. Students will have to take their general education courses more seriously and not tick them off.
 - a. Right now they don't think of them as a fundamental part of their education.

- b. Students in the SoA don't take these courses seriously, they don't get a good background in sociology, politics, economics, history, etc. This new system would address that problem.
- 6. Architecture students are probably the least diversified of all the student bodies at UT.
 - a. Students are too isolated from the rest of the student body.
 - b. Even if architecture students want to take courses outside the SoA, they don't have the time. (This does not bode well for architecture as it is practiced when these students leave UT.)
 - c. This new program would serve to foster more interaction with the rest of the student body.
 - d. The idea of being interdisciplinary can create a climate and structure of collaboration for the student.
 - e. Students could become more diversified; core courses are now their lowest priority; students are focused on the most efficient way to get through the program
- 7. We can only really focus on the courses in our own college. The reason why those courses are poorly taught is because they are not a priority by anyone. This new program would address that problem by making the university core courses a high priority.
- 8. Would not embarrass the students if they decide they do not want design because they do not have to declare their freshman year since they would be in the University College.
 - a. If students feel it is not for them—they just do not declare, therefore, there is no sense of failure, on either side; no psychological damage for the student.

Would have very little impact on SoA Curriculum, because:

- 1. One of the signature courses is only an additional 3 hours, but the other could overlap with one of the present core requirements, so it would really be only an additional 3 hours.
- 2. 3 natural science courses now required; coordinating board requires only 2
 - a. Will stick with 2 natural science courses but the 3rd one will be a broad issues one that fits well with Arch.

What about limited space for those wanting Architecture/Professional Programs and declaring their 1st year:

- 1. Hold a spot for them and they are 'in' their sophomore year—just as they are in their freshman year, as long as they maintain a certain GPA. Those would be the students that could take SoA courses (studio) in their freshman year, but they could not initially declare themselves to be architecture majors.
- 2. Let other students who do not have a "ticket" into the SoA to take design studio in the summer time.

Question of Taking Courses at a Community College & cutting down on transfer courses?

- 1. UT will demand that certain courses would have to be taken at UT, rather than as an AP course or a community college course, for both the commonality, identity, and the UT Austin experience.
 - a. Students will **be required** to take their 2 signature courses at UT.
 - b. They will have to watch out for the **flags**, which will have a residency requirement.
 - c. Some courses with flags will be in their major college, and those will have to be reviewed by the University College (ex: advanced arch. history courses).

2. This is an effort to reduce the number of core courses taken elsewhere and transferred in by credit that are counted in the core, because those courses won't have the quality of the signature courses at UT.

Major criticisms:

1. Why are we spending money for a new college that will be expensive and a new bureaucracy?
2. Why not just redesign some of the foundation core courses into signature course?
 - a. Taking energy away from the "host" colleges; wouldn't it be better to focus on making drastic improvements in the courses we are now teaching in the core area.
3. Why cannot all of this be handled by the Provost's office—why do we need an expensive new administrative unit—University College.
4. We do not have high student/faculty ratio; our majors get what they need from our SoA counselors. (We are not broken—so why fix us?)
5. With all these requirements and flags and the high number of hours that our students require it can create an extra burden on the student to be able to graduate on time and it adds to their financial burden to earn their professional degree.
6. This proposal directly suggests 672 new TAs. We have some of brightest students but:
 - a. Some cannot teach
 - b. Some come from a lesser university than here; Limited number of really good TA's.
7. Getting faculty outside the norm is difficult to find; few outstanding scholars outside the norm, in terms of professors that could teach interdisciplinary courses
 - a. Now we want them to teach 200 people and walk around to 14 sections to see if the TA's are teaching appropriate.
8. We have gone through drastic cuts; summer programs have been drastically cut—no money to teach in summer now.
9. Admire the attention to more cultural exposure, diversified and challenged undergraduate students but a fear this is toward that student who is not outstanding at UT.
 - a. This proposal seems more directed toward the lesser student and not toward the outstanding student, of which we should be getting more.
10. Very difficult to have a college without any real identity of its own (i.e. the University College)