

10-23-2013

## Scholastic minutes 10/23/2013

Scholastic Committee

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/schol\\_com](http://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/schol_com)

---

### Recommended Citation

Scholastic Committee, "Scholastic minutes 10/23/2013" (2013). *Scholastic Committee*. 58.  
[http://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/schol\\_com/58](http://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/schol_com/58)

This Minutes is brought to you for free and open access by the Campus Governance at University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. It has been accepted for inclusion in Scholastic Committee by an authorized administrator of University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. For more information, please contact [skulann@morris.umn.edu](mailto:skulann@morris.umn.edu).

**Scholastic Committee**  
**2013-14 Academic Year**  
**October 23, 2013**  
**Meeting Seven Minutes Approved**

**Present:** Jennifer Goodnough, chair, Brenda Boever, Chad Braegelmann, Jennifer Herrmann, Peter Wyckoff, Roland Goyotte, Judy Korn, Hilda Ladner, Saesun Kim, Jess Larson, Marcy Prince, Laddie Arnold, Nic McPhee, guest Dean Bart Finzel

**Absent:** Steve Gross, Clare Dingley

- 1. October 16 minutes for review tabled to discuss Writing for the Liberal Arts (WLA) during Dean Bart Finzel's available time**
- 2. Chair's Report tabled**
- 3. SCEP Report tabled**
- 4. Appeal to full SC, petition denied by SC executive staff tabled**
- 5. Writing for the Liberal Arts (WLA) general education requirement transfer evaluation discussion**

The Dean provided his thoughts on the new WLA writing requirement.

- Morris doesn't require as much writing as peer institutions. Through WLA, the Curriculum Committee seeks to improve what we do at Morris by implementing a simple, direct requirement that everyone takes. The Curriculum Committee brought forward a clear proposal to Campus Assembly, a course that all students would be required to take. The proposal was clearly presented to the Assembly that there would be no exceptions and every Morris student would take ENGL 1601. Now the Scholastic Committee is wrestling with courses from other campuses. A "high burden" falls to students with writing transfer courses to make the case for WLA fulfillment because the default must be that all students take ENGL 1601. Syllabi and writing samples will be required for WLA evaluation, but students should know that all students are required to take the course. How can we hurt a student by making him/her take another writing course?
- A chemistry senior influenced the creation of WLA. He wished he had enrolled in College Writing even though his ACT course exempted him from the requirement.
- We need to keep the bigger picture in mind. Writing is the weakest component at Morris. We need an efficient way to solve that problem. We expect a dramatic change with ENGL 1601.
- Students will be disadvantaged if they DON'T take the course.
- If students complete the entire Minnesota Transfer Curriculum, the Morris campus will honor the University of Minnesota's commitment to this program, and MnTC students will have fulfilled the WLA gen ed requirement.
- Minnesota is experiencing a dramatic increase in College in the Schools programs.

Comments and questions for the Dean included the following.

- It seems that the "right" student with the "right" adviser who understands the evaluation process has an unfair advantage. Some students do not know that they can request an evaluation. Minnesota Transfer Curriculum students are also advantaged.

- More writing is a good thing, but not all the students believe the same. General education often becomes a “box to tick off.” This is a bigger problem than WLA, but it does impact the WLA discussion.
- Many Assembly members would have voted no [to the WLA Assembly vote] if it would have been clearly presented that transfer courses would not be evaluated for WLA.
- The students are caught in the middle.
- I asked students in ENGL 1601 how they felt about taking writing over and not having the information about evaluation. There were concerns. WLA information must be clearly articulated.
- If traditional transfer students don’t complete the MnTC but completed two years at community colleges, ENGL 1601 will be a significant problem.
- I am glad that the ACT exemption was eliminated.
- While this is not our primary concern for this discussion, if Morris earns a reputation for making students take courses over it could impact enrollment.
- The MnTC could be differently interpreted by students and advisers. It is a discrepancy that will be hard to explain to students. It is a bizarre position and difficult to justify.
- In comparison to WLA, IC was brought forward to the Assembly very specifically.

After the Dean excused himself to return to another meeting, the SC continued the WLA discussion.

- I agree with the Dean’s interpretation of the Assembly’s wishes. If we change the implementation, that intent will be lost. I am frustrated about doing something about writing. We should not lose what the Assembly wishes.
- The Constitution’s last line in the paragraph addressing SC responsibilities impacts the committee’s responsibilities in regard to WLA.

### **Responsibilities**

The Scholastic Committee develops, reviews, and recommends policies affecting the quality of education. It is concerned with such matters as admissions, academic progress, academic advising, student academic honesty, scholarship, and graduation. It has the power to grant exceptions to academic regulations when the spirit of such regulations has been satisfied. The committee admits students and evaluates transfer credit in accordance with standards established by the campus assembly.

- To say that students don’t have the right to have their transfer courses evaluated is at issue with WLA. SC has responsibility to do the evaluation, and the result could be that the transfer course does not satisfy WLA.
- The irony is the assertion that ENGL 1601 is identical to other courses that could possibility be taught by highly qualified professors. Students who have fewer credits are privileged over those who have more. I’m troubled by this.
- The former Inquiry course was significantly different than courses at other colleges.
- Every college includes revision in writing courses.
- In response to the Dean’s story about the senior chemistry student, it is the responsibility of advisers to guide students to make good choices about their educations rather than just tick off general education

requirements. It is hard to get across to students everyone is getting better at writing by writing more. We need to make this requirement look like an opportunity rather than a box to be ticked. Institutionally, requirements are seen as burdens.

- Requiring all majors to require ENGL 1601 may be a quick and easy work around if disciplines believe their majors need more writing.
- Some majors may be interested in this approach [prereq for major writing course], but it is not a very efficient tool.
- Perhaps ENGL 1601 should be a 2000-level course.
- Removing the ACT exemption was my focus as the Assembly discussed WLA. That was the most important.
- ACT English tests bare mechanics...grammar. Earning a high score does not mean that you can write.
- We need to do right by the students. Those who ask may get a substitution, but those who do not know to ask will not. This is not in the spirit of fairness.
- Should we address the issue with those students? Or put a note in APAS?
- I agree with the spirit of the requirement, but the murkiness is...I don't want to disadvantage students. Some students are in the know.
- Students should not be disadvantaged by not knowing that they can request an evaluation.
- It is frustrating for freshmen who feel that they have not received good communication. It is not respectful to not be told the options.
- For the sake of fairness, we could communicate with the 118 students who have writing courses that could be evaluated. We could emphasize the benefits of taking ENGL 1601.
- The Twin Cities campus English Department coordinates the College in the Schools University Writing course. This could be a powerful issue.
- Advisers cannot tell from the APAS if courses are College in the Schools in the high school or in campus classrooms.
- Morris has goal-based general education not criteria-based. It should not be a problem to single out WLA for criteria-based evaluation. It is not advised, but perhaps ok for this situation.

The Chair will draft a message that can be emailed to students from Goodnough or the Registrar. Advisee meetings will be starting soon, and advisers could be copied on the email to students. The email will be open about students' rights in regard to having transfer courses evaluated for WLA. The email will also honor the spirit of the Assembly while acknowledging implementation issues. The message could open with the quote from the Assembly to establish current policy.

Perhaps the advisers should receive an additional email in "advisee language." We may wish to mention to advisers that students should register for ENGL 1601 even if they seek an evaluation.

The writing coordinator, who has been charged with transfer evaluations for ENGL 1601 and WLA by the Dean and the English Discipline, will be on leave during spring semester.

WLA is challenging even after today's discussion, but the challenge does not negate the SC's responsibility to evaluate transfer courses for general education.

Eventually, WLA will be a campus norm. We just need to get there.

Respectfully submitted,  
Judy R. Korn  
Scholastic Committee Executive Staff