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## Consultative minutes 04/06/2011

Consultative Committee

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## **Consultative Committee Minutes: 6 April 2011**

Present: , Jim Barbour, Nick Bergantine, Nancy Carpenter, Bradley Deane, Jenn Zych Herrmann, Jane Kill, Nic McPhee, Paula O'Loughlin, Mark Privratsky, Laura Thielke

The committee was joined by Dean Cheryl Contant to discuss two issues.

1. Leadership of the Center for Small Towns. This is a personnel issue and therefore the discussion remains off the record. However the committee unanimously recommended that the dean initiate a review process of the current director of the Center that would lead quickly to a recommendation for future staffing.

2. Review of General Education Requirements. Dean Contant informed the Consultative that a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee has been examining our current GER policies in comparison with best practices across the nation. They have presented preliminary findings to Curriculum, and hope by the end of the semester to have produced a "white paper" that will become the foundation for Curriculum's work in the next academic year. That committee will try to generate a campus-wide conversation about the current state and possible revisions of the GERs, with the hope that by the end of 2011-12, the campus will come to some conclusions about either maintaining the current GERs or revising them. New GER policies, if indeed the campus decides to adopt them, could be implemented the following fall semester.

Consultative raised several questions. Given the GER subcommittees charge to examine best practices at other institutions, will there be room for innovation? Yes, the subcommittee's recommendations are not limited to endorsing existing models. Is the subcommittee making its recommendations in light of our campus's resource constraints? No, they are charged with imagining possible alternatives regardless of resources, so resource-related issues will come up next year. How will this affect the current student perception of GERs? The dean suggested that we might try to raise the profile of the general education component of our curriculum so that our model becomes less fixated on the individual disciplines as the core of our pedagogy. Consultative raised the example of the College of Wooster, where students may not immediately declare majors; this has the effect of raising the GenEd profile, but may also scare some students. A further complication in the revision of GERs is the trend of students who join our campus having already earned a number of credits that count toward their requirements. In spite of these complications, Consultative was happy to see new efforts to bring disciplines into dialogue with one another as part of the educational experience of the liberal arts.

Respectfully submitted by Brad Deane