

University Undergraduate Academic Council
February 18, 2015, 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Adams Center Classroom

Present: S. Lewis, S. Jones, P. Lakey, D. Pope, G. Powell, J. Reese, S. Stewart, S. Wages, D. Williams, V. Williams

Absent: none

Ex-officios: T. Baggs, J. Cardot, E. Gumm

Guests: E. Brokaw, C. Buck, T. Lee, T. Milholland, L. Penny, R. Rhodes, B. Scott, G. Straughn

The Meeting began at 3:30.

I. Call to Order by S. Lewis

II. Prayer by J. Reese

III. Approval of the Minutes from 10.29.14

L. Penny noted that she was a guest at this meeting but was not listed on the minutes. The minutes have been revised to include this.

Motion to approve by S. Jones; seconded by D. Pope; 7 in favor; 2 abstentions; none opposed; motion passes

IV. Term Offerings for SOCI 415 and 416

There was no discussion from the council on this item because it was information only.

V. Restructure of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Proposal

S. Lewis began the discussion by noting that the council had a difficult and complex matter before them. She then clarified that the question before the council was whether or not to discontinue the three majors offered by the Agricultural and Environmental Science department, Agribusiness (AGRB), Animal Science (ANSC), and Environmental Science (ENVR). The discussion would begin with presentations from guests: R. Rhodes, E. Brokaw, and G. Straughn, then the council would be able to ask questions before voting. T. Lee was also available to answer questions.

R. Rhodes began the discussion by highlighting the main points of the provost-proposed proposal. The overall proposal is to teach to completion students in the three majors (AGRB, ANSC, ENVR), and then to create new degree plans in Biology. The programs would close after the teaching is complete. The pre-vet and wildlife management tracks would continue in a modified way within Biology, and the AGRB program would close.

R. Rhodes then explained the rationale for the proposed change. The department has 100 students, and 2/3 of them are ANSC majors. The AGRB major has 9 students, and the ENVR major has the balance of the remaining 1/3 students. There has also been a reduction in faculty over the last several years, in addition to a difficulty in finding qualified faculty when funding is available, or not having adequate funding when qualified faculty is found. The department has encountered a “perfect storm” -- a previous proposal for closure(s), growth in the ANSC program, with a reduction in the other two areas, and at the same time, the retirement and departure of faculty during budgetary reduction. He noted that this has been an ongoing conversation, but it is now an accelerated conversation. ACU either has to fund new positions and the existing program, or revise using available resources. It is not a long-term ideal to have a functioning department with only two full-time faculty members and students being taught by adjuncts. He noted that he is advocating something that he doesn’t want to do. These are valuable programs with great students, but he does not want to wait until the two faculty retire to restructure the programs. He noted that there is potential loss of all programs if there is not a plan to give them life beyond the current state. This could be mitigated by a reinvestment in the programs, but that is not available. ACU must reduce costs by \$2 million in 2016 and is facing the same for 2017; there is no budgetary relief on the horizon. If we don’t have the ability to intervene fiscally, then we should do so structurally. They want to keep the culture with farm maintenance and various activities (rodeo, wildlife club, etc.). He closed by stating that he wouldn’t mind if the closure is voted down, but ACU would still be in the same spot, and would still have to deal with the circumstances by either reducing elsewhere or the continued erosion of the program.

E. Brokaw began his presentation by handing out a document (see last page) that outlines the courses taught by the department and whether or not they are required for each major and track. He noted that the majors may continue elsewhere, but they will not be the same as the current majors, and they may not attract the same types of students. He stated that the three majors are holistic, integrated, and interdisciplinary; the document shows the holistic approach which is used in order to maximize resources and create efficiencies. Regarding the “too many unsubscribed courses” notion -- AGRB as a major requires no additional classes in their department, as some courses are taught in other departments. ENVR -- there are four different tracks, but the students take essentially the same courses. E. Brokaw believes that the undersubscribed programs is a non-issue. The department built these programs intentionally for students to build on a core curriculum within the disciplines; the tracks give students options to pursue career choices in different directions. Some courses come from other departments (i.e. Biology, Chemistry, Political Science, Kinesiology), so they do not need additional faculty for those areas. ANSC is the most subscribed program because many freshmen and sophomores come in wanting the pre-vet concentration, but then drop that path because it’s more challenging than they thought, but they can continue with ANSC major if they move from pre-vet. Most juniors and seniors are AGRB or ENVR majors, the most common track choices are livestock management (LM) and business industry (BI). E. Brokaw noted that if you look at a larger school some of our classes would be their own departments (i.e. soils, water resources, etc.); ACU has these areas integrated into holistic tracks. ACU is one of three Christian universities that has an agriculture program (the other schools are Dordt and Andrews). He also noted that a

degree is not required for veterinary school, only prerequisite courses are required, so the pre-vet concentration could be offered by any major. The ANSC major has an emphasis on food production, large animals, and recreational animal training, which is very different from the anatomical/physiological major that he assumes Biology is proposing. If the ANSC major is closed and pre-vet is created in Biology it will not be approached in the same way, and it will attract different students. These programs have unique positions to serve students in different areas. Most students are not interested in wildlife biology but wildlife management, so students will have different expectations if the program moves to Biology. E. Brokaw does not doubt that Biology can offer high quality programs, but it will not be the same, and it will not be attractive to the same students. He estimates that about 50% of current students would not be interested in the Biology majors, and it's possible that 75% of the students might be lost due to program changes. He noted that program enrollment has gone up the past 2-3 years despite stagnant ACU enrollment. He anticipates that interest will continue to rise as global environmental concerns rise. He also noted that high school agriculture programs are growing, which could pose a recruiting challenge if the department is closed. He said that students tell him that they are only at ACU because of the Christian pre-vet program. He closed by stating that the closing of a program with 100 students will have a ripple effect within the university.

G. Straughn gave the Dean's response, which he began by emphasizing the need for precision in language. This issue is a closure, but is also a restructure. The council is voting on the closure. He acknowledged that restructuring will bring different students. The proposed potential Biology degree plans were tabled by CASAC, because it is more appropriate to have conversations about closure first and then the restructuring conversation. He also noted that if AGRB continues it would need additional courses. Foy Mills left and that position was not refilled due to budget constraints. The department didn't always have faculty ready for some courses. The decision was made to save money instead of the harder conversation of what to do/not do. He said that he reluctantly supports the closures.

The council asked questions to the presenters, then all but the voting members were dismissed. The council continued the discussion before voting.

Motion to have an anonymous vote on the matter of the proposal to discontinue three majors (AGRB, ANSC, ENVR) by D. Pope; seconded by S. Jones; six in favor; 3 abstentions; none opposed; motion passes.

Results of vote: 2 in favor; 7 against; motion does not pass.

The meeting adjourned at 5:08.

The following agenda items were not discussed by the council on this day due to time limitations.

1. Changes to General Education Bible Menu
2. Psychology Capstone
3. Changes to Teacher Education Admission Criteria
4. Communication Sciences and Disorders Menu Changes

[illegible]