Recorder’s Summary

Forum date: 3-6-17
Table number: 4

Key points and ideas that emerged from table discussion (bulleted list of 5-10 points with a couple sentences of description for each):

● Recreated of the Liberal arts requirements
  ○ One person feels that we need to completely create a new core curriculum—that our current set of rubrics allows too many courses to satisfy liberal arts requirements.
    ■ They feel that a specific committee of liberal education faculty should decide what courses can fulfill liberal education requirements.
    ■ They also feel that ‘core requirements’ should mean that a majority of the student body should have to take identical courses in order to ensure that all students are receiving an identical ‘core’ education.
  ● Many people at my table did not agree with this perspective
    ○ Many felt that students need flexibility in order to adapt to things that they have interests in and build the education that they came to the University for.
    ○ LE isn’t about measuring competencies, it’s about recognizing all knowledge

● Liberal arts education classes should be finished by the end of a student’s sophomore year.
  ○ Too many LE classes are filled with seniors just trying to finish up requirements before they graduate.
    ■ Students in this situation aren’t getting anything out of these courses because they waited too long. They could get so much more out of them and use this knowledge throughout their last two years if they took these courses earlier.
    ■ The point of LE courses is to get an educational grasp on the diversified cores and designated themes that the University has deemed important for all students to graduate with.

● Current LE needs some updating to assure students are gaining work force applicable skills
  ○ Classes should require critical thinking, interpretation, open communication, and writing skills
  ○ Mathematical thinking in any possible way throughout a course is also important.
  ○ We need to trust the faculty that we have to teach LE courses that somehow implement all of these skills

● Liberal education courses need to be taken out of the boxes that they are currently in and limited just a little bit more so that so many courses don’t fulfill the requirements.
○ Turn these ‘boxes’ into zones, limit the courses but still provide a variety.
● We also need to get rid of the ‘butts in seats’ mentality that departments have when it comes to LE courses.
○ Unlink LE from enrollment.

Summary of discussion (300 to 500 words):

The conversations started with one person taking the reins to discuss a letter that covered their thoughts on our current liberal education make-up. Those thoughts mainly consisted of how we should strip the current make-up and start over by creating a liberal education faculty committee to determine the new make-up. This committee would be the all-determining factor in all things regarding LE. Suggested removing LE from the already created boxes and making students take specific required courses rather than just letting them choose from the boxes. So every student upon admission would take the same history class and same mathematical thinking course.

The rest of the table did not like this idea and thought that this was impractical with the size of the university. They did agree with the idea that students should complete their LE requirements by the end of their sophomore year at the U. They thought that this was important because then a student could really grasp the core principles and use them throughout the rest of their college education.

Our table also discussed that we need to trust the current faculty we have to assure that students are getting the required liberal education understanding within their coursework if they have passed their class as an LE class. But they would like to see the implementation of more skill based learning throughout some of the already approved LE courses. They would like students to have to use more critical thinking skills and communication within coursework implemented within LE classes.