Working Group Notes

4/4/14

Present: Bridget Gourley, Wade Hazel, Jeane Pope, Pam Propsom, Jackie Roberts, Michael Roberts, Naima Shifa, Brian Wright

We began with everyone writing their departmental votes regarding Gormally et al.’s TOSLS skills (see attached table—although it seems like some departments responded more in terms of whether their courses currently *do* these things rather than whether departments *value* them). Some departments didn’t have much time for discussion. A number of individuals didn’t like the terms that Gormally et al. used to categorize the skills; the instrument itself and the parenthetical skill descriptors may be better. However, many felt the parenthetical descriptors should be expanded.

Skills/experiences missing from Gormally et al.’s 9:

Physics: lab experience—doing hands-on science

Geo--making observations, classifying, gathering one’s own data, developing and testing hypotheses, problem-solving, testing hypotheses by observational methods

Bio--making observations, laboratory experience/doing science

Chem--interpreting tables, dealing with large data sets, the changing nature of science

Questions

How would we prioritize these goals?

How many of these goals/skills would have to be met for a course to meet the SM requirement? Would it have to be all of them? 70%, 80%, 90%? Or would some courses meet some of these (and they’re listed in SOC) and students would have to meet all of them by taking some combination of courses?

Is the purpose of SM requirement “exposure” or “scientific literacy?” What do those in AH and SS believe about the purpose of their area requirements?

Change the language of SM description from what the courses *are* to what *students will be able to do* after them (learning goals)

How to structure the Open Meeting Thursday night?

If your department agreed with each goal/skill, what would the “parenthetical” or specifics be for each skill?

What about a “Great Ideas in Science & Math” course as part of the S & M gen ed requirement? Could be taught in modules, faculty rotate through every 2-3 weeks. If we had “great ideas” courses, what would the great ideas be?

Michael shared an example from how someone at Allegheny teaches a course for non-science students, taking sides, debates regarding science. Michael’s “dream” would be a team-taught SM course for non-majors. Faculty would provide guidance to transfer (transfer of skills, knowledge).

Naima questioned whether we might need an SM workshop (similar to Q workshop) about how to teach an SM gen ed course.

How do we increase diversity of students in SM majors? Maybe have Gloria Townsend talk with us because CS has been pretty successful.

Write to Khadija to get clarification of CS response regarding Gormally et al. skills (was their response with regard to gen ed or the CS major?)

Pam wrote to Gormally. She doesn’t know of others who have used the TOSLS outside of biology.