

**Academic Chairs' Council Agenda**  
**1:00-3:00pm Wednesday, 12 November 2008**  
**University Union – Havasupai A/B**

1. 1:00 to 1:15pm: Updates
  - President's Cabinet, Provost's Academic Leadership Council, etc. (Roy St. Laurent)
  - Executive Director search update (Cynthia Kosso)
  
2. 1:15 to 1:30pm: Changes in Liberal Studies Processes (material following this agenda): Blase Scarnati, Chair, Liberal Studies Committee
  
3. 1:30 to 1:50pm: Discussion of Contract Honors Proposal (material following this agenda, and 9 page proposal sent separately): Anne Scott, Interim Director, Honors Program.
  
4. 1:50 to 2:30pm: Finalizing ACC Budget Principles (material following this agenda).
  
5. 2:30 to 3:00pm: Discussion with the Provost: Liz Grobsmith

**Upcoming dates:**

- Next ACC meeting: Wednesday, 10 December 1:00-3:00pm, in University Union Havasupai A/B

## Material for Agenda Item #2: Liberal Studies (3 pages)

### Initial e-mail from Blase Scarnati:

November 5, 2008

The Liberal Studies Committee is engaged in a process with colleges and departments to bring courses in the current Liberal Studies Program into alignment with changes adopted by the Faculty Senate in Spring 2006. For the more than 450 courses in the Program, the Liberal Studies Committee is working with departments to establish a current Master Syllabus for each Liberal Studies course (to be maintained by the department) that insures that each course selects one of the new distribution blocks and a single essential skill for assessment in either the 2009 or 2010 NAU Catalog.

In designing the alignment process, the Liberal Studies Committee intended for each department to make strategic decisions about its contribution to Liberal Studies in light of enrollment growth and resource constraints. Both the volume of submissions that we are seeing this Fall and the level of engagement with the process signal to the Committee that many units may not be carefully evaluating what would be optimal given local and institutional resources. The recent call by the Provost to examine and streamline curriculum throughout the University only highlights the importance of this aspect of the alignment process.

To improve both the alignment process and the curriculum of the Liberal Studies Program, the Liberal Studies Committee adopted the following three-part resolution on Friday, October 31, 2008:

**1.A. The Liberal Studies Committee will immediately suspend the current alignment process and institute a moratorium on the review of new distribution block courses. This decision will not affect Junior Level Writing and Senior Capstone course proposals or reviews.**

No time or effort by either departments or the Committee to date will be wasted by suspending reviews. The suspension and moratorium will allow time for the Committee to make strategic decisions as outlined in point 2, below, that will dramatically improve the Program through discussion and engagement with departments.

**1.B. The Committee will work with departments and colleges to complete a ‘snap’ alignment of all Liberal Studies courses with the new program requirements by the conclusion of the Fall 2008 term so that the status of all courses will be determined for the 2009 NAU Catalog. The Committee will solicit from departments information necessary for alignment: the distribution block and one essential skill for focus and assessment for each course. Departments will be expected to adjust their Master Syllabus for each course in accordance with the Liberal Studies Master Course Syllabus Template, but will not be required to submit syllabi for review. No action will be required for courses that have already been re-aligned through Committee review.**

The ‘snap’ alignment will allow us to move forward and plan for the next academic year while longer term decisions are made. The Committee also asks departments to consider the option of withdrawing Liberal Studies distribution block designation from some courses currently in the Program as part of the process.

**2. The Liberal Studies Committee will immediately begin discussion of the Liberal Studies Program structure and the distribution of courses in the Program over the blocks, skills, and**

**their student learning outcomes. The Committee plans to complete its discussion by the conclusion of the Spring 2009 term.**

This will be an opportunity to take up the charge by the Faculty Senate for the Liberal Studies Committee to begin “managing and reviewing the Program” (Final Report of the Liberal Studies Review Committee of the Faculty Senate, Northern Arizona University, adopted Spring 2006 by the Faculty Senate, section VIII.A). This is viewed by the Committee as a positive opportunity to begin dialogues with departments not only about what courses they would like to offer, but also what types of courses the Program needs to insure that it “prepare[s] students to live responsible, productive, and creative lives as citizens of a dramatically changing world” and that NAU “provides a Liberal Studies Program that challenges students to gain a deeper understanding of the natural environment and the world’s peoples, to explore the traditions and legacies that have created the dynamics and tensions that shape the world, to examine their potential contributions to society, and thus to better determine their own places in that world” (Final Report, 2006, section I.A).

**3. The Liberal Studies Committee will decide at the end of the Spring 2009 term when to resume the revised alignment process and lift the moratorium on the review of new distribution block courses. The revised alignment review will then begin at the time decided and new distribution block courses will then be considered.**

It is anticipated that the revised alignment process will resume in Fall 2009, at which time the moratorium on the review of new distribution block courses will be lifted. However, the determination of when to proceed with alignment and consideration of new courses will be contingent upon development of a plan for the Program and a well-designed process for academic units.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns at [Blase.Scarnati@nau.edu](mailto:Blase.Scarnati@nau.edu). Thank you!

Blase S. Scarnati  
Chair, Liberal Studies Committee

**Follow-up e-mail from Blase Scarnati dated November 7<sup>th</sup>:**

Hi,

I want to follow up my earlier email on behalf of the Liberal Studies Committee to address a couple of issues that have been raised.

Remember that if your department has already completed and submitted syllabi for alignment, then your work is done. We will use syllabi submitted from your department to date to complete the ‘snap’ alignment that is to be completed by the close of the Fall 2008 term. No work by departments will be wasted. In fact, your department will be in a particularly good position when the Committee commences reviews in a manner that will strengthen the Liberal Studies curriculum.

If you have had or are just beginning discussion among faculty but have not yet submitted aligned syllabi, please know that this work, too, will not be wasted. We will be in touch soon to solicit the distribution block and single skill that is assessed for each Liberal Studies course. The work that you have completed so far will inform your own department curriculum discussions and will help your department engage more deeply with the Liberal Studies Committee when reviews begin again.

Finally, the Provost has asked all of us to strategically reconsider curriculum in light of constrained resources. Please know that no harm can come to either academic

units or our students by not continuing to add courses to the Liberal Studies Program this year. The time created by the moratorium on new distribution block courses will allow both the Liberal Studies Program and your department to consider the best way that we can strengthen both the Liberal Studies curriculum and degree program curricula.

Remember, too, that reviews of Junior Level Writing and Senior Capstone courses will continue without interruption.

Please do email or call me on my cell phone, 600-2801, to set up a time to meet, or to continue to clarify issues for your department.

Thanks!

Blase Scarnati  
Chair, Liberal Studies Committee

### **Material for Agenda Item #3: Contract Honors Proposal (this page, plus 9 page proposal sent in separate file)**

To: Academic Chairs and Directors  
University Curriculum Committee

From: Karen Pugliesi  
Date: October 27, 2008  
Re: Honors Contract Option

I am very pleased to introduce you to a new model through which Northern Arizona University Honors Program students will have greater opportunities for challenging learning experiences. The proposed honors contract option will enable students to pursue study under the supervision of faculty from across the university. The contract option will address the desire of Honors students for a wider variety of course options. In a time of resources constraints, it is difficult to meet the diverse needs of Honors students with regular course sections.

The contract option is based on individualized contracts for an honors plan of study in conjunction with a regularly scheduled course. A plan is developed by the faculty and students in response to a student's request. The contract approach will allow us to increase learning opportunities without as much an impact on programs in our degree granting academic units. This approach has been used with great success by other successful honors programs, including the Barrett Honors College at ASU.

Anne Scott, Interim Director of the University Honors Program, has developed the attached plan for contract based honors learning in consultation with the Honors Program Advisory Council, which has given its blessing to the proposal. I hope you will support the implementation of the contract honors option at Northern Arizona University.

## Material for Agenda Item #4: ACC Budget Principles (2 pages)

### E-mail from Executive Director (St. Laurent) on November 5<sup>th</sup>:

Based on the discussion at the ACC budget work session on October 29<sup>th</sup>, the Executive Committee has drafted a set of budget principles for your review and comment. The plan is to finalize these at the ACC meeting on Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup> so that the Executive Committee can take the ACC principles forward to the President's Leadership retreat on November 15<sup>th</sup>. (We also would like to coordinate this process with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee so that both groups can go into the retreat with similar talking points.)

If you have suggestions for substantive changes and/or additions to this list, it may be most effective for you to send these to me by November 10<sup>th</sup> so that I can put together a document for discussion on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

### DRAFT ACC Budget Principles DRAFT

1. Decisions regarding budget cuts should be made in line with university mission, priorities and strategic plan.
2. Transparency must be applicable at all levels of the budget/cutting process. From the president's office to the smallest program, careful sharing of plans and recognition of effort must be made. Consider a faculty senate committee to review non academic spending and cuts.
3. Protecting existing jobs is a high priority. In a time of economic crisis, we do not want to increase the jobless rate in our own community.
4. Protecting the interests of untenured faculty in their career establishment and progression toward tenure is a high priority.
5. We must continue to plan for the future, acknowledging that this crisis will eventually resolve. Thinking and planning must be long, and not just short term, to enable support for continued growth.
6. Procedures to create an institutional memory of particular sacrifices should be implemented, with the possibility of restoring funds to certain areas when budgets improve.

### Suggested changes / additions / comment received from ACC members:

- A. To #1: you might consider adding that there is a distinction between temporary emergency measures and strategic planning (the provo blurs this in her guideline memo).
- B. Do we want to emphasize the need to protect staff under item #3? It is inclusive already but some may think that it refers only to the academic side.
- C. I agree with the principles and also think that #3 should include staff as well as faculty.
- D. Please include in the list that you have circulated among us: Based on the notion of targeting cuts versus massive cuts, recognize that many upper division courses needed by seniors can have less than 15 students. Cancellation of these courses prevents students from graduating in four years.
- E. One of our faculty members suggested this concept, and I really like it. Increase in teaching loads. If full-time faculty are being pressured to increase teaching loads, it seems only fair that academic administrators (associate deans, deans, vice provosts, provost etc.) receive the same pressure. The pressure for all or most faculty to have their teaching load increased is arbitrary, not well reasoned. It is because of a fiscal crisis, rather than because of a study documenting that our workloads are too light. By telling faculty they need to work harder, but administrators do not, we send two messages:
  - a) faculty are lazy and don't work as hard as administrators, and /or
  - b) the work that faculty do (i.e. teach, advise, pursue scholarly activities) is not as important as the work administrators do (i.e. I'm not going there...)

So if there is a demand for increased teaching loads, it should go out to all PhDs across the campus, not just the teaching faculty.

### **Comments from members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee**

A. These are well-considered principles, and ones I can fully support.

Here are a couple of suggestions.

A specific reference to the value of support staff, perhaps within principle #3, might better express how most of us feel. Maybe, "Protecting existing jobs, /particularly those of support staff,/ is a high priority. In a time of economic crisis, we do not want to increase the jobless rate in our own community." Most of the support staff I talk to are pretty concerned about their futures, and knowing that the faculty cares would help.

Another tiny consideration: why not move principle #5 up to position #2 on the list? That would put the concept of "long-thinking" right next to the concept of maintaining mission, etc.

B. Comment from ACC Exec Comm member on A. above: I agree, but also feel that not filling open support staff positions only degrades morale further and puts program operations and effectiveness at risk.

C. I am sending you some Out of the Box Ideas regarding the budget. Hopefully they will find some hearing in the faculty as a whole and in the Leadership Retreat next week. Most of the "in box" ideas leave me uninspired.

The current budget cutting ideas being discussed are all quite conventional: larger class sizes, increased teaching loads (for chairs and faculty), merging departments, eliminating programs, etc. etc. Although the language of "down sizing," and "rightsizing" has been replaced with "productivity" and "greater efficiency," in many cases the end results are very similar.

There may be merit to some of these proposals but there is also a need for "out of the box" ideas. Here are some "out of the box" ideas that need to be considered alongside of the traditional ideas.

- Academic Deans could teach one course a year
- Early, full year sabbaticals
- Four-day work week
- Moving to a trimester calendar
- A temporary ban on travel associated with athletics until state funding for academic programs increases
- Shifting Spring semester to later in the spring so as to save energy costs
- Restructuring pay packages that exceed \$100,000 a year