

Special SEC Meeting-Regarding the Language Proposal

December 4, 2017

Call to Order: 3:34 pm

CGEC World Language Proficiency Resolution

https://www.wku.edu/senate/archives/archives_2017/b-4-d-i-cgec-world-language-proficiency-resolution-and-supporting-documentation.pdf

Attendance: Jen Hanley, Gordon Baylis (Matt Shake), Janet Applin, Eric Kondratieff, Liz Sturgeon, Doug MacElroy, David Lee, Thad Crews, Marko Dumancic (guest), Robert Dietle (guest), Jerry Daday, Jim Berger, Kristin Wilson, Kirk Atkinson, Leila Watkins (Elizabeth Gish), Ke Peng (guest) Laura McGee (guest), Savannah Molyneaux (Andi Dahmer), Joe Shankweiler, Claus Ernst, Jim Fulkerson,

Notes

Chair: Eric Kondratieff

First Point of Business—**Motion to re-consider:** 1st Atkinson, 2nd Wilson

Discussion:

Kondratieff: The purpose of this meeting is to revisit the language proficiency requirement resolution proposed by the Colonnade Committee at last week's (November 27, 2017) SEC meeting. At that time the proposal was sent back to Colonnade by the SEC to revisit the number of students included in its provisions. Since then, the SEC has gained more information and historical context surrounding the resolution and therefore requested that the proposal be re-introduced to the SEC for reconsideration. We were also informed that Colonnade chair Jerry Daday was considering bringing the proposal to the senate despite its failure to pass SEC. We were concerned about the potential fallout of bringing this resolution directly to the senate floor and any unintended consequences. We want to preserve the process of faculty governance; and, since there are issues that were not raised at the last SEC meeting, we have invited the Colonnade Committee chair and two of the past chairs— Robert Dietle and Marko Dumancic—to also weigh in on this issue.

Daday: Just for clarification, no one on the Colonnade committee was going to re-introduce it at Senate, but someone else would have...

Dietle: Following the November 27 SEC meeting I spoke with Eric Kondratieff and helped contextualize the rationale behind the Colonnade Committee's motion. When the General Education task force was formed, we worked with the Department of Modern Languages (ML) to craft the current proficiency credit. In our plan, we were going to allow WKU students who had taken two years of language before coming to WKU to use those courses to fulfill their language requirement by taking and passing the STAMP test.

This plan did not call for any increase in the staff for the ML Department. One of its purposes was to alleviate the pressure on the existing faculty by having students meet the language requirement before they came to WKU. Over the past four years it has become increasingly clear that the language proficiency requirement was not functioning as we had anticipated. Students were not taking the Stamp Test (ST) and the university was not encouraging them to take it either. We also had not anticipated the severe limitations there are on the number of students who could take the ST at one time. Thus, we are where we are right now—with approximately 6,000 students who are unable to fulfill their language requirements.

Conversations with Provost David Lee and PCAL Dean Larry Snyder have been very clear that new hires to are just not going to happen. The university has a \$16 million shortfall and that is affecting new hires. In PCAL last year we hired 16 new faculty, this year we have 3 lines for the whole college. All departments whose moving-forward plans depended on **increased** staffing are going to have to rethink their mission.

The ultimate goal for this committee is twofold: first, keep the language requirement in place; second, alleviate the backlog. This is not an amnesty proposal because that would have a ripple effect—students would assume that they too would eventually be granted amnesty. What this does is allow students who have language course credits from high school to count those in lieu of taking the ST for students through calendar year 2017-2018.

The Colonnade Committee is actively working with Modern Languages to resolve this issue and develop proposals moving forward. There are four main benefits to the current proposal:

- 1) It keeps the language requirement in place
- 2) It gives students an alternate way to fulfill the requirement
- 3) It gives ML the ability to make adjustments
- 4) It will preserve the language requirement and alleviate the backlog

Marko Dumancic: This has been a conversation in Colonnade Committee for some time and although the issues have not been publicly addressed, it does not mean they have not been a source of concern. The first challenge was determining where to put this issue to devise a plan to correct the problem—technically, this is not under the purview of colonnade, but it is a colonnade requirement. In my second year on the colonnade committee, the discussion of how to resolve the backlog began in earnest and we are hoping to find a solution that works on all levels—from advising, to ML, to the dean, and the provost.

There have been multiple meetings between Chris Jensen (head of advising) and Laura McGee (ML Department Chair) to craft a solution that is workable and fair. There has been no progress thus far and when Jerry Daday took over as head of Colonnade Committee the issue came to a head. There are wide variations in the approach to resolve

this ranging from the extreme—eliminate the language requirement entirely—to offering amnesty for juniors and seniors. We recognize that this solution is not ideal and that it is the best of a bad situation, but it does give ML space to find resolution moving forward.

Daday: Colonnade has been trying to ascertain the exact number of students counted in the backlog since mid-September. After the Colonnade committee meeting on October 3, committee members were asked to return to their departments and colleges to solicit ideas as we moved forward. Our intention is to preserve the world language proficiency while simultaneously removing the backlog. Our concern is that if we just alleviate this for juniors and seniors, when the Fall 2018 class of freshmen start there will be another 3,000 students added to the mix, and we will be right back where we started. We are hoping to clear the backlog to give PCAL and ML and CHHS and Communication Disorders the opportunity to devise a plan so there is no longer a backlog at all. The ST is not working like it was supposed to. The ST was supposed to be administered while students were in high school and the scores were supposed to be forwarded to their colleges and universities. However, due to changing state [education-funding] environments, this did not happen. What we want is for the colleges and departments involved to devise a plan and present it to Colonnade Committee so it can then move forward through the proper channels of governance.

Doug MacElroy (Representing David Lee): It is certainly the case that our expectation of how exactly the language proficiency would manifest itself was different than how it actually played out. This has created a vexing problem and the solution is difficult to determine. There are variable numbers and it is important to recognize this fact because the numbers themselves are hard to obtain. But, in all the number variations one thing has remained constant—the backlog numbers have never gotten close to zero. So, regardless of the statistics, we are dealing with a significant number of students. The whole purpose of this resolution is to simply clear the backlog. Some key points to remember:

- 1) This resolution is not a back door mechanism to eliminate personnel or the language requirement.
- 2) Because the February 15 deadline is looming, we have already started the conversations to resolve the issue and have a committee of 6 or more people working diligently on this problem.
- 3) The committee is focusing on resourcing not curriculum. It is only the job of ML to make curricular decisions; our job is to supply some resources and suggestions of how to accomplish these goals moving forward.
- 4) We also want to understand the parameters of the demand and the causes of the backlog to help us devise some workable solutions. The bottom line is that right now our goal is to simply clear up the backlog.

Open Discussion

1. **Kondratieff:** What mechanism will be used to determine that students have achieved an adequate level of proficiency?

Daday—High School transcripts

2. **Applin:** Do you think when we put the 60-hour limit during advising sessions we are inadvertently sending the message that students don't have to think about completing their language requirement for two years? In the past with just 102, we encouraged first semester freshmen to take language.

Dumancic: The problem is that we haven't been enforcing the 60-hour rule. We thought the ST was going to work out in a way that it didn't.

Dietle: Students should take the ST as soon as possible after finishing their language.

Dumancic: We are working with advisors to get students to place them into language classes ASAP.

3. **Dietle:** What is the ST pass rate?

McGee: Over 80% students pass.

MacElroy: The backlog has been around for a while and our assumption was that with the new mechanisms in place the ST in high school would help things dissipate.

4. **Baylis:** Language is a critical skill, what is wrong with simply clearing the credit for just juniors and seniors? If we do amnesty now, students can always say we will do that again. These two years clearly need to be adjusted. Won't this lead to a huge dip in enrollment in modern language? What's wrong with just a junior/senior plan?

Daday: If we just do it for juniors and seniors—freshmen and sophomores will assume they are going to do it again.

Dumancic: The basic idea was that the standard still needs to be enforced. Students to whom this applies will have to have the two credits in high school. The idea is to maintain the standards throughout.

Wilson: The students who have already taken these courses are going to be perturbed.

5. **Kondratieff:** What do we do about the students who have already fulfilled this requirement?

Dietle: There will be winners and losers; someone is going to be unhappy.

6. **Wilson:** Robert and Marko, are people advocating to remove the ML requirement?

Dietle: When I was on the colonnade taskforce the two things we had to fight hard to get were the 9 hours of connections and ML. There was a push to eliminate the ML requirement on the old general education program even before colonnade.

Dumancic: The argument is that no other Kentucky university has a ML requirement.

MacElroy: This resolution needs to separate these two conversations. If there was a decision to remove the language requirement using this resolution it would be based on the backlog and resources. Removing it from Colonnade altogether would be a separate curricular decision. Thus there are two separate issues being discussed: one is a resourcing issue, the other is an academic one. We need to be able to enact the academic resolution because resourcing should not drive academic decisions.

Bayliss: Looking at resources is not the way to tackle this long term.

Davis: Since Oct 2017 we have been aware that there is a real issue and that we need to make drastic changes. We agree with all of this but the devil is in the details. We [in ML] are glad to hear we are not going to completely axe ML. Feb. 15, 2018 is a quick deadline and we keep coming back to the same problem: if you can't staff the requirement in the future, you need to re-think the whole thing. Clearly, placement is not working. This discussion raises another issue: how do we better fit in Colonnade if this is abandoned? There is no a consensus. One thing we recognize is that the placement test (ST) needs to be implemented more efficiently.

7. **Davis:** We need assistance from colonnade to know exactly what you want. We need guidance.

Daday: Since this process got started in October colonnade has met with 3 different ML faculty and all I've seen are new course proposals.

Davis: We thought this is what you wanted...

8. **Daday:** Can proficiency be met through colonnade?

Davis: There is no consensus about where we belong in Colonnade. We were under the impression that we have until February 15th to devise a better option or it will be waived for all students.

9. **Atkinson:** Is there a long term solution? My concern is that in 4 years we are going to be discussing this thing again so we need to adjust this issue. I am wondering if you would consider adjusting the requirement and leaving the proficiency level to be determined by individual colleges just like they do with math?

Davis: Changing proficiency has not been well-received.

10. **Ernst:** It is not a good idea to do this just for juniors and seniors. Students will think we will waive it again and so will incoming freshmen. This is a long-standing issue that ML knew about it--what makes people think we can resolve this by Feb? I suggest we just waive this requirement for just current juniors and seniors and then see what happens in February.

Kondratieff: But the concern is that with 3000 incoming freshmen, we are simply going to have another backlog.

Daday: That will still leave us with the same number of students we have now.

MacElroy: Typically, the size of incoming first year, first time class numbers between 3000-3100 students in the Fall semester and 200-300 additional students in the Spring semester. So we are looking at about 3300-3400 first time first year, minus international students and transfers—many of these incoming students have met the two years of high school proficiency credit.

11. **Wilson:** How too small is your infrastructure? If you doubled the number of classes would that fix the problem?

MacElroy: We would need a 50% increase in the French, German, and Spanish classes to deal with the demand of an incoming class of freshmen. Additional staffing is not an option.

Davis: ML has 6 faculty members serving that demand.

12. **Minter:** How many faculty are in the department?

Davis/McGee: 18.

13. **Minter:** I support Robert but oppose a carve-out and they have been asked for by various groups over the years. When the engineering department was first created they wanted a carve-out but were voted down. The rationale was that once you give one department a carve out, they all want one. Once that happens, you lose the unified experience that colonnade is supposed to provide.

14. **Minter:** Why do we have this obstacle to getting people into the ST? Is it an under-utilized resource? Student Affairs controls TOP and they have they not wanted to add it to their program. This is a university with an academic mission, and academia should call

the shots. We need to tell Student Affairs that they are simply going to do it. We have precedent.

MacElroy: That is one of the options we are exploring. Not necessarily the ST, but other possibilities. Laura brought forth an option for a placement exam that could be completed prior to TOP which would allow students to get their proficiency up front. They talk about the ST at MASTER plan—it's just not happening in the magnitude needed.

15. **Baylis:** There is no compelling reason for forgiving 4 years rather than 2, the backlog will simply come up every year. There is no data on how many students would even need to worry about the ST. What is the argument of getting rid of it for four years?

16. **Applin:** Was there ever any consideration to just make the requirement for honors students only?

Minter: No, and doing so moves against the current president's standard. He has stated that it's time to quit having a privileged group. There is a high school requirement—the state does have a language requirement. This offers a quick fix, but there needs to be time carved out at orientation for the ST.

17. **Dietle:** We should be precise in how we talk about this--we are not proposing amnesty, this does not apply to those without language credits from high school. Students will be required to show transcripts as proof.

MacElroy: Item one preserves the requirement.

Daday: This is a known problem. We only offer 2300 seats [per year] of 101 and 102 courses, and the PCAL dean and the Provost have known this was a problem. If the ST solution was that easy, it would have worked. It's not being done. Maybe it is the solution moving forward, but it hasn't been done for the last 3-4 years.

18. **Minter:** Student Affairs said no about putting Stamp Test in TOP.

19. **Baylis:** Rebut: I think an expanded task force should have the option of adding another two years of alternative language. We know we are back against the wall, but we can find a solution.

20. **Crews:** This is an effort to do right by ML requirement and deal with a difficult situation. The suggested line in the proposal is the cleanest. Anything else will create problems. The goal is to save the program, and the best way to do that is give them a chance to find a solution.

21. **Daday:** Doug [MacElroy] and Laura [McGee], is it realistic to meet the Feb 15 deadline? We based this decision on the academic calendar—if that deadline needed to be pushed out we can shift to the calendar year to 2018-2019. This will give us more time to draft a comprehensive solution to prevent the backlog permanently.

MacElroy: My personal feeling is that we need time to implement a real solution and we would like to put the new process in place to get it rolled out by fall.

22. **Hanley:** How will the implementation of this process work? Who is going to be responsible for identifying those students to whom this applies and then who is going to be responsible for notifying them of the changes? We need to keep the burden of the responsibility off the shoulders of faculty advisors as much as possible.

Daday: Chris Jensen has said that his people in Academic Advising and Retention could work throughout January to meet with students.

Lee: There is an implementation committee who will assume this responsibility.

Baylis: Those who have completed this need to have it clearly showing on their ICAP.

23. **Baylis:** Can we have it both ways? We need ML's suggestions by February but the complete solution takes longer to determine.

MacElroy—the solution may be developed, but not all solutions are immediately implemented. We need ML to come forward with a set of options.

24. **Atkinson:** 1) To Patti [Minter's] point: I was not suggesting a carve-out plan, I was suggesting a stepped plan to let colleges determine their required level of proficiency. 2) Any time you build a new process you need control points along the way, so we need to implement some key performance indicators to avoid this a second time.

25. **Berger:** If we no longer require students who come in with language requirements to take these classes, will it hurt them meeting their 120 hours for their BA?

MacElroy: Very few students graduate with only 120 hours, the average is more like 139.

Berger: There is more detail to consider and we didn't get a true sense of what the numbers are. If we are having 3000+ students coming in each year we are simply going to have the same problem again unless we address the number of seats offered, or utilize the ST test more

MacElroy: We need to reduce the demand

26. **Berger:** How many 101 and 102 classes are offered in the winter and summer? When we come up against this again—and we will hit it again—we need a clear sense of what the trends are. This is not resolving the issue, it's a stopgap. Hoping the committee will take the conversation and devise a reasonable solution.
27. **Applin:** The language requirement is important and so is how we communicate this to the university community, in particular how we present it to advisors and students. We need to add the wording to make it clear what this means exactly.
28. **Davis:** We (ML) have a task force working on options to include placement tests that lead into the ST. By February 15, Colonnade wants to know how the ML department is going to address these issues moving forward. Do we need to move it to another place in Colonnade?
29. **Dietle:** If it remains a requirement for students, don't re-package it.

Minter: Moving it is not an option.

30. **Wilson:** There are no new resources available, we have to communicate these changes and their meaning to students, and develop a plan moving forward—this is a heck of a task for ML.

Daday: When we passed this in colonnade we identified numerous ways to meet this requirement. Is there a way for a student to demonstrate the world proficiency in a connections course, for example?

Dietle: Parliamentarian: point of order—this is not the proposal on the table.

Kondratieff: Agreed. Discussion closed. Can I get a motion to pass the Colonnade proposal regarding ML?

So Moved: 1st, Hanley, 2nd, Minter

Approved: In favor 12, opposed 2, abstentions 1

Motion to Adjourn: Hanley, Sturgeon

4:38 meeting ended