

**ORAL ROBERTS UNIVERSITY**  
**ACADEMIC COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES**  
**April 15, 2016 – 12:00 p.m., GC 3112**

1. **TOPIC:** Opening

Dr. Kathaleen Reid-Martinez, chair of the Academic Council, opened the meeting with prayer requests and urged the Council members to work together today.

2. **TOPIC:** Definition of Intercultural Experience

**DISCUSSION:** The proposed definition was displayed on the screen as follows:

**Definition of Intercultural Experience:** Encounters, interactions, and involvement among people from different cultural backgrounds, countries, or regions of the same country that develop students' cognitive, affective, behavioral skills and attitudinal responses.

Council members were asked to reflect on this definition over the summer. The definition had been derived from comments made by faculty, including a Wiki which had been made available to them.

Dr. Marshal Wright moved for acceptance for the proposal to be considered over the summer. Dr. Kenda Jezek seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**ACTION:** Academic Council representatives will take the proposed definition to their colleges. Discussions on this definition at Academic Council will begin in the fall.

**OPEN**

3. **TOPIC:** Proposal to Reduce the Minimum number of hours in an Undergraduate degree from 128 to 120.

**DISCUSSION:** Dr. Reid-Martinez reminded the Council that input on this proposal has been sought from all of the colleges.

Ms. Corie VanArsdale moved to bring the proposal back to the Council for discussion. Dr. Kenda Jezek seconded the motion. Dr. Kathaleen Reid-Martinez opened the floor for discussion.

Dr. Marshal Wright shared that the College of Business also wants to get the minimum number of hours reduced to 120, but wants to maintain the distinctive faith-based general education curriculum and is in favor of the general education review currently being conducted to streamline and maintain that distinctive. Some programs at ORU cannot reduce to the total to 120 without additional review of general education courses, therefore a decision should be delayed until we get the recommendation from the general education curriculum committee. The proposed IT degree eliminates electives only and does not change any general education requirements; programs following a similar pattern would reduce the flexibility of our programs for our students.

Dr. Reid-Martinez asked if the nursing program's review of their degree has been beneficial to the general education curriculum committee. The general Education Curriculum Committee and Nursing faculty members are in total agreement about a holistic review of general education. The goal is not to eliminate discreet courses (i.e. reduce general education by six hours), which could lead to a "turf war." This discussion has been helpful in determining future steps in general education review.

A question was asked whether core competencies guided the proposal. Dr. Lori Kanitz responded that a survey of more than 1,000 alumni and students has been conducted. The goal is to propose general education curriculum models to be considered for discussion next fall with the goal of a vote on a final curriculum by the end of spring 2017.

A handout was distributed summarizing the procedures nursing has followed. Dr. Kenda Jezek shared that a consultant had been hired to provide advice on how to reduce the nursing program from 131 total hours to 120 total hours in anticipation of a change of federal guidelines. This change is not currently mandated but is definitely anticipated in the near future. Many other nursing programs have already changed to 120 total hours. Nursing's proposed redesign of their curriculum eliminates three-credit hours of Nutrition and Humanities. Dr. Jezek further stated a review of what constitutes a 3 hour versus a 2 hour course credit needs to be conducted university-wide as other programs consider reducing total hours to 120.

A question arose concerning the target date of implementation of the IT degree and the nursing degree and why a delay would be a problem. The online IT program will launch in fall 2016 and nursing plans to offer the new program beginning in fall 2017

A point of order arose from the Council. The nursing proposal was not on the table and should not be discussed. The nursing faculty responded that their handout was simply presented to demonstrate their support of the college of science and engineering's proposal.

The Council was reminded that the general education curriculum is currently under a three-year review. Nursing's concept-based curriculum would impact approximately 50 new freshmen and the IT proposal would impact 5-20 new students. A suggestion was made to simply make an exception for these two degree plans and prohibit any other degrees being reduced to 120 total hours until completion of the general education review.

Mr. David Fulmer, University Registrar, cautioned the Council that any exception that goes in the catalog would have to be clearly stated since the catalog is the university's official document used by accrediting bodies and other groups to ascertain our key requirements for graduation.

Dr. Lori Kanitz, Chair of the General Education Curriculum Committee, agreed that an exception would allow a continued holistic study and implementation of the new general education curriculum.

Dr. Sergio Matviuk shared that there are five more online programs that will be brought forward in the next few months. The key performance indicators in the university's adaptive plan require six new online programs this year, some of which are targeted to launch in fall of 2016. Some of these new programs are new, unique programs and some are conversions of ORU traditional, residential programs. Although it is sometimes hard to distinguish what is unique and what is a conversion, the Higher Learning Commission indicates that 65% - 85% similarity makes an online program substantially equivalent.

Dr. Mark Hall was recognized in order to share feedback from the College of Arts and Cultural Studies. After vigorous debate by the members of that college earlier in the week, the vote was 31 against the proposal and zero for the proposal, but they were generally willing to consider an exception for certain programs. The faculty members in the College of Arts and Cultural Studies were concerned that allowing some programs to be reduced would create pressure for others to follow the same path in order to stay competitive.

A question arose concerning the direction of the three-year review being conducted by the General Education Curriculum Committee. Dr. Lori Kanitz indicated that a reduction of the total number of hours in general education was definitely a goal, but the reduction needs to be a strategic reduction with a holistic approach.

Dr. Eric Newberg stated that the faculty members of the College of Theology and Missions support the proposal to reduce the minimum number of hours in an undergraduate degree to 120 as an exception to the University policy.

Nursing plans to implement their new 120 hour degree in the fall of 2017 and would like the nursing program to be considered as an exception so that the nursing faculty can continue their work on appropriately designing their program. The nursing faculty indicated that today is not the time to vote on a nursing proposal since no degree plan sheet is available for review and a reduction of general education hours in their proposal will need to be approved by the General Education Curriculum Committee.

Dr. Reid-Martinez suggested the Council table the current proposal. The discussion then turned to whether or not the university could allow exceptions to the 128 total hours in an undergraduate degree for the IT online program and for Nursing.

Dr. Ken Weed then withdrew the initial proposal. The motion to withdraw was seconded by Dr. Kenda Jezek and approved by the Council.

Dr. Marshal Wright made the following new motion: “An exception should be granted to the ORU policy of a minimum of 128 total hours in an undergraduate degree allowing the total to be reduced to a minimum of 120 total hours for new online programs and to reduce the minimum to 120 total hours for the Nursing degree subject to approval by the General Education Curriculum Committee.” Dr. Eric Newberg seconded the motion. This motion will need to go to the University Faculty for final approval. Motion passed (18 for, 1 opposed, no abstentions).

**ACTION:** The provost will send the motion to the president for consideration at the University Faculty meeting.

**TOPIC:** Increasing understanding of number of credit hours required for graduation

**DISCUSSION:** Dr. Reid-Martinez recommended that a subcommittee including the Chair of the General Education Curriculum Committee and the University Registrar be formed to identify critical issues that must be addressed in any future university-wide discussions regarding a minimum of 120 total hours for undergraduate degrees at ORU. The goal is to have a well-informed Academic Council on this topic. A report will be expected at the fall 2016 meeting of the Academic Council.

**ACTION:** The Provost will establish an ad hoc summer committee to review the issue with a report back to the Academic Council in fall 2016.

**OPEN**

**TOPIC:** Concern about time needed for faculty to make decision

**DISCUSSION:** Dr. Angela Watson moved to recommend the proposal for the exception on the 120 hour minimum for the online IT program and the Nursing program be presented to President Wilson for consideration for the agenda for Monday's meeting of the University Faculty. In the motion, Dr. Watson further recommended that the Council suggest that no formal vote be taken at Monday's University Faculty meeting but a vote be conducted electronically within the two weeks following the University Faculty meeting to allow those faculty members swamped at the end of the semester appropriate time to consider the ramifications of the proposal before casting their vote. Dr. Marshal Wright seconded the motion. After discussion related to the demands on faculty time at the end of the semester, Dr. Angela Watson asked to amend the motion to extend the vote to "within four weeks of the University Faculty meeting." This was considered a friendly amendment to the original motion since it was offered the author of the motion. As such, no vote was taken on the amendment. A call for the question led to a vote of 16 for the proposal, one opposed, and one abstention. Motion passed.

**ACTION:** The provost will send forward that the Academic Council recommends the University Faculty consider a focused discussion and, if more time is needed to process the topic, that electronic discussion and voting could be used over a two to four weeks as an option to respond to the request to allow 120 credit hour exceptions to the current 128 credit-hours policy required for graduation.

## **OPEN**

**TOPIC:** Recommendations for proceeding

**DISCUSSION:** Dr. Lori Kanitz reminded the Council that several critical members of the Council will be out of town this Monday for a meeting with the Higher Learning Commission. Their leadership and explanations will be valuable if the proposal is placed on the University Faculty agenda for discussion.

Dr. Reid-Martinez recommended that the following members of the Council be available in person or electronically for Monday's University Faculty meeting to respond to any questions about why they are requesting the exemption to the 128 credit hour policy for graduation:

Dean of the College initiating the proposal	Dr. Ken Weed
Chair of the Department initiating the proposal	Dr. Andy Lange
Dean of the College impacted by the proposal	Dr. Kenda Jezek
Chair of the General Education Curriculum Committee	Dr. Lori Kanitz
University Provost	Dr. Kathaleen Reid-Martinez
Dean of Online Learning	Dr. Sergio Matviuk

Dr. Marshal Wright moved that the Council members mentioned above be available for potential discussion at Monday's university Faculty Meeting. Dr. Eric Newberg seconded the motion which passed unanimously (17 for, zero opposed, zero abstentions)

**ACTION:** The above members of Academic Council or their proxies were asked to be available at University Faculty meeting on Monday April 18 to respond to any questions on the topic of 120 credit hour exemption to the 128 credit-hour policy for graduation.

**OPEN**

4. **TOPIC:** Adjournment

The Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Terry Unruh*

Terry Unruh  
Vice Chair, Academic Council