

Minutes of ARFAC Meeting

November 5, 1997

Present: Kathy Chadwick (chair), Wendy Allen, Mark Gelle, Michelle Gierke, Barb Lundberg, Tim Mahr, and Anna Trefz.

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS: Kathy C. began the meeting by announcing that Gail Carlson had had her baby and by welcoming our new Fine Arts representative, Tim Mahr.

2. FUTURE MEETINGS: There are two remaining meetings this semester: November 19 (probably Conf Rm 1; check Diane Strom's announcement) and December 3 (Conf Rm 3). The November 19 meeting will focus on retention. Jacquie Skinner will be invited and she and Barb L. will talk about current retention efforts. We also want to examine such efforts in the broader context of an overall retention "program."

3. BUNTROCK PROGRAM: Faculty members on the committee were reminded of the need to identify a faculty member from within their faculty (but not their department) to read Buntrock essays at the end of January/beginning of February.

4. MINUTES: The minutes of the October 29 meeting were approved as distributed, with the understanding that the secretary would correct the spelling of the chair's first name (ie—>y).

5. AGENDA:

- a. review of draft memo to Jim Pence re English-language proficiency requirement for entering international students;
- b. review of job description for position of Professional Exploration Program director;
- c. initial discussion of first-year student adjustment to/satisfaction with St. Olaf.

6. REVIEW OF DRAFT MEMO TO JIM PENCE RE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT FOR ENTERING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:

Committee members reviewed a draft memo prepared by Wendy and distributed at the meeting. The following points (reported in random order) were made in the course of the discussion.

- a. The policy we are suggesting does not represent something dramatically new and different from what we have been doing to date; rather, it represents a tightening up. In particular, up to now, we have pretty much held to the requirement for degree candidates; non-degree candidates (and especially exchange students) have not, by and large, been held to the same standard. We wish to see the same standard applied to all international applicants.

b. Nevertheless, we do not want to have such a strict standard in place that we cannot be sensitive to unique situations or special cases (e.g., an international applicant whose TOEFL score falls below the required 550 but who is interviewed by a St. Olaf faculty member in whose professional judgment his or her level of English-language proficiency is deemed adequate).

d. We added several items to the charge for the proposed sub-committee.

It was agreed that Wendy would revise the draft and send it out to ARFAC members the next morning via e-mail. (Copy of revised draft is attached to official copy of Minutes.) All comments and suggestions for additional change are to be forwarded to Kathy Chadwick, over whose name the memo is to be sent.

7. REVIEW OF JOB DESCRIPTION FOR PEP DIRECTOR:

Kathy distributed copies of the job description for the PEP director, which had already been made available to the campus community via e-mail. There was some discussion of the mission of PEP, but we concluded that such discussion was ill-timed in view of the fact that we are at the beginning of a new grant-funded cycle of activities. Under the terms of the new job description, admissions decisions will be made by the Admissions Office rather than by the PEP director; this change is designed to avoid/minimize potential conflicts of interest. There was extensive discussion of the nature of the position and, in particular, whether the new description indicated a decrease in PEP staffing. The new description reflects a melding of positions. PEP was originally allocated 1.0 positions; under the current arrangement, a Residential Life staff member is assisting the current director, Bob Carlson, bringing the staff allocation for PEP to 1.3. The new description reflects a desire for increased flexibility in filling staff positions, on the one hand, and a desire, when possible, to foster collaboration among various sectors of the College (Admissions, residential life, PEP, etc.), on the other. The College hopes that the expansion of the director's activities to include coaching—if we can find such a candidate—and not a head coaching position, mind you!—will assist the director in carrying out the responsibilities of the post by expanding the settings in which he or she might potentially interact with students.

8. INITIAL DISCUSSION OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENT ADJUSTMENT TO/SATISFACTION WITH ST. OLAF.

The Dean of Students Office has recently completed a telephone survey of 75% of the first-year class. ARFAC members expressed the desire to be informed of the findings of this survey. This will be a future agenda item. We briefly considered whether it would be a good idea to conduct a follow-up to this survey, focusing on multicultural students—and, if so, who might do so (Student Senate, Multicultural Student Services, other groups); but decided that, for the moment, there is no reason to single out multicultural students.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Allen, secretary