

Annual Report from the Longwood Seminar Advisory Committee  
April 2011

The Longwood Seminar Advisory Committee met formally once during this academic year (late February), though ongoing conversations continue via e-mail. Members of this year's committee were: Chris McGee (Chair), Ellen Masters, Pam Tracy, Melinda Fowlkes, Sarah Whitley, Stacey Wilkerson, Susan McGowan, Geoff Orth (ex officio), and Rachel Cave (student member).

As a part of this meeting the committee was updated on upcoming changes to the New Lancer Days orientation week, which includes, in lieu of a traditional outside speaker, an in-house presentation from Longwood faculty, students, and community members. The committee then voted to continue with the extended Longwood Seminar schedule that was adopted last year – courses meet twice for the first four weeks and then once for the remainder of the session.

The committee then focused on attempts to improve the working relationship between faculty and their assigned peer mentors. I shared a survey I had designed to gain feedback from peer mentors about faculty, as well as plans to invite faculty to peer mentor training and peer mentors to faculty training. Sarah and I also updated the committee on work to develop a lesson plan for peer mentors to cover a session on citizen leadership. Subsequently a portion of the afternoon of March 2001 Peer Mentor training was devoted to training peer mentors to lead this session. Sarah Whitley and I continue to develop this new curricular requirement for Longwood Seminar, with training on both the faculty and peer mentor ends.

The clearest challenges facing both the committee and the course itself revolve around assessment, both in the immediate future and for the long term. I shared information on what I had so far entered on WEAVE, in particular three areas that need development and assessment (Understanding the Mission of the University, Understanding the Application of Critical Thinking, Developing the Skills for College Success). The committee discussed possible assignments within the course that connected with these goals and could be areas for assessment. I shared two possible rubrics I had anticipated in advance of the meeting, while Pam Tracy suggested another possible assessment in connection with the First Year Reading.

With time running short the committee agreed to discuss these issues later in the semester in preparation for the Spring faculty training, which has been set for May 11th. Plans have been made for a possible final committee meeting before this Spring training. Meanwhile, I will solicit revisions to our rubrics before this Spring training.

As a final part of the meeting the committee heard a short presentation from two representatives from Cengage Learning on a program they offer, CSFI. This program could be conducted via student self-reporting and would provide a number of measures that connect with the goals of LSEM. Hard copies of materials were offered.

And a few minor points are also worth mentioning. I shared my desire to complete a handbook for LSEM faculty that would contain the basics of curriculum, possible assignments, and material on opportunities for students from around campus. Ellen Masters asked the committee on the possibility of requiring a hard copy of the course catalog for all incoming undeclared students, with the possibility of inquiring our bookstore on the possibilities.

The highest priority for the committee remains establishing assessment for the Longwood Seminar course. In the upcoming months my goal is to have a working assessment ready for a first application in the Fall.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chris McGee  
Chair, Longwood Seminar Advisory Committee