

Notes from IRC meeting
Wednesday, November 1, 2006 (4-5PM)
Library 442

Present: Susan Kress, Justin Sipher, Ruth Copans, Beth Dupont, John Anzalone, Matthew Schrenzel, Andy Ashton, Tom O'Connell, Dung-Lan Chen, Mark Hofmann, Leslie Mechem, Michael Arnush, Ann Henderson, Steve Dinyer, Cameron Dunn, Tom Marcotte, Margo Mensing, Barbara Norelli, Susan Zappen, Jim Welsh, Tim Donahue, Phylise Banner Klein

Absent: Hassan Lopez

A. Minutes: minutes from October 11th were approved with corrections

B. Susan Kress distributed packets providing background information for today's discussion on Information Literacy and Research Skills, Part 2 to address:

1. How do we go about assessing the current I.L. needs at Skidmore? Would a focus group or task force be useful? What kind of information can we collect from other colleges/universities that would be helpful to our discussion?
2. What resources do our faculty need?
3. What resources do our students need?

- She pointed out that the IRC Plan included in packet is part of the action agenda in Academic Affairs. It demonstrates that IRC can move forward on the goal to implement Information Literacy (or a yet to be determined more comprehensive and acceptable term). The goal does not need to be restated.
- Several spoke about ongoing programs at other institutions. John Weber mentioned Ohio State's WOVE (Written-Oral-Visual Expression)
- Second document discussed: Skidmore Plan (Draft) Generated at CIC/NITLE Workshop, Boston, April 20-22, 2006
 1. Susan Zappen, Mimi Hellman, and Sarah Goodwin attended this conference. Susan Z stated that this is a document drawn up at the request of NITLE to summarize how the library/technology mission at Skidmore fits with the institutional mission, and the document is not intended to represent IRC's broader mission to instill critical learning skills across the college.
 2. In response to the third step of first steps [Request funds to support team for course design to include information literacy (faculty, librarian, student, IT member)], Michael Arnush suggested that this team approach would work well for the FYE seminars and teams could profit by including peer mentors as liaisons to support faculty, library and IT's transmission of research skills. Mellon funds are available. While

response was favorable, several pointed out the challenge of staffing 47 odd teams. Others brought up such training needs to be multi-leveled and multi-tiered. Also it would be best if focused on particular assignments.

3. John Weber queried the purpose and audience of this document: whom does it address and how is it valuable?

C. Should IRC assemble a Task Force to study I.L.?

- Barbara Norelli reported that the librarians are working on Information Literacy and Research Skills plan as well as presently delivering these skills in the FYE.
- She added that there is a list of websites for colleges/universities that have done considerable work in this area. This information would be useful for a Task Force.
- John Weber stated that Information Literacy/Research Skills constitute a two-part scenario: the "going to" or accessing the information followed by the "putting out" or publishing of the information. There is an enormous increase in the amount of information that students publish, particularly visual information. It is the quality of this putting out that most concerns faculty.
- Ruth Copans pointed out that the library's role is accessing information.
- Susan Kress brought up the timing in creating a Task Force. Writing across the curriculum, an ongoing initiative for CEPP, requires considerable resources; would it be better to wait until this initiative is established before proceeding with Information Literacy/Research Skills? Can the two initiatives be connected—or is the writing proposal too far advanced?
- Leslie Mechem stated research and writing are intrinsically linked.
- Ruth said that if we put this off, we would be starting over again next year.
- Cameron brought up the importance of students as stakeholders.
- Justin mentioned the need for a website that builds awareness. As well, any task force needs to respond to the ethical issues related to the mega amount of information published by students and the methods of archiving this information.
- The discussion returned to the idea of FYE seminars as a possible site for beginning the study. Perhaps this is the place for faculty members to design assignments?
- Others lamented the difficulty of staffing so many teams and suggested a pilot program for five FYE classes that would then be assessed.
- Attendees agreed that Academic Affairs needs to see the Information Literacy issue as embedded in the whole fabric

of the college. The College must attend to fast changing delivery of information in the culture at large and how this affects students, faculty and all users within the College.

- Mark pointed out that since expertise in information literacy is required for writing, if we approach this sequentially it will be associated only with particular disciplines. This project needs to be considered by CEPP and should contain broad-based competency requirements for oral as well as research skills.
- Again the problem in naming this creature surfaced. Writing across the curriculum addresses a single competency. The project we are considering encompasses a far greater range of literacies. We need to find a broader term.

Conclusions:

- Barbara Norelli, Beth Dupont, John Weber volunteered to develop a preliminary charge for a potential task force.
- All present agreed that not only is the presence of a faculty member on this team crucial, but that the faculty person needs to be from the English Department. Susan will solicit the Department for a member to join this committee.
- The committee will report at the next meeting, November 29. FEC approval for any task force is necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

Margo Mensing