

Student Learning Committee (SLC)
Minutes from Meeting on October 11, 2011

Committee members present: Kendrick Brown (Chair), Nancy Bostrom, Adrienne Christiansen, Terri Fishel, Jim Hoppe, Lisa Landreman, Peter Mathison, Kimerly Miller, Libby Shoop, Yang Yu

Absent: Cheryl Browne, Chad Higdon-Topaz

I. General business/Updates

- There will be no SLC meeting on October 18.
- Minutes from 10.4.11 are approved.
- Last week, Kendrick gave two presentations to the Board of Trustees—one to the Academic Affairs Committee, one to the Campus Life Committee. He received positive feedback and support for this effort.

II. Review feedback and suggestions for the initial draft

SLC received additional feedback, some of which has already been incorporated into the document. SLC members received copies of the suggestions for reference. A few comments were designated as “major issues” for later discussion. SLC reviewed other comments on a case-by-case basis. Highlights are included here, but for specific edits, see the revised draft.

- We began with KTB3, then moved this topic into a “major issue” to be addressed later. At issue is different interpretations of the mission statement:

Macalester College Mission Statement

Macalester is committed to being a preeminent liberal arts college with an educational program known for its high standards for scholarship and its special emphasis on internationalism, multiculturalism, and service to society.

(adopted by the Board of Trustees in 1992; reaffirmed by the Board in 2005)

Some community members read the mission as engaging in scholarship which has an emphasis on internationalism, multiculturalism, and service to society. Others read the “special emphasis” as not only related to scholarship, but extended to the educational program as a whole, encompassing both the curricular and co-curricular.

This major question requires further conversation, perhaps by people outside of SLC.

- Page 2, Scholarship: The suggested edit related to “public scholarship” was not highlighted in the draft, but SLC briefly discussed a clarification of this term. A group at Macalester, including the Provost has developed a definition of this term, and SLC agreed to leave the term as is.
- SLC agreed to the changes from “discipline” to “field” terminology throughout the document.
- David Moore raised an important point regarding multiculturalism and internationalism. While at Macalester these terms have referred to US and non-US contexts respectively, these distinctions are blurred in the draft document.
 - The distinction is clear in our general education requirements, for example, where the two are separate. The requirement’s emphasis on multiculturalism in US contexts was a conscious decision, not necessarily intended to reflect facts on the ground. However, recent requests for “M” and “I” designations also reflect a blurring of this line. The mission statement was written in 1992, and the contemporary definition of this milieu has changed. This issue requires a larger conversation.
 - SLC respects M’s traditional emphasis on US contexts, and also appreciates current experiences which may reflect a more nuanced perspective of multiculturalism. The committee agreed upon wording that attempts to bridge the two.
- There likely is a place for a diagram or graphic, but it should better communicate the relationship between the values and goals. In the future, it may be an effective means to communicate to students, for example. (However, we caution against condensing so much that meaning is lost.) For now, SLC will remove the diagram. It is not an integral part of the document now, but may assist with communication in the future, at which time it will be revisited.
- SLC members thanked Kendrick for his substantial efforts and careful work to revise the draft.

Action Item: Kendrick will begin to revise the draft and will circulate to SLC on Friday. He will incorporate additional suggestions. Track changes will be used to identity completed edits and points for further discussion.