The Faculty Senate met on Thursday, May 3, 2007, at 5:00 p.m. in Beatty Center 115 to continue discussion of the proposals on General Education submitted by the Ad-Hoc Committee on General Education.

The formal session began with continued debate on the motion concerning Goal I.2: “Effective writing and critical reading; oral and visual communication.” Larry Krasnoff (guest, Philosophy) said that he hoped the Senate was almost ready to vote on this motion, adding that the course requirements for this goal have become fairly simple, with the amendments that have already been made. The key addition to our current general education curriculum, he argued, is the requirement that students take a speaking-intensive course. Mr. Krasnoff asked the Senate if we really wanted to do this—“put all our eggs in the speaking-intensive basket.” He argued that it might be better to have a third course that is either writing or speaking-intensive. While he said he doesn’t want to get rid of the speaking requirement, this requirement made more sense when the proposal had another writing-intensive course in the major (which was amended out at the previous special Senate meeting). He would like to see other departments (in addition to English and Communication) buy into communication-intensive courses. Hugh Wilder (Philosophy) moved to amend the motion as Mr. Krasnoff had suggested—to change “speaking-intensive” in 3b on p. 19 of the proposal to “communication-intensive.” The requirement, as amended, would read as follows:

b. At least one additional communication-speaking-intensive course, which may be a course in the student’s major.

Brian McGee, Chair of the Communication Department, said that he wouldn’t repeat the arguments made many hours ago in favor of a speaking-intensive course, but that he would like to remind Senators of the force of those arguments. His department would like to see speaking-intensive instruction spread out over the disciplines. Julia Eichelberger, Chair of the Ad-Hoc Committee on General Education, said that the committee had designed the proposal so that any department could contribute to the speaking-intensive part of the curriculum. The reason the committee specified this requirement is because they believe every student should receive speaking-intensive instruction, not just those who select such courses.

A vote was taken, and Mr. Wilder’s amendment failed.

Deanna Caveny (At-Large, Mathematics) then moved to amend the proposal by striking a required cap of 20 students in communication-intensive courses. The language Ms. Caveny moved to strike (from p. 20 of the proposal) reads as follows:

5. Writing- or speaking-intensive classes will have no more than 20 students, and departments offering such courses shall not be penalized for any adverse impact on their department’s Delaware Study target number.
Ms. Caveny said that she understands there’s a workload implication in teaching writing and speaking-intensive courses. Yet, she argued, we haven’t been told precisely what writing-intensive means. She said she doesn’t know what the gain would be for the cost of having only 20 students per section. We have no sense of how many of these courses there will be, she argued, so we don’t really know the true cost; it may be more than what’s proposed. In addition, she said, this is such a big decision it shouldn’t be made solely in terms of the Faculty Senate. Such a decision has tremendous impact on pay and on faculty in other disciplines. Richard Nunan (At-Large, Philosophy) said that he shares Ms. Caveny’s concerns about budgetary implications; however, he doesn’t regard her amendment as a happy solution because if we are going to have writing and speaking-intensive courses over and above what we already have, those courses need to have smaller enrollments. Either we approve having them, which the Senate has already done, or we don’t. If we have such courses, he argued, we need to have an appropriate enrollment. We’ve put the administration on notice that we’d like to implement this costly part of the proposal, he said. If we do what Ms. Caveny suggests, the administration will simply make us teach large writing and speaking-intensive courses. Then, either the requirement will “wither on the vine,” or we’ll pretend to fulfill it.

Terry Bowers (English) argued that, currently, the proposal is formulated so that the required writing-intensive courses replace English 101 and 102, which already have caps of 20 students, so it’s a wash. It would be a big mistake to remove caps, he added, because such a move would violate best practices. He then read a brief excerpt from the Modern Language Association best practices, which say that the number of students in writing-intensive courses should be 15 or fewer, with no more than 20. Ms. Caveny’s amendment, he said, would be regressive; it would push the College in the wrong direction.

Mick Norton (Mathematics) said that, just because English 101 and 102 operate with caps of 20 students, this doesn’t necessarily mean that Department X that emphasizes writing should do it in the same way. The number 20 could hamstring departments. Another issue, he added, is whether this is intended to be a hard 20 or a soft 20—you can override caps if necessary. Paul Young (Mathematics) said that he was not really sure whether leaving the cap of 20 in or taking it out would do much to the document either way. One bothersome thing about saying how many students can be in a communication-intensive class, he added, is that we don’t even know how many hours these courses will be. So, he doesn’t know why the document includes the caps of 20 in the first place. Sofia Agrest (Mathematics) said that she doesn’t think there should be caps in the document at all. It should be up to departments how to cap their courses—not an issue for Senators to decide.

Julia Eichelberger replied that the reason the committee put in the cap is because they were trying to identify the conditions under which the proposal’s goals could be met. After much studying, meeting with faculty, etc., it appeared that the learning that needed to occur in communication-intensive classes had to be done in a situation where there was a smaller student/faculty ratio because these courses will require students to present a great deal of written work, have this work responded to, and have an opportunity to
revise it. It’s a labor-intensive method of teaching. Ms. Eichelberg said that she doesn’t teach her upper-division classes that have caps of 30 the way she teaches writing-intensive courses with caps of 20. The cap specified in the proposal, she added, is the norm in writing programs. In including this requirement, the committee wanted to give the Senate leverage to argue that the caps need to be respected.

Deanna Caveny then said she wished to clarify her rationale for the amendment. She said she was not opposed to the English Department negotiating workload based on their professional society recommendations. But faculty workload, she argued, is based on a larger picture than class size. She said she could think of at least two examples in which a smaller class size would have been legitimate in other types of courses—specifically, foreign language courses and science labs, where students do a great deal of writing. She said that what she objects to is the cap of 20 in this place in the document in this context.

Joe Kelly (guest, English) spoke in favor of keeping the language about the cap of 20 in the proposal. This cap, he argued, is something that will protect the faculty. Faculty members asked to teach writing-intensive classes without such a cap will either destroy themselves or do a bad job. The language in this part of the proposal concerning the Delaware Study numbers protects departments; the language about caps of 20 protects faculty members. Such a requirement will help other departments that currently don’t have these caps in place. Brian McGee (guest, Communication) said that the cap of 20 is also consistent with best practices in speaking disciplines. Such language appears in similar proposals at other universities. Harvard, for instance, institutes a cap of 12 on such courses.

Mark Lazzaro (guest, Biology) asked whether the caps of 20 become irrelevant when you move outside of the disciplines of English and Communication. Currently, he pointed out, his department has caps of 24 in biology labs. Scott Peeples (English) suggested that it might be a good idea if other disciplines that want their courses to count as communication-intensive seek to lower their caps. Why not lower labs from 24 to 20, he asked? This might require more resources from the administration, but we won’t get resources if we don’t ask for them. If communication-intensive courses are going to be meaningful, Mr. Peeples argued, he knows from years of experience that they can’t be taught effectively with more than 20 students. Carol Ann Davis (English) said that writing-intensive courses do not simply include a lot of writing, but also require that instructors respond to student writing in a very intense way.

Norine Noonan, Dean of the School of Science and Mathematics, argued that certain Senators, who make statements about departments they know little about, are displaying the “moral superiority of the uninvolved.” She said that she has taught a communication-intensive course that probably has more writing in it than any other course at the College. She argued that 20 is not a magic number. The intent of the Delaware Study is to give departments flexibility in determining course loads. She would prefer to see the proposal say “small courses,” not 20. Why not 12 or 17, she asked—there is nothing magic about the number 20. For folks to say science courses should be capped at 20 students betrays ignorance of the practice in her discipline.
Larry Krasnoff reminded Senators that the amendment strikes the entire passage about caps in communication-intensive courses; the amendment does not suggest taking out the number 20 and replacing it with the word “small.” In this proposal, we’re making recommendations that may or may not be put into practice. The number 20 is an estimate, it’s a guess. This debate shouldn’t be seen as English vs. the Sciences. The cap of 20 students, Mr. Krasnoff argued, seems like a reasonable number for numerous disciplines.

Meg Cormack (Religious Studies) then asked if we could possibly solve the problem by inserting the word ‘normally’ in front of the number. Ms. Caveny replied that she would not consider that a friendly amendment. What would be acceptable as a friendly amendment, she said, would be a more general statement about sizes appropriate to course objectives. Melissa Hughes (Biology) said that the cap of 20 seems to be an arbitrary cut-off. If her department dropped biology labs from 24 to 20 students, that would be 116 students cut off, so sticking to a hard cap of 20 would have a major impact. David Kowal (Art History) then made a friendly amendment to revise the language about caps to read as follows:

5. Writing- or speaking-intensive classes will have caps that are appropriate to their discipline and course objectives no more than 20 students, and departments offering such courses shall not be penalized for any adverse impact on their department’s Delaware Study target number.

Susan Kattwinkel (Theatre) said that she’s not sure if she’s for or against this amendment, but she suggested that courses at the College of Charleston are already supposed to have caps that are appropriate to their discipline and course objectives. Frank Morris (Classics) argued that Foreign Languages and English have taught large communication-intensive courses as part of the General Education Curriculum for many many years. It took a long time to get the caps down to 20, he said. He said that objections to the caps of 20 seemed to be for courses in the major. Mr. Morris urged Senators not to take away from English and Foreign Languages caps that are best for effective teaching and that they worked so hard to attain.

Scott Peeples (English) then pointed out that the cap of 20 applies only to a required first-year composition course, a writing-about-literature course, and a speaking-intensive course. He asked whether biology labs would even fit in here. While the English Department hopes that other departments will propose to teach literature courses, he wondered how likely this was to happen in the sciences. Richard Nunan agreed. He argued that the Senate has been talking about something irrelevant. Mr. Peeples is absolutely right, he said. If we adopt Ms. Caveny’s amendment, what will happen in practice is that English and Foreign Languages will have to fight the battle for small class size all over again. They’ll probably win, he argued, but other departments that might entertain the possibility of teaching a literature course could then be told that their courses will have 30 students because they’re not English or Foreign Languages.
Paul Young argued that the cap does not belong in the proposal, because, at some point, we may approve a General Education Committee that will make such decisions. Sofia Agrest said that the supporters of the amendment are not asking that English 101 or 102 go up in size. The amendment, however, gives other departments flexibility. Norine Noonon asked whether a course in the major that wanted to be designated writing-intensive would be required to have a cap of 20. Ms. Eichelberger replied that it would.

Darryl Phillips (At-Large, Classics) said that it would be one thing if we were going to designate only English 101 or 102 as having caps of 20. But this proposal, he argued, could allow his department to offer their entire curriculum as writing-intensive. We’re not here in the Senate to make statements, he said, we’re here to make a curriculum. We’re here to make something that works. If we come up with something that’s not feasible, that we can’t implement, then we haven’t done our job. Pete Calcagno (Economics/Finance) said that he appreciates best practices, but the cap of 20hamstrings all departments. In Business and Economics, he argued, there will be no writing-intensive courses offered if this cap is left in. At this point, Hugh Wilder reminded Senators of Scott Peeples’ point—that the proposal currently requires only two writing-intensive courses: a freshman composition course and a literature course. Unless Economics or Biology is seriously considering offering a freshman composition course, a literature course, or a speaking-intensive course, these comments aren’t relevant. Melissa Hughes said that the cap of 20 would preclude Biology from offering any of those types of courses.

Deanna Caveny said that part of the reasoning for her amendment is the feeling that there are lots of disciplines who currently require a great deal of writing that she doesn’t want to require less writing because they’re not designated as writing-intensive. She doesn’t want the statement about caps of 20 to have unintended consequences for courses that have been very writing-intensive and don’t currently cap at 20 students (a history course for instance). This might cause students to do less writing rather than more. Frank Morris said that he was in sympathy with Hugh Wilder’s point, that we’re talking about something that will replace English 101 and 102. If that’s our context, we’re not speaking generally, we’re speaking quite specifically. It’s the third course, the speaking-intensive course, that brings in the greatest possibility for another department to teach. He asked if it would give more flexibility to the proposal if we added language suggesting that communication-intensive courses in a major do not have to be capped at 20. Ms. Caveny replied that increased flexibility was not her motivation in making the amendment, though she said this seems to be the motivation of those in the sciences who are speaking in favor of the amendment.

Chris Lamb (Communication) then called the question on the amendment. The Senate approved calling the question. The Senate voted against Ms. Caveny’s amendment.

Discussion then returned to the main motion. There was some debate about whether the motion could be amended to make it clear that caps of 20 would apply only to the required freshman composition course, to the required writing-about-literature course, and to the speaking-intensive course, but attempts to make such amendments were
overruled by Speaker Bob Mignone, who said that these amendments were too similar to
the amendment that had just been defeated by the Senate.

Terry Bowers (English) called the question on the main motion (to approve the defining
characteristics and coursework associated with Goal I.2). The Senate approved calling
the question. The Senate then approved the entire motion (as amended in several
previous special Senate meetings). Please see Appendix 1 for a copy of the amended
motion.

Deanna Caveny moved that the Senate adjourn “sine die” (which would cancel all
remaining scheduled special Senate meetings). Because such a motion is not debatable, a
vote was taken immediately. The Senate voted in favor of Ms. Caveny’s motion and will
adjourn until next fall, when the General Education Proposal may be re-introduced.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Farrell
Faculty Secretary
Appendix 2.

General Education Motion Concerning Goal I.2: “Effective writing and critical reading; oral and visual communication”

Please note that this version of the motion reflects the final vote taken on May 3, 2007.
--Postponed items appear in blue (these items address the formation of a CAC Committee and have been postponed until the end of the agenda, when the Senate discusses the formation of a General Education Committee).
--Added items appear in red.
--Deleted items have been struck through.

I.2a. The General Education Committee proposes the following as the defining characteristics of the second sub-goal.

Effective writing and critical reading; oral and visual communication

a. Students should be able to
   • Understand, analyze, and interpret intellectually challenging written texts and oral and visual presentations
   • Use writing and speaking to increase their own understanding of a topic and to communicate their point of view persuasively
   • Strengthen written and spoken work through the process of drafting, revising, and editing
   • Create formal papers and public presentations that are appropriate for the situation and audience
   • Produce well-organized papers and public presentations that convey substantive information and that conform to the conventions of edited American English
   • Interpret visual images and employ images to communicate ideas and concepts

b. Students should complete rigorous writing and speaking assignments and receive significant feedback on their work in first-year courses and in other courses throughout their college career.

I.2b. The Committee proposes the formation of a faculty committee, known as the Communication Across the Curriculum Committee, to oversee this aspect of general education. This committee will be a subcommittee of the General Education Committee (see “Committee Proposal”).

1. Composition of the committee: 5 voting faculty. 3 are also members of the General Education committee; 2 are the chairs (or chairs’ designees) of the departments of English and Communication.

2. A Director (or co-directors) of Communication Across the Curriculum, appointed by the Provost, will serve as a non-voting, ex officio member of the committee. The director or directors must possess appropriate expertise in communication instruction and must be teaching writing-intensive or speaking-intensive courses.

3. Duties of the committee:
   a. Evaluate requests to designate a course or sequence as writing intensive (WI) or speaking intensive (SI).
   b. Initiate, review and recommend changes to CAC policies and programs.
   c. Work with the Assessment Committee and Office of Assessment to assess CAC program.
   d. Support and advise the Director of CAC in training faculty who teach writing-intensive (WI) and speaking-intensive (SI) courses, in guiding student mentors assigned
to WI and SI courses, and in other areas of CAC administration.

4. The Committee will forward all recommendations for course designations and for changes to the CAC program to the General Education committee and to the Faculty Senate.

1.2c The Committee proposes that each student be required to complete four three communication-intensive courses or instructional sequences, as described below, to meet this sub-goal. The requirement described in this proposal will replace the current English 101-102 requirement only if the Senate approves the creation of a standing General Education committee.

1. The CAC committee will use the defining characteristics of “effective writing and critical reading; oral and visual communication” (proposal 1.2a) to evaluate course proposals for writing-intensive (WI) and speaking-intensive (SI) courses. Since these criteria are still very general, the CAC committee will also develop more detailed criteria for WI and SI courses, according to the following suggested guidelines. These criteria must be approved by the General Education Committee and by the Faculty Senate.

   a. Assignments in WI or SI courses shall require students to demonstrate understanding of the course content and/or academic research; all such assignments have the dual goals of improving the students’ communication skills and of advancing the other learning objectives of the course.

   b. Students must generate a significant quantity of written communication or oral/visual communication. The amount of writing or speaking will be determined and published by the CAC committee.

   c. A WI- or SI-designated course must include several opportunities for individualized feedback by the instructor and revision by the student. Some of the writing or speaking may be informal in nature, but at least half of the assignments should be presented formally, in accordance with the conventions of an academic discipline, and/or in a format suitable for an academic or professional audience.

   d. A significant portion of the course grade (to be determined by the CAC committee) must be based on the quality of the student’s work in either writing or speaking.

2. Once these criteria have been established, courses may be approved as WI or SI if their department demonstrates that they meet the criteria. Departments will submit proposals for individual courses to the CAC committee, furnishing course descriptions and other evidence that this course meets the criteria.

3. The four three required communication-intensive courses, which will replace the current requirement for English 101 and 102, must include the following.

   a. During the student’s first year, one composition course (a writing-intensive course devoted to academic writing).

   b. At least one speaking-intensive course, which may also be a literature course (described in c, below) or a course in the student’s major.

   c. One course in literature, a rich and creative form of verbal communication. Courses satisfying this requirement must also be either writing-intensive or speaking intensive. Courses must also explore a significant quantity of literary works (at least five full-length prose works or three volumes of verse), must analyze ways these texts employ language imaginatively and artistically to create multiple levels of meaning, and must explore the ways some of these texts have been interpreted by literary critics.
Departments wishing to have courses approved for satisfying this requirement will submit proposals to the CAC committee, furnishing course descriptions and other evidence that the course fulfills these criteria for a literature course as well as the criteria for a communication-intensive course.

d. A third approved communication-intensive class in any discipline.

e. A fourth approved communication-intensive class or instructional sequence within the major. If departments choose, this course or sequence may be the same as the one in which students receive instruction in gathering and using information in the major (described in Proposal I.1).

f. An “instructional sequence” within a major may be composed of multiple courses that provide sufficient communication instruction to the student who takes them all. A set of linked courses (such as a Learning Community or a minor) may also be classified as communication-intensive if the combined courses provide enough instruction to satisfy the criteria.

g. Communication instruction within the major should include both writing and speaking instruction, although a department may emphasize one mode more than another.

4. Students will select two to four examples of work completed in these required courses to be uploaded within their online record (as described in “Online Record Proposal”). These work samples may be used for institutional assessment, and students may choose to display them when applying for employment or graduate school admission.

5. Writing- or speaking-intensive classes will have no more than 20 students, and departments offering such courses shall not be penalized for any adverse impact on their department’s Delaware Study target number. If a communication-intensive sequence is designed by a major department, the caps of 20 are not required for all courses in the sequence.

6. A course’s designation as WI or SI is dependent on the faculty member who teaches it as well as on its curriculum. For a section of a course to be so designated, its instructor must undergo formal training in communication instruction. If a previously approved WI or SI course is later taught by another faculty member who has not received this training, that faculty member’s sections of the course will not satisfy a communication-intensive requirement.

7. Formal training in communication instruction for approved courses will be offered at a time convenient to faculty members (either during a summer institute or at some other convenient time), and faculty completing this training will receive a stipend for their time.

8. The College will provide additional support for faculty who teach WI and SI courses, such as pedagogical workshops during the academic year and, when appropriate, student mentors trained to provide supplemental instruction in particular courses.

Rationale: This new requirement recognizes that students need a higher level of research and communication skills than they can acquire through the current writing requirement (English 101 and 102 in the first year). The Ad Hoc Committee has heard this need expressed repeatedly by individual departments, by faculty participating in the 2005 Faculty Forum, and at many other meetings across campus. There is a clear consensus that many College of Charleston students still
need further instruction in research, writing and speaking by the time they enroll in upper-level courses.

The present requirement of English 101 and 102, which focuses mainly on writing and not speaking, and which “front-loads” communication instruction in the first year, cannot equip students with all the communication skills that they will need throughout college. Confining such instruction to a single department makes the problem worse, since students may construe writing and speaking as minimal, quantifiable skills (an ability to proofread written work, a willingness to speak in public) that they should “get out of the way” and never develop further. However, writing and speaking are complex intellectual tasks that require students to deploy many different skills at once. The more complex the course material becomes, the more challenging, and the more dependent on disciplinary conventions, the communication becomes. Interpreting aural and visual information also becomes more challenging as a student attempts to navigate more complex information and concepts.

Students will learn and retain more of a course’s content through doing more and better writing and speaking on this material; moreover, students who do more of this writing and speaking over their whole college career will have more lasting, or “transferable,” abilities and intellectual perspectives after they finish here. Strong communication skills are a hallmark of a liberal arts and sciences education, and they make our graduates more effective in absolutely any field.

While some departments are already delivering excellent research and communication instruction to their majors and in their General Education courses, other faculty are less familiar with teaching these skills and may not yet be able to deliver this labor-intensive instruction alongside other teaching demands. Therefore we recognize that the following requirements can only be implemented over a period of time and that they will be more expensive to staff. We recommend forming a CAC committee as soon as possible to develop a strategic plan for developing and approving communication-intensive courses.