WESTFIELD STATE COLLEGE
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
Minutes of March 11, 2010

Guest: Carol Grobe of the Biology Department

∞ The meeting was brought to order at 4:00 PM by Chair Carabetta.
∞ The minutes of February 11, 2010 were approved with no changes and no abstentions.

CHAIR’S REPORT
∞ Chair Carabetta reported that student representative, Michelle Brown, will replace Nicole Dipilato.
∞ Chair Carabetta attended the ACC meeting on Feb. 24, 2010 and brought them an update on ACC 09-25.
∞ ACC has asked the CC to consider the Commissioner’s Advisory Group on Undergraduate Education (CAGUE) Report.
∞ Regarding M.G.L. Title XII 73, section 2a, John Ohotnicky sent to the CC more direct language regarding the requirement for teaching Massachusetts government and curriculum related to the Constitution. The law was enacted in 1938.
∞ Academic VP Bob Hayes notified J. Carabetta of intent to establish a new WSC Environmental Science academic department. (Such notification is contractually mandated, and carries with it an implied request for Committee reaction.) (Last year three new WSC departments were created: Ethnic and Gender Studies, Nursing, and Social Work.) Guest C. Grobe reported that the Environmental Science major was formerly a joint program between GARP and Biology and is now approximately the same size as the Biology major. Subsequently, it makes sense to make Environmental Science an independent department. The role of the Environmental Science Program Coordinator will change to that of Department Chair. The CC members had no objections to the creation of a new Environmental Science Department. Brooke Orr moved to endorse the new department and the motion was seconded by Stan Jackson. The motion passed with one opposed and no abstentions. J. Carabetta noted that currently WSC does not have enough space to house new departments.

DISCUSSION OF THE CAGUE REPORT:
∞ At the request of ACC, CC members discussed their opinions of the CAGUE Report. B. Orr suggested that WSC contact other Commonwealth public IHEs about the report. J. Carabetta expressed that the intent of the Report is to establish a set of standard principles that would guide general education for each public college.
∞ J. DiGrazia said she was opposed to any General Education tests that may ensue as a result of establishing a standardized General Education curriculum for the
state colleges. In a session with the Commissioner, he was reported to have said that he would not view a portfolio as a reasonable/valid way to assess student learning.

∞ The consensus of the CC was that teaching and learning will change if a norm-referenced, standardized test were adopted and WSC’s autonomy would be affected negatively. Members noted that we are doing adequate assessment of student learning currently. Many of our programs are already linked to specific accrediting associations that already require standards-based measures required to earn accreditation.

∞ Apart from the threat of an unwanted and unneeded test, another source of tension with the CAGUE Report is its emphasis on employability factors. E. Bressler stated that this emphasis contradicts or pre-empts our WSC Mission Statement that prioritizes preparing knowledgeable and skilled citizens vs. future employees. These priorities are very different.

∞ J. Carabetta expressed that the essence of our response should focus on our belief in our own identity and autonomy.

∞ J. DiGrazia asked what could we do to be heard and to prevent the intrusion of the State in our mission and our autonomy? Members supported the strategy to invite the other State Colleges to participate in a discussion with us about the issues involved in the CAGUE Report with the intention of responding to the Commissioner as a group.

∞ The CC’s consensus was to recommend to ACC that they move to convene a discussion with all the State Colleges.

∞ J. Carabetta agreed to construct a response to ACC related to the CC’s views on the CAGUE Report. The points that members would like included in this response include:

1. We invite discussion with the Commissioner and the other State Colleges and the Universities. ACC should take the lead to invite the other public schools to our campus for discussion.
2. We prioritize identity and autonomy. We are opposed to unifying the campuses; separate identities and autonomy are strengths not weaknesses.
3. The Report is currently too top down and stakeholders need to be heard; there is lack of inclusiveness in that no faculty or staff were involved.
4. The suggestions related to revising the General Education seem to be one-size-fits-all and less effective than individual programming that capture a school’s mission.
5. We might learn from other states that have attempted standardized General Education requirements with or without assessment systems.
REPORT: SUBCOMMITTEE A

Subcommittee A Chair Laing presented the following:

- **09-143** Change of Program Description: Licensure for Teacher of Biology (8-12) language for the Bulletin under BIOLOGY:
  - C. Grobe clarified the delineation grades 8-12 is the right level for licensure (vs. grades 9-12)
  - The inclusion of the physics course, PHSC 0101, in the program of study for licensure candidates is correct.
  - Approved unanimously with clarification

- **09-173** Change of Program Description: Revisions to Biology Major
  - New course: BIOL 03xx Senior Seminar should be included (See 09-175 Below)
  - BIOL 0280-287 should be called Biology Seminars vs. Topical Seminars
  - Add BIOL 0237 Human Anatomy and Physiology I to the Section COMMON CORE COURSES as nursing students will take this course as part of their core.
  - In the section, Introductory Courses, the courses MATH 0105 Calculus I and MATH 0108 Statistics will not be accepted in lieu of BIOL 0123, Mathematical Methods in the Natural Sciences, as part of the Applied Analytical Reasoning section of the common core for Biology majors. The footnote number reference 2 should be removed.
  - In the section, LICENSURE FOR TEACHER OF BIOLOGY, the delineation should be (8-12) not (9-12). And the sentence introducing the additional courses that licensure candidates must take should read, “The introductory courses (11 credits), biology seminars (3 credits), and required chemistry courses (16 credits) listed above for the Biology Major in addition to:”
  - Approved unanimously with changes.

- **09-174** Withdrawn.

- **09-175** New Course: BIOL 03xx Senior Seminar
  - The prerequisite, Senior Standing, was added and the language “Permission of the Instructor” was deleted.
  - The language, “The seminar will be graded on a pass/fail basis.” is included under OUTLINE OF PROPOSED COURSE.
  - The course will meet weekly for one hour.
  - The course will be numbered as a 03xx level course because it is intended for seniors.
In the section PROPOSED NEW COURSE DESCRIPTION: The sentence pertaining to the portfolio should be edited to read: “The portfolio begun during the first-year seminar (BIOL 0180) will document progress toward departmental learning outcomes.”

Approved unanimously with changes

09-176 Change of Course Description: BIOL 0203 Genetics

- 4 credit hours should be explicit
- The new description reflects the current content and laboratory exercises of the course.
- The prerequisites remain BIOL 0128 and 0129.
- Approved unanimously with clarifications

The Committee adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandy Berkowitz
Curriculum Committee Secretary