Welcome: Lee welcomed the Department for our February Meeting. Lee announced the hiring of Shelley Staples for our EAL program as a new faculty member. He noted the updates on the “For Faculty” portion of our department web page. He also announced the packet with our staff bios so folks know what we do on the administrative side.

Reports:

Department Head Report from Lee Medovoi
LM: Lee emphasized the faculty webpage as a good resource for the department. He suggested that we look into a way to address technology support on the webpage as well.
Lee announced that the APR committee met on February 25th and is getting organized for the departmental-wide review. He mentioned the new deadline to complete APR materials in UA Vitae is March 1st.
For our awards ceremony, Lee reminded us that the event will be at the Arizona historical society on Thursday, April 21st. He announced that Doug Biggers won our Alum of the Year award. Lee gave a description of Doug’s bio, noted that he’s excited to make the connection with Doug and have him come to the ceremony.

Report from Lynda Zwinger and UG Office on obstacles for UG Majors
Lynda started her report by saying her goal is to make everything completely transparent. Lynda emphasized that there will be emails sent out concerning room assignments. She highlighted that it is extremely important that faculty actually check their rooms. Mistakes happen at all points, and it’s so much easier to correct a mistake made by us, RCS or you, as long as we check our rooms now. Lynda made a note that March 21st is priority registration, and that we don’t want anything delayed in getting set up for classes.
Lynda continued on about how to address the ongoing problem in terms of our majors being able to graduate our program in a timely manner. She noted that it’s been difficult to gather all the numbers but we do have some. 21% of our majors are graduating in any given year, and we have up to 740 majors. This percentage of 21, even if you consider a 5 semester major (optimist) we should be much closer to 35-40% to even feel like we’re doing a good job. Lynda noted how she can’t figure out where our majors go when they leave our classes.
John used a Qualtrics survey to gather more data:

1. What are you? (year) Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, or Senior. Total responses were 125 (this is lower than 20%)
2. What is your major?
3. Are you a double major?
Lynda mentioned that it is difficult to determine internal double majors, and we may have to just count them.

4. What is your other major?

5. Have you had difficulty being able to schedule courses required in your English or Creative Writing major when you need to take them (that is, in a timely manner so you can move through the major at a pace that will lead to your graduating on time)?

Lynda noted that the survey isn’t entirely scientific but you can still note a trend; it supports the initial suspect number of 21% graduating every year. This is a subjective reaction sent out after the semester had begun. Looking at this, you can see freshmen are good but the numbers get disturbing as we go higher up in the matriculation level.

Racheal Shertzer gave her input: Racheal noted concerns with registration from students: the first concern is the availability of core classes, ones they have to take to progress through their major. The second concern is the days of the week that classes are offered. TR is problematic since classes are competing against other major obligations, etc., and they don’t want to make a choice. Third concern is the times of day classes are offered, non-standard times or longer length of time, all made it more challenging for students to take these classes.

Sandra Holm gave a report as well: She noted that when advising students, the bottom line is that they want to graduate on time. They need to take core courses in a particular semester. They have to schedule their fun courses around the core courses. Sometimes they can’t take these fun electives because the core classes take precedence.

Sandra elaborated that in the last few years, there have been more financial conversations between students paying for courses with loans.

There was discussion about certain rules about class scheduling within RCS, noting the 35/35/30 rule.

John Potenza identified one of the biggest difficulties is getting rooms in general, so it makes everything that much harder.

There was further discussion about RCS and spreading out the typical requirements across time and day slots in an effort to stop the traffic jam and find out where our majors are. Enrollment in 400 level courses is low, and we had to make some last-minute adjustments for the Spring semester.

Lynda emphasized helping the students plan schedules farther out in advance in order for them to graduate on time, in addition to having a discussion about M-W schedules.

Lee asked about losing people at the UAccess registration point. He wondered if this reflects experience for getting bottled up in the junior year. Sandra noted that she sees a lot of students change between sophomore/junior year.

There was further talk about the short window of time to fix things with RCS, and that we’ll aim to get the timeline up on the webpage.

Lynda talked about how we make more money on double majors. She noted that we get to generate more for SBS, etc.—we like double majors a lot, and we love our minors but if advisors can point out its
just as easy to double major, that’s good for enrollment and status. It’s only 2 extra classes to get the double major.

END UG Report

There was discussion about names that were missed from last minutes’ attendance: Susan Miller-Cochran, Damián Baca, Roger Dahood and Madelyn Pawlowski have been noted for the 1/29/2016 meeting.

Proposal for World Literature Major Discussion

Lee said that the COH world literature major was imagined to have 2 new core courses that would be housed in COH (generally) not in any one department. A 200 level course on World Literature and then a 300 level course on analysis and translation, then 15 credits of upper division course work. He further noted that there are 6 elective credits, then a senior capstone.

The conversation Lee originally had touched on how the department could potentially support a major in world literature. While it is an interesting development, we have 2 main concerns: first, is to make sure that any major in WL did not become a de facto way of competing in direct fashion with the English major. The second concern is the absence of English courses in this WL major. Lee noted that Literature originally written in English is there, you can’t have non-English world literature. There are all these literatures written in English so, at his meeting, Lee and COH came to a point of negotiation that Lee is sharing now to get departmental input. Third concern is the fact that the 200 level course followed by the 300 level course seemed to virtually duplicate the structure we have in our own major and literary analysis course 380.

There was discussion about the slippage between the meaning of “English”…literature, rhetoric, study of English as a language, writing, poetry, many things. Theoretically, any language department could be the same thing. The point here would be that English, the way the major has been structured, is to provide core courses in literary analysis—to duplicate courses, not exact duplication.

Lee stated that the proposals he made to the folks behind the WL major were: First, to safe guard against it being a major that could potentially be taken entirely in translation to ask that the upper division courses at the very least be taken in an original language. Whatever language that literature was originally created in would be taught in that language. This would be difficult for East Asian Studies and hard to acquire competencies in those languages. There are also electives and there are few courses in East Asian studies taught in original languages. In any event, Lee stated that the upper division courses would be taken in an original language. English could be one of those, so would our department be able to contribute courses in the upper division courses? It is a risk for them, and it makes the major too easy to go in the direction of English, but it seems like they might find it workable. This is how comparative languages work, according to Lee.

Lee emphasized the core courses: Another proposal is rather than having 2 new classes in COH called “What is World Literature” and “Literary Analysis and Translations” that students would majoring in WL be asked to take 280 and 380 as core courses since they already exist. So, there is no reason to duplicate them. In general, the response to that was positive, Lee noted. They seemed to be willing to do that, and that’s good for us as a department on a number of levels. It means we have skin in the game if we
provide core courses. It also means we’re at less risk of a student majoring WL and majoring only in COH classes.

Another issue is that we would need to find some way of meeting them by allowing some way of introduction of literature having certain sections that would be oriented toward world literature in some way. Likewise for 380. Lee noted that we have a lot of faculty here in our departments who would want to teach core courses. Lee said one thing, he could talk to his faculty about someone from one of the language departments occasionally teaching 280, not 380, but 280, as a course oriented to kind of capture that world literature intention. This is really what Lee wanted to talk to the department about, allowing some sort of nuancing of 280 and 380 to become the core courses, as opposed to the alternative: to have WL create 2 new classes, then compete and potentially create problems for us.

There was discussion about simply cross-listing the courses with the different departments so that it wouldn’t matter. Some folks talked about how we’ve cross-listed the History of English language as English 405 and German 405. Roger Dahood noted that he always had one, sometimes 3 German majors in the course because the first five weeks are common material, dramatic languages, etc. If you say ENGL 280, GER 280, FRE 280, whoever they are, then anyone who is a major in any of those disciplines/areas can take the course and get it automatically for credit in their own department and anyone can teach the section. It seems to Roger, that every time we offer more sections of 280 and 380, pulling on our own faculty, that’s other courses that those people from our faculty can’t teach and so we wind up with shortages in the upper division courses, more advanced courses so we need more faculty unless Lee has some hires up his sleeve, one way to get them is to have faculty who are already on campus doing this kind of teaching.

Lee responses by saying he would probably create cross list in individual departments in COH but listed as HUMS 280 or 380, since that seems to be the direction COH has been moving. He did mention that we do have to worry about someone who is a specialist in literature other than English teaching “What is Literature” and that would be one concern. Another worry would be from what Lynda was calling the “crass perspective”: Do you worry about a loss of student credit hours because credit for a class goes to that department and not English, even though it’s an English course? Lee said he would be more worried about not trying to build a coalition with WL, if it becomes a real competitor (this would be a worse outcome). This way, if a student decides to major in WL, one might be led into CW, and English, and it kind of keeps those students with us.

Lauren Mason pointed out that if COH simply had not chosen to use these terms, this wouldn’t be an issue. Lauren suggested they could’ve set this up like comparative studies, and wondered how COH will be able to make the distinction between the 2 literary analysis courses. There was discussion about goodwill and intentions on the COH level.

Per Lynda, the agreement that Lee and the rest of us are trying to craft at the department level is supposed to be beneficial to both COH and our own department. When a student has taken 2 courses in a department to figure out a double major, those people are going to stick with us. That means we have people who will be taking the rest of our courses too. The fact that they said we’ll give you 2 core courses, electives, means we may be able to make this help our department in the long run, even if COH didn’t have the best intentions when they started this.
The main point of this part of the discussion was to make sure that our own department wasn’t losing anything by agreeing to these terms of “playing nice” with COH. While these are legitimate concerns, it seems that it will be a win-win for COH and our department because it has potential turn into something excellent on both academic and intellectual levels.

Lee noted that one part of the agreement was that 2 faculty members from English should join the core committee. One from Literature, one from Creative Writing, someone who is an active translator (ideally) and COH seemed interested in that. Lee noted that relations with COH on an admin level are not good, but this creates a grass roots collaboration on the proposal and in the long run, that’s a good thing.

Lynda emphasized that folks are already teaching this way so it’s a good idea to continue on this trend. Lee summarized the discussion by saying that he thinks he’s hearing general openness to this approach from our department. He said there would be details to find out, but he thinks it’s doable and feels like it’s in a better place now than when it began.

There was discussion about the implication of replacing “coordinator” of graduate studies. Tenney noted that we don’t have a director of graduate studies, rather we have a director of each 4 programs. Because we have 4 grad programs, we tried to find a different term for that person. It’s largely nomenclature, according to Lee.

We turned to the Constitution to see if it passes. There were typographical errors due to “search and replace” and the notion that we should update it to the year 2016.

Constitution passes, barring minor typographical errors.

The Meeting was adjourned.