

History Faculty Meeting Minutes  
December 8, 2010

Attending: Browne, Bertrand, Dachowski, Corse, Oyebade, McClain, Williams, and Dark

- I. Presentation of Common Reader for Fall 2010—Dr. Rebecca Dixon from the Department of Languages, Literature and Philosophy shared information regarding the goals and potential for the Common Reader, Gary Younge's *No Place Like Home*. The goal is to get more faculty directly involved. Dr. Dixon briefly summarized the book and suggested that his retracing of the Freedom Rides manages to address the global perspective as Younge is a black Briton. At the same time issues of race and identity are also prevalent in the book and should have a broad appeal. Dr. Williams asked if the committee had reached out to surround schools, and Dr. Dixon agreed that was a good suggestion and would look into doing so. Dr. Dixon then explained that Younge would be visiting campus two times, once in the Spring 2011 semester to hold workshops/meetings that would serve as professional development in ways to teach his text, and then in Fall 2011 to speak to students in Freshman Orientation and all others adopting the Common Reader. Dr. Dixon mentioned the difficulty surrounding the funding of two visits and Dr. Browne offered to provide support from the Samuel Shannon Distinguished Lecture Series. Ms. McClain noted that next year is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Freedom Rides and suggested that it would be an ideal time to get Riders as lectures as well in February and May 2011. She also mentioned that a Freedom Riders reunion was scheduled for May with more than 300 expected. Dr. Dachowski suggested that everything discussed would be an excellent way to tie in our Human Rights/Social Justice emphasis that we had put forward in the recently submitted History Prioritization Operational (Action) Plan.
- II. Dr. Dark then updated the group on the WRITE Program. The first year planning and implementation is underway and all students will contribute a writing artifact through D2L. Their electronic portfolio will then transfer with them when they take the American history survey. We will be able to look at an assessed writing sample of the student and we will then continue to reinforce and assist in the development of student writing. The ultimate benefits to the department will be students possessing better writing skills, more faculty and smaller class size, and a better monitoring of plagiarism. Dr. Dark will be piloting the process in his survey's and will be organizing several workshops during 2011 to prepare the rest of the history faculty for Fall 2011. Dr. Dark concluded with news that the WRITE studio was in the process of being built.
- III. Dr. Schmeller then shared a proposal from Overton, High School looking for University partnerships in their efforts to develop a humanities focused curriculum with a capstone project. Dr. Schmeller asked if there was a consensus to offer our department as such a resource, and those attending agreed unanimously. Dr. Schmeller said he would communicate with Overton our willingness to partner.
- IV. Dr. Schmeller then shared information regarding a NEH Collaborative Grant, the Schomburg-Mellon Humanities Summer Institute, and the American Experience—Freedom Rides opportunity. Several faculty members agreed that such opportunities were excellent for students and that Tiara Knight, a TSU History graduate, had participated in the Schomburg Summer Institute and found it invaluable. It was suggested that the department needs a better centralized location for such information and that the revamped website should serve that purpose. Dr. Dachowski suggested establishing a Twitter account for just such student opportunities.

- V. Seminar Course Proposal—Dr. Browne suggested the course should be reading intensive as a preparation for Senior Project. Dr. Bertrand agreed that a reading intensive seminar would allow students to focus on primary source work once they were in Senior project, and that would in turn allow us to do a better job of teaching majors critical thinking. By giving them a better background the students would also be more focused when entering Senior project. Dr. Dark agreed that a required seminar course would also move us toward greater collaboration. Ms. McClain informed the group that 20 years ago, this was the structure of the senior project at TSU. Dr. Williams raised a concern that such a structure would limit students too much for Senior project. Dr. Browne suggested that by offering two seminars we might avoid forcing students into a subject area they do not find appealing. She then asked if we had the numbers to effectively offer two seminars? It was generally agreed that at this point we most likely could not offer two based on our number of majors. Dr. Dachowski suggested that we move our Seminar more toward broad themes as opposed to geographically distinct courses. Ms. McClain suggested that the course could be several topics with in a national focus. Dr. Schmeller then suggested that a proposal for the seminar course needed to be drafted for feedback, and he offered to draft that CARF.
- VI. Text Book Selection for the American History Survey—Dr. Schmeller opened by explaining that it had now been several years under the current combined Nash and Carson text. Both books were going to new editions for Fall 2011, and that it was an appropriate time to review our current common text. Dr. Dark offered that he felt the Nash narrative was too choppy in the brief edition, but that the Carson text is very good. Dr. Bertrand reminded the group that if we keep the format with Carson we are also stuck with what Longman has to offer as far as standard American texts. Dr. Dark then suggested we first look exclusively at African-American texts to determine if there is something we prefer to Carson and then make our decisions based on that. The group agreed to begin looking at available African-American history textbooks, and Dr. Browne agreed to chair the textbook committee.