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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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**UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
2011-12 MEETING #9 Minutes
December 5, 2011, 2:00 p.m., BCR**

Present: Bart Finzel (chair), Joe Alia, Bryce Blankenfeld, Carol Cook, Janet Ericksen, Hazen Fairbanks, Sara Haugen, Leslie Meek, Peh Ng, Paula O'Loughlin, Ian Patterson, Gwen Rudney, Tisha Turk

Absent: Clare Dingley, Caitlin Drayna, Heather James, Jeri Squier

Visiting: Nancy Helsper

In these minutes: General Education Review (Items to handle quickly and Timeline)

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Finzel noted that the meeting materials include a communication from vice chancellor Olson-Loy regarding Gen Ed, which should be considered as part of the discussion. He reminded the members that January 30 will be the first meeting of spring semester. Ericksen stated that she will bring a request for a Gen Ed with a directed study forward at the January meeting. The student will have completed the directed study by then. Finzel answered that it is fine to have the Gen Ed considered in January, but the student should be aware that there is no guarantee it will be approved. Ericksen answered that the student is aware of that.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION (Ericksen/Patterson) to approve the November 21, 2011 minutes. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

2. GENERAL EDUCATION REVIEW

Finzel provided handouts to help focus the discussion. The preliminary plan for the continued Gen Ed discussion in spring 2012 proposes a focus on four distinct areas that the committee has talked about. The first item, which received a broad consensus, is "Writing." It will probably take up the first three meetings of spring semester. Finzel asked Turk to generate a proposal for the committee to consider, and suggested that she broaden that discussion by vetting it with others outside the English discipline if the proposal includes a writing requirement through disciplines.

The second item will be Repackaging. The committee will entertain changes in the language describing our Gen Ed program and the placement of this information in our course catalog, web pages, advising materials, etc. An effort should be made to link the GERs to our Student Learning Outcomes when possible. Importantly, the repackaging should remain consistent with the purposes of our current GERs. Should time permit, we might entertain Repackaging proposals that might be more substantive, e.g., whether HDIV should be concerned only with U.S. diversity, or whether ENVT should focus more on sustainability. That discussion will probably take three meetings. O'Loughlin suggested that the second discussion on Repackaging might be better if it is split into

separate discussions. The first part of Repackaging is in reference to learning outcomes, and the second part would involve substantive repackaging. Finzel stated that he would be happy, should time permit, to address Repackaging in that way.

Finzel shared an amended APAS report that Dingley had prepared which includes the description of each of the Gen Ed program elements. For example, the Intellectual Community (IC) description reads “to foster development of a liberal arts intellectual community through the introduction of intellectual and practical skills and through active student-faculty engagement in course material.” In the past, this section contained no descriptive text. When APAS began there were limitations on computer system memory so brevity was very important. Those constraints no longer exist. The inclusion of descriptions is a welcome improvement.

The third discussion will focus on the suggestion to add information literacy to the IC requirement. That would take a meeting to discuss. We could perhaps identify skills in the definition of the IC requirement. O’Loughlin suggested that James, who is a strong advocate for this because of her involvement in the IC program and the Library, could be asked to prepare a proposal. Finzel stated that Ericksen and Patterson also have strong ideas about this and he would like them to prepare proposals also.

The fourth discussion will focus on Gen Ed designators. The committee will entertain proposals to remove Gen Ed designators from a limited number of courses, while creating a process by which courses can maintain the designators if they choose to do so. Also, a process in which a rationale is required for Gen Ed designators on new courses will be discussed. One meeting might be enough for that discussion.

Ng asked how many meetings would be needed for the Gen Ed designator discussion. Finzel answered that he expected it to take one meeting. Ng suggested it might take more than one meeting if the discussion leads to a proposal to no longer allow Gen Eds on courses with prerequisites. That might cause problems for new students. Others agreed that the discussion might require more than one meeting.

Patterson asked if the items will be discussed in the order of the preliminary timeline. Finzel stated that the first two items are time sensitive. “Writing” is first, so disciplines have time to identify courses with writing for the catalog. Repackaging is second because it will need to be completed before annual planning. We will also have other agenda items as we move through the semester. It will take perhaps nine meetings to get through the four Gen Ed discussions.

Other Gen Ed topics Finzel said he would like to discuss include the concern that courses carry a Gen Ed designation for the lifetime of the course. There should be a process by which courses are reviewed and revalidated to ensure that they continue to fulfill the Gen Ed requirement. The Global Village discussion did not result in a consensus or single idea, so Finzel would like to broaden that discussion to include the campus community. Another idea in need of more discussion is the addition of depth to the Gen Ed program. There should also be a discussion on the idea of linking Gen Eds to the Student Learning Outcomes.

Patterson asked if substantial changes made as a result of the Gen Ed review will be implemented in time for the next catalog cycle. Helsper noted that she didn't think the registrar would be in favor of changing requirements in the middle of a catalog. Ng stated that it is too late for the 2013-15 catalog. Finzel agreed that the longer term objective of 2016 is as early as we can realistically see the full changes made. Rudney added that it is right that we are starting early and giving ourselves enough time to handle any big issues that might require more time.

Ng asked what the deadlines will be for divisions to submit curricular changes for next year's catalog cycle. Helsper answered that the preliminary deadline has normally been September 1, until more is known about which divisions will have the more substantial changes. Finzel added that he and the division chairs will decide on the order in which divisions will present their changes.

Adjourned 2:27 p.m.
Submitted by Darla Peterson