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Scholastic minutes 02/15/2012

Scholastic Committee

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Scholastic Committee 2011-12, Meeting #13
University of Minnesota, Morris
February 15, 2012

Members attending: Michelle Page, chair, Allison Wolf, Luciana Ranelli, Holly Gruntner, Dennis Stewart, Steve Gross, Jen Zych Herrmann, Peh Ng, Peter Wyckoff, Tammy Berberi, Hilda Ladner, Clare Dingley, Erin Christensen, Chad Braegelmann, Judy Korn, executive staff, Absent: Dillon McBrady

1. Approved February 2, 2012, minutes
2. Chair report: Korn is working on the Scholastic Committee website, reviewing for clarity and ease of use. Updating forms as Google forms or PDF fillable forms based on user friendliness, clarity, and efficiency for staff. Project will include implementing Morris website style/formatting.
3. Petition 1203 update: Student has two science courses, so Petition 1203 approved. The committee reviewed previous discussion surrounding Petition 1203. In the future, the executive staff will invite Brenda Boever, Advising coordinator, who assists students submitting petitions, to attend the Scholastic Committee meetings that include hearing petitions.
4. Disability Services forms/documentation/correspondence discussion: The committee discussed what it means to “endorse” Disability Services’ new procedures and documents. Director Nancy Cheeseman does not want to make changes in isolation and is seeking involvement from a number of groups. Committee is in consensus in supporting Cheeseman’s efforts. The Chair will contact Cheeseman and express the support of the committee, but the committee will not issue a formal endorsement that could suggest a formal reporting relationship between the work of Disability Services and the work of the Scholastic Committee.
5. IC course discussion: The Chair provided background. She has discussed with the Dean and has been provided minutes from the Curriculum Committee, discussing policy and procedure in regard to helping students complete this requirement. The Dean has asked that the Scholastic Committee discuss as well. The chair provided talking points gleaned from the Curriculum Committee discussion to launch a conversation that included comments, concerns, and questions.

The Chair recalls 11 international students dropping or failing IC and notes that we no longer have a separate section for international students. She states two issues: keeping students in the course and keeping students from failing. In addition, the question arises of what the appropriate response is if students do drop or fail.

The registration system could not enforce “making a student stay in it [IC].” The Registrar states that Scholastic Committee has established exemptions for IC. Examples include transfer student who have more than 12 credits from another institution. And, students who completed Inquiry or First-Year Seminar are allowed to use those courses as substitutions for IC. The spirit of the requirement is met. The committee should think beyond trying to figure out how to make students take the IC course.

What does it mean if IC is not repeatable? What happens to the F if a student fails? The Registrar notes that there are no guarantees that a particular IC class will be offered again. The F stays on the record. Reminds that we need to think about consistency for all students and fairness as we discuss this issue.

First-year Seminar had a theme. For current students, there is not much difference between IC, in place now for two years, and other courses on campus. Thematically, IC courses run the gamut. The discussion and papers required for IC are also components of many courses on campus.

The benefits of the IC experience are noted. But, anytime after the student’s first semester, the course seems irrelevant. Failing students would be placed in a cohort with other students who failed or withdrew. The response to failing or withdrawing needs to be punitive or let the IC requirement go.

Comment: Fail in the fall, take it in the spring. If IC still is not completed at that point, the student would be eligible for an approved replacement course.

We could create a punitive consequence and allow students to get approval to meet requirement through another course. The approved course could only be used to fulfill the IC requirement. Whatever we would develop would be the last stop...and still get something valuable out of the experience. The alternative course would need to be from Morris. To make this course beneficial, instructors need to be more intentional about informing the students about what is expected in the classroom, topics from IC. IC was to be a gateway into a discipline. Introduced to skills needed in a particular discipline.

The students are introduced to a cohort in IC, the function of the course. No cohort if the student takes another course to fulfill the requirement. Also, first-term IC was supposed to be a transition between high school and college. If you don’t complete it [IC] your first semester, it loses its value.

The registration system is looking for first-semester students. If a student fails, do we allow faculty to take them into their courses within the same academic year? How do we handle registration for IC? Students are allowed to add or drop. In First-Year Seminar, it was set up that students couldn't move sections. At the beginning of IC course history, the assistant dean oversaw the process.

IC courses are already quite large for this type of experience, and a limited number of spaces are also a big factor.

The Registrar proposes that we no longer give permission numbers to faculty who become the "regulators" allowing upper class students to enroll. This revised method would create extra work for the Office of the Registrar.

The Registrar reminds that students serving on the Curriculum Committee believed that it was important to be enrolled in a course with just first-year students. She believes there is an attitude toward general requirements as "checking off a box" rather than tools for one's education. Students need to review their APAS records from the beginning of their academic careers.

Withdrawals are very different from those who fail. When petitions come [to substitute a different course], the Scholastic Committee could ask questions to differentiate between student situations.

Could student problems in an IC course be a required part of early alert [Morris Academic Alert]? The Chair states that this is not a mechanism for Scholastic Committee to control, but that academic alert is an important tool to help all students. As such, IC is already part of the academic alert. It is noted that there are usually other underlying issues if a student fails.

The Chair asked members to continue thinking about this topic and both formal and informal procedures. Berberi was asked to articulate the suggestions she raised during the discussion, a petition system wherein students would provide documentation of meeting the IC goals through another UMM course. It was noted that adviser involvement is central to this topic. Discussion will continue at the next meeting. _

6. Other: A member asked about the transcript discussion that began fall semester. We may not get back to this discussion because of other topics before the committee. Ng shared that the SCEP committee has not moved on this topic.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Korn
Scholastic Committee executive staff