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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
2012-13 MEETING #1 Minutes
September 6, 2012, 1:00 p.m., MFR

Present: Bart Finzel (chair), Charlie Abraham, Joe Alia, Donna Chollett, Carol Cook, Clare Dingley, Pieranna Garavaso, Josh Godding, Aaron Goemann, Sara Haugen, Leslie Meek, Peh Ng, Gwen Rudney, Jeri Squier, Tisha Turk, Zac Van Cleve
Visiting: Sylke Boyd, Jennifer Deane, Farah Gilanshah, Roland Guyotte, Nancy Helsper, Michael Korth

In these minutes: Introductions and discussion of the committee's charge and process, an overview of the committee's work in 2012-13, and program review reports by History, Physics, and Sociology.

Finzel welcomed the members of the committee and asked members to introduce themselves. He shared the committee's charge as defined by the campus bylaws. The committee has a busy year ahead. The work of the committee this semester will be dominated by the 2013-15 course catalog proposed changes. Other work this semester will include a look at the Education Development Program (EDP) proposals. The committee will also begin a multi-year effort to review the Gen Ed program.

Finzel stated that last year the committee heard reports from two of the academic programs that had undergone reviews in the prior year. Last year we also began the Gen Ed review process spring semester. Four broad themes emerged and were considered by the committee, resulting in decisions that 1) information literacy would be best handled in the writing requirement; 2) the packaging of the advising information on Gen Ed would be changed; 3) instructors would be asked to look at 4xxx-level courses and voluntarily remove Gen Ed designators from those with prerequisites that carry the same Gen Ed designator; and 4) a proposal requiring that all freshman take a common writing course would be brought to Campus Assembly.

EDP Timeline

EDP grants were historically approved in the spring. This year we will change to a fall timeline. On October 4 the committee will look at criteria and identify a subcommittee to review proposals. The deadline for proposals will be November 16, and the subcommittee will report back to the Curriculum Committee on November 29.

Program Review Reports

Last year, five programs were under review: art history, English, history, physics, and sociology. Today faculty from three of the programs will give oral reports to the committee. Finzel welcomed Roland Guyotte and Jennifer Deane, faculty in history; Michael Korth and Sylke Boyd, faculty in physics; and Farah Gilanshah, sociology faculty member. He asked them to talk about the distinctiveness of their programs, the connection between the program's curriculum to general education and other programs,

recent curricular innovations, and program goals. In four years they will be invited back to the committee for a brief follow-up discussion.

History

Deane stated that, after going through the review and making comparisons with history programs at other colleges, a couple of elements of distinctiveness became clear. For a relatively small number of faculty, we give students a balanced coverage of regions and time periods. We cannot aspire to the global coverage that a history discipline with fifteen or more faculty could provide. Another element is that our faculty concentrate on research that influences the courses that we teach, and students are engaged in faculty research.

The history program is linked to other programs in three ways: 1) history courses are imbedded in other discipline requirements; 2) history provides courses for the Gen Ed program; and 3) history is deeply imbedded in interdisciplinary programs by providing courses that satisfy requirements in I.S. majors and Intellectual Community (IC). Last year four history faculty taught IC courses, two taught honors courses, and introductory courses were taught by history faculty in American Indian studies and GWSS.

History did a big overhaul of its curriculum a few years ago. A methods course is now required of majors. The course walks through the methodology of different fields of history. It includes a technical aspect with a lot of writing and source analysis. Students learn to develop a research paper on their own. It is a preparatory course for the senior seminar. The curriculum was streamlined by moving some 3xxx-level courses to the 2xxx level to make them more accessible to students. History faculty supervise a number of MAPs and UROPs, providing students the opportunity to give presentations of their research. History is participating in the Diversity Pre-Doctoral program for the second year and mentoring the new instructors. History also provides outreach by bringing guest lecturers to UMM.

History is currently developing more student internships, connecting with the ACE office, and helping students decide what they want to do after UMM. Most history majors don't become historians. Work is needed on assessment, with a focus on GERs. A challenge is to continue to build the program strategically and keep close connection with other programs on campus, while making the best use of existing resources. There are gaping holes in the history curriculum; for example, courses in ancient history, African history, and middle-eastern history are not offered.

Guyotte stated that this report is a summary in part of the changes that were made two years ago. The self-study reports on those changes and tells how the program is continuing to evaluate its effectiveness. Deane added that the review suggested elements of outreach to students. Finzel suggested that a way of linking students with what historians do would be to tap our history alumni.

Finzel stated that he was curious as to why History has very few prerequisites. Deane responded that when she attempted to assign a prerequisite to her 3xxx-level class on the

Crusades, she couldn't come up with criteria or a course that would guarantee students would be more successful. Requiring a student to take an intro to world history course before taking the 3xxx-level course would just create a block for students. Guyotte added that a student taking Shakespeare might want to take a course in early modern Europe, but might not take it if it required a prerequisite, and the course is enriched by this interdisciplinary expertise.

Physics

Boyd stated that physics has four full-time faculty specializing in theory, astronomy, experimental physics, and computer modeling. Physics graduates 5-8 grads per year, plus a few minors. Teaching includes courses beneficial to other disciplines, with multiple Gen Ed and IC courses. A distinctive feature of physics is that the rigorous introductory courses prepare students for upper level courses in the sciences and mathematics. The upper level courses cover as many fields as possible. Faculty are actively involved in research, with a strong effort to involve students, providing an opportunity to pursue an interest by exposure to methods not found in class. Student effort and collaboration is recognized in the field and at conferences. The success of alumni in grad school speaks for the successful preparation of students. Eighty percent go on to grad school in physics or engineering. Some go into industry and then to engineering school a few years later.

Another distinction and challenge in that Physics offers labs with many of the courses. Labs are important for students to learn to use equipment, interpret data, and think analytically. Physics courses are linked to many other programs. For example, general physics is required in chemistry and other sciences. Physics courses are important for pre-med students and biology majors. Many physics courses count as electives in math or environmental science. Physics courses also satisfy GERS.

Challenges identified in the self-study include: 1) we lost our experimentalist last year, and many of our upper level classes should be taught by a specialist in experimental physics; 2) doubled enrollment in introductory physics in the last three years has resulted in a need for more lab sections; and 3) alumni and current student surveys indicate a need for skills in programming, experimental physics, and in technical writing; and 4) physics is challenged to teach more IC courses and maintain student research.

A couple of the challenges are easy to address, for example, technical programming has been incorporated in some courses. Also, some 4-credit upper level electives are now offered as 2-credit courses. This was done in response to the increase in enrollment as well as the need to offer a greater variety of electives. These new courses will alternate every other year. Technical writing is being addressed in the expanding the senior thesis to two credits. The TA culture is changing. The peer tutoring program from the academic assistance office has made it possible to offer peer review sessions with a TA leading it, and another shadowing it.

Chollett asked how the demand for lab courses is handled at other small colleges where teaching resources are equally stretched. Korth answered that most of our peer

institutions have a smaller fraction of their students in physics. Boyd stated that in larger colleges doctoral students teach labs. Here the labs are split between two instructors.

There is an increase in the enrollment in the intro class because we have more international students who come strongly prepared in physics, our new environmental science major requires the course, and there is an increase in very strong students who have an interest in taking the class. In general, UMM has for decades had a very high percentage of students in this area, so as enrollment goes up at UMM, it goes up in the sciences.

The physics program has long recognized that it is not in the top three in student population, and doesn't expect that to change in the next century. It also recognizes that Gen Ed is a significant part of how physics is supporting other programs as well as the curriculum. Seventy percent of all of physics enrollments are non-majors, 70% of the physics teaching efforts are toward non-majors. Physics has followed through with that further by offering courses that are not part of the major.

Sociology

Gilanshah explained that sociology is a broad subject that covers the nature of the human on both a macro and micro level of interactions. The kinds of courses offered include gender, multicultural, environment, sexuality, aging, race, social justice, human rights, and other areas. Sociology incorporates and supports a lot of other programs. The program review showed research and theory to be strong components of the program.

Four years ago the number of sociology faculty was reduced from four to three. Faculty used to teach a qualitative methodology course and a quantitative methodology course. They taught one classic theory course and one contemporary theory course. Then they gave students the choice of methodology course, and nearly all the students chose qualitative methodology. Four years ago, the two methodology courses were collapsed into one course, and the two theory courses were combined into one course because there was a need for more courses. Five new courses were added.

A goal of the program is to have enough faculty to cover everything they want to cover, drawing more students into the major. Another goal is to have an internship requirement and a statistic course requirement.

Graduates go on to a variety of fields, such as social work, human services, law, medicine, and nursing. Finzel added that there are alumni networking opportunities available to aid students in seeking career options.

Meeting adjourned at 1:58 PM.

Submitted by Darla Peterson