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Curriculum minutes 02/12/2013

Curriculum Committee

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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

2012-13 MEETING #11 Minutes

February 12, 2013, 9:00 a.m., Moccasin Flower Room

Members Present: Bart Finzel (chair), Joe Alia, Donna Chollett, Mark Collier, Pieranna Garavaso, Josh Godding, Aaron Goemann, Peh Ng, Gwen Rudney, Jeri Squier, and Zac Van Cleve

Members Absent: Charlie Abraham, Carol Cook, Clare Dingley, Pilar Eble, Sara Haugen, Leslie Meek

Visitors: Melissa Engleman, Nancy Helsper

In these minutes: Humanities Division new course approvals (Engl 2033, Engl 3171, Mus 4110, Th 3450) and course revisions (Engl 3167, Engl 3444); Discussion of Scholastic Committee's request for feedback on various topics.

Approval of Minutes – January 22, 2013

MOTION (Garavaso/Ng) to approve the January 22, 2013 minutes. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Humanities Division Course Approvals

The Humanities Division presented four new courses and two revised courses for approval:

ENGL 2033 - The Bible and Literature (HUM, 4 cr) – New course

ENGL 3171 - The Literature of Creative Nonfiction (HUM, 4 cr) – New course

ENGL 3167 - Studies in Contemporary British and Anglophone Literature (IP, 4 cr)

– Revised course (change GER from HUM to IP)

ENGL 3444 - Holocaust Literature and Film (IP, 4 cr)

- Revised course (change level from 2431)

MUS 4110 - Seminar: Advanced Music Theory and Analysis (FA, 4 cr) – New course

TH 3450 - Irish Drama: Print, Culture, and Performance (IP, 4 cr) – New course

Garavaso explained that ENGL 2033 is a new course proposed by Professor Eckerle. We had a course like this in the past that was taught by Professor Barber. They have found that the course is necessary for students to understand much of the literature of that time. The course was approved by the division with no discussion. The other new English course, ENGL 3171, is a course about biographical novels that are based on biographies. The new music course (4110) is proposed by a new faculty member, and the new theatre course (3450) is a May term study abroad course.

Finzel asked if the four new courses will be replacing courses that have been deactivated. Garavaso replied that the new courses are replacing courses that were taught by people who have retired. The new courses better fit the expertise of current staff. Ng asked if the new courses will be offered as electives. Garavaso answered that she will ask the disciplines.

MOTION (Alia/Rudney) to approve the proposed course changes in the Humanities Division.

The motion passed unanimously (10-0-0).

Feedback Requested by Scholastic Committee on Three Topics

1) Writing for the Liberal Arts (WLA) Gen Ed Requirement and Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MNTC)

Finzel reminded the committee that when WLA was presented to the Campus Assembly, there was a discussion about whether students who have completed the MNTC can be compelled to take the WLA course. It is now evident that we cannot compel them to do so if a student transfers with a complete MNTC. In that case, they will have met our writing requirement. He looked carefully at how the Twin Cities campus (which also signed the MNTC agreement) has managed their writing requirement, and found that they have imbedded the additional Writing requirement within their program requirements. We might want to add that additional piece rather than abandon our MNTC agreement. We are operating in a very restricted environment regarding students coming in with MNTC unless we imbed WLA in our program requirements rather than our GER. This restriction only applies to those who have completed their MNTC. We can require WLA for those who don't complete the entire MNTC.

Helsper asked what numbers of students come in with a completed MNTC. Squier answered that there were 12 to 13 students last year.

Garavaso asked if the English faculty know about this exception. Finzel answered that it wasn't known at the planning stage. It would have been helpful to have known about this before going into the new writing requirement. It is disappointing, but we have agreed to accept the completed MNTC from community colleges and universities in the state.

2) Prior Learning Credit (IS 3893 and IS 3896)

Prior Learning is an old practice that was done informally in Advising before the courses were created in the early 1980s. Finzel stated that there are two distinct Prior Learning courses:

IS 3893 - Prior Learning Directed Study (1.0 – 4.0 cr [max 10.0 cr]; Individualized learning project combining prior learning with faculty-directed new learning, awarding academic credit for both. (When content is discipline-related, discipline designation will appear on transcript and credit may count toward appropriate education requirement category.)

IS 3896 - Prior Learning Internship. (1.0 – 16.0 cr [max 32.0 cr]; An educational experience in a work environment providing field application for the student's theoretical classroom learning experiences. The prior learning internship, such as in social service or

business settings, occurred prior to the student's matriculation. The prior learning is documented and combined with faculty-directed new learning, with credit awarded for both.

Finzel noted that there are several issues that should be discussed: whether we wish to continue to offer the courses; and if so, whether we wish to continue to do so at the current credit level; and which office will be responsible for working with the students and determining whether the submitted documentation is sufficient.

The existence of these courses is not widely known on campus. Currently, if an academic adviser happens to know about these options, she/he may work with a student to get the credits. There appears to be an issue of fairness of how these courses are applied. Finzel noted that the intent of this discussion is to let the minutes represent the sentiment of the Curriculum Committee.

Ng asked if the Scholastic Committee has mentioned how many students have gone through this. Finzel answered that very few students do this, it has been done sporadically, and it tends to be done by certain faculty members. As Dean, he has seen two of them come to him for signature in the past one and a half years.

Helsper noted that it might help to know the background of how these courses came about. There used to be a program called University Without Walls, which was advertised for older adults who are out in the workforce. It was an incentive to get them into college by giving them credit for work experience. That program seems to have fallen away.

Goemann stated that a lot of students are not aware of the option and would do it if they knew about it. Finzel noted that most of the participants are in a profession that requires certification. An example would be a financial planner who takes periodic study courses that are easily documented. That's the kind of proposals he has approved. It is easy to document that the person has demonstrated they have taken 100 hours of training. He questioned whether anyone could document experience that would add up to 32 credits.

In response to comments about crediting prior experiences that high school students might have had, Rudney stated that we probably would not, for example, be approving credit for people with 12 years of 4-H participation-even though they had gained training and experience. Finzel noted that it is a grey area, but if you can demonstrate a great deal of training, it may be accepted. Ng noted that there is a big difference between someone with 4-H experience and a professional accountant. Rudney asked what requirements the credits would fulfill. Is it Gen Ed? Degree credits? Finzel answered that it is just credit. Students receive interdisciplinary S/N credits.

Finzel stated that the parenthetical sentence at the end of the Directed Study's course description is puzzling. How would it be determined and implemented? Squier noted that when we changed from quarters to semesters and these courses tagged along, they not only kept the same course

descriptions, but they kept the same repeatability of other directed studies and internships. The Curriculum Committee reduced the repetition to twice.

Chollett noted that she is skeptical since it is a lot of credits, and also that a lot of this has been done by only a few professors. Do we have some uniform agreement of what is equivalent to credit and if so, are the decisions currently made by a select number of faculty? Finzel answered that we have internship guidelines in which credits are mapped to hours spent learning. It is very hard to do it that way with this type of internship. When Karla Klinger was doing it, she would come with piles of documents to fulfill the documentation requirement for 10 credits or so. It may be easier to take a four-credit class than to document a four-credit prior learning course. There is really very little chance that anyone other than those in professions with formal training programs will have sufficient documentation.

Ng noted that it is a good thing to have the courses available if a scenario occurs and we need to use that. However, we need to have an implementation process without it becoming a program with new staff needed. Rudney asked if there is an office that can do it. Finzel noted that when it was done out of an office in the past, the office was staffed by multiple people. That office now has one person. The only way is to rely on faculty advisers to at least be aware of the option but be aware that it would apply to only a few students. Garavaso stated that she doubted that the courses would be applicable in the Humanities, but she would be reluctant to take the courses away from those few faculty who do it in professional fields where it makes sense.

Garavaso stated a concern with the number of credits allowed and suggested that it be restricted. Helsper noted that 32 credits is the maximum, and it's only listed because ECAS requires that there be a maximum when courses are repeatable. The number was matched with the IS internship that was already on the books.

Ng stated that the max should be reduced on the directed study and the repeatability should be removed. Prior Learning should be a one-time thing. Your background doesn't change. She asked if anyone has asked for repeated credit for prior learning. Squier answered that if a student has the internship and is looking for more credits, they can take the directed study; it works as a package. We could change it to non-repeatable and increase the maximum.

Finzel stated that he would argue for 1-32 credits and non-repeatable for a Prior Learning Internship, but not for the Prior Learning Directed Study. Ng noted that she did not like repeatability in either. A student should ask for the credit for prior learning all at once. Squier asked why the range of credits starts at one. She suggested changing it to 6-32 credits. Finzel asked if other institutions have Prior Learning credits. Engleman noted that she has experienced it at other institutions, but not as large as 32 credits.

Finzel stated that, since IS courses are under the Dean's authority, he would propose a change in the repeatability and credit maximum of these courses.

3) Petition to Waive the Intellectual Community (IC) Gen Ed Requirement

Finzel explained that when the Curriculum Committee proposed the IC requirement, the intent was for it to be taken by entering freshmen when they first step forth on campus, giving them the experience of a small cohort learning together, with opportunity for discussion.

The Scholastic Committee has proposed a solution to a thorny problem concerning the IC Gen Ed requirement: what to do when students do not successfully complete the course. Some students enroll and drop the requirement their first semester. Some students take the course and receive a grade of W. Others have failed the course. With the proposed process, students who do not successfully complete an IC course are required to take another IC course the following semester. After two unsuccessful semesters, students would need to petition to waive the IC course requirement by replacing it with a comparable course that has met the “spirit of the requirement.” An IC course petition process proposal was included in the agenda materials.

A brief list of the most common comments regarding the Scholastic Committee’s proposed petition process are shown below:

- The proposal is reasonable.
- The Scholastic Committee’s proposal is cumbersome. It relies on advisers to follow the petition process and find a replacement. It’s a lot of work for advisers.
- This is saying to students who didn’t like their IC course, you *have* to take it and then petition to take a course like the one you didn’t like. How often should a student take a swing at it? Why not allow them to fail it and be done with it?
- What we do now is not the best model, placing all students who don’t successfully complete an IC course together in one of two IC courses in the spring.
- We could allow students to fail the course and consider the IC requirement completed.
- We could require IC faculty to give a D as the lowest grade. That way all students who complete the course will fulfill the requirement.
- We don’t want to entice people to withdraw and petition.
- We should insist the student continue to meet the IC requirement rather than allow a substitute.

Submitted by Darla Peterson