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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

2013-14 MEETING #2 Minutes

October 14, 2013, 1:00 p.m., MFR

Members Present: Bart Finzel (chair), Joe Alia, Donna Chollett, Mark Collier, Carol Cook, Pieranna Garavaso, Sara Haugen, Zach Johnson, Leslie Meek, Peh Ng, Gwen Rudney, and Jeri Squier

Members Absent: Clare Dingley, Pilar Eble, Eric Gandrud, Mitchell Moe, and Emily Sunderman

Visitors: Nancy Helsper, Judy Korn, Michael Lackey

In these minutes: Course changes in the Humanities, Science and Mathematics, and the Social Sciences; EDP selection criteria and subcommittee; and SLOs on ECAS

Approval of Minutes – September 16, 2013

MOTION (Garavaso/Meek) to approve the September 16, 2013 minutes. Minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Course Changes

Division of the Humanities Course Changes

English

The request to remove the Engl 1601-Writing for the Liberal Arts (WLA) prereq from seventeen 2000-level courses was tabled at the last meeting, with a suggestion that it be brought back to the discipline for discussion. It had also been suggested that a member of the English discipline be present when the proposal comes back to the Curriculum Committee. Professor Lackey, discipline coordinator of English, spoke to the committee. Lackey explained that there are two points to the argument to remove the prereq from 2000-level courses. The first argument is that many students who want to be English majors cannot get into a 2000-level English course in the fall or spring and cannot identify themselves as English majors until their sophomore year. In the past, 40% of the students tested out of college writing and were eligible to take 2000-level courses. The 2000-level courses are ones that get students interested in the English major. With the prereq, students will be prevented from considering an English major. The second argument is that courses like his 2000-level survey course consist mostly of quizzes, exams, and short paragraph assignments, requiring minimal writing. Students would not need to have 1601 in order to succeed in his class. The kind of work done in college writing courses would better benefit students taking 3000-level courses.

Collier stated that the argument that brilliant students need to take 2000-level courses is countered by the argument that the majority of the students (60%) have not tested out of it in the past and will therefore struggle in those courses without the writing course experience. The problem across campus is that students are not doing enough writing. If it is true that 2000-level courses do not require much writing, is it a legitimate argument?

Ng stated that this is a new year for Writing for the Liberal Arts (WLA), and the solution to remove a prereq from all 2000-level English courses might be a drastic way to solve a problem that may solve itself if given time. Lackey answered that the Twin Cities campus got rid of the prereq because they had the identical problem. Garavaso stated that disciplines should make decisions like this, if the discipline unilaterally agrees to remove the prereq from all 2000-level courses. The example given by Lackey consists of two survey courses that aren't writing courses. Are all of the other 2000-level English courses those in which the prereq would not influence them? Garavaso asked if the faculty considered separating survey courses out and only removing the writing prereq from those courses. For some 2000-level courses students might be better prepared if they have writing skills. Lackey answered that he could ask each of the faculty who teach 2000-level courses if the prereq applies to their course. Korn noted that both ENGL 1011 and ENGL 1601 are prereqs for 2000-level courses. There were about 200 students who transferred in with 1011 equivalency. Lackey stated that it is possible that it is just a bad year for English. He would be curious to see what will happen in the spring. Ng noted that there may be other unintended consequences if the prerequisite is dropped.

Finzel asked if instead of dropping the prereq and trying to create access to students, might some of the 2000-level courses be better listed at the 1000-level? Lackey answered that the 1000-level courses don't count toward the major. The discipline shot down an earlier attempt to get more 1000-level courses that count toward the major. The discipline equates them with IC courses. Collier suggested that instead of removing the prereq from all 2000-level courses, the survey courses could be changed to the 1000-level with credit given toward the major. That fix would target the group of students who might become majors.

Rudney stated that she is glad we have the WLA course and that everyone is required to take it. The assumption is that most students will take WLA their first year. Lackey asked if there is any other discipline that has a single course that has to be taken in order to get into all of the others. Rudney answered that you have to take the intro course to get into any Education program. Squier noted that there should be something in the prereq statement saying that if you are becoming an English major, the prereq would be waived.

Collier questioned whether there is an academic reason to make the change. If we think the students need the course, but are concerned about the temporary drop in the number of majors, is that a reason to drop the prereq? Lackey stated that there is no reason why they need it for the survey course.

Finzel stated that there did not yet appear to be a clear consensus. Collier noted that there is a consensus to change the survey course to a 1000-level course. Lackey answered that the discipline will not do it. Chollett asked if there has been a discussion about this proposal and is there a consensus among the English faculty who teach 2000-level courses. The English faculty know best what they want their students to know and when. Lackey answered that a meeting did take place to approve the removal of all of the prereqs but he could not speak to every course. It was decided that he would bring the proposal back to the discipline and return with a proposal to remove 1601 from only those courses that receive consent from instructors of 2000-level English courses.

In the meantime, Squier stated that she will add the following note (in red) to all the 2000-level English courses in the spring semester class schedule: *1601 (or 1011) is NOT required to enroll in this course. This class is appropriate for first-year students and non-majors.*

Division of Science and Mathematics Course Changes

Biol 4231 – Immunology (new course)

Chem 3801 – History of Chemistry (inactivate course)

Chem 4354 – Biochemistry of Neurological Disorders (new course)

Rudney asked whether adding two new courses and removing one course results in a resource issue. Ng stated that the plan is to offer the new courses every other year.

The proposals for course changes in the Division of Science and Mathematics were unanimously approved (10-0-0).

Division of the Social Sciences Course Changes

Hist 3451 – Facing West (inactivate course)

Meek explained that this course was tabled at the last meeting and is coming back for a vote. The instructor has retired and it has been replaced by a new 2000-level course.

The proposal for the course change in the Division of the Social Sciences was unanimously approved (10-0-0).

Educational Development Program (EDP)

Finzel stated that the selection criteria for the summer 2014 EDP grants needs to be determined. Last year, the priorities (listed in random order) were: 1) intellectual community courses; 2) efforts to develop innovative “hybrid” courses; 3) courses within our interdisciplinary majors or the Honors Program that will be team taught by faculty from different academic divisions; and 4) courses in majors with new faculty or in need of significant program renewal. Well-developed proposals that address a significant need within the curriculum or that will benefit large numbers of students will also be considered.

Ng asked if there was still a need for IC courses. Finzel answered that at least half of the IC courses are new. Squier noted that getting faculty to offer IC courses is a continuing concern. Finzel added that he hoped that those who offered IC courses a year ago will come back to teach them again next year. Finzel stated that he would like to keep sustainability on the list, as well as Honors courses. The Honors coordinator has had a difficult time identifying team-taught Honors courses. Internationalizing the curriculum came to mind, although the International Programs Committee has a separate fund and call for

proposals. Garavaso stated that she would encourage more team-taught courses that integrate science and the humanities. Collier asked if there is funding for the courses to go through and get on the schedule. Finzel answered that is why the deadline was moved to the fall beginning last year so that the new courses can be identified before class schedules are complete. Ng noted that there is nothing wrong with developing a course to offer a year or more in the future. Finzel added that if we decide to fund the course, we need to make it happen. Ng suggested giving priority to interdisciplinary courses. Finzel agreed that contributions to IS majors are needed. Rudney suggested a priority for courses in new majors or programs undergoing serious revision. Collier stated that there is a need to create an incentive for those who might not otherwise create a new course; a new faculty member or a new major already has a built-in incentive.

Four equally important funding priorities were identified: 1) intellectual community (IC) courses, 2) efforts to develop innovative “hybrid” courses (a course offered partly online and partly in the classroom), 3) courses within our interdisciplinary majors or the Honors Program that will be team taught by faculty from different academic divisions, and 4) courses in majors with new faculty or in need of significant program renewal. Well developed proposals that address a significant need within the curriculum or that will benefit large numbers of students will also be considered.

Finzel asked for volunteers to serve on the EDP review subcommittee. Historically, the subcommittee consists of three individuals, often including student representation. The 2013-14 EDP review subcommittee volunteers were Joe Alia (chair), Leslie Meek, and Zach Johnson. Finzel stated that the deadline will be November 25, the Monday before Thanksgiving. The subcommittee will present their recommendations to the committee at the December 9 meeting of the committee.

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Questions on the Electronic Course Activation System (ECAS) Form

Finzel noted that the Assessment of Student Learning Committee (ASLC) has suggested that when a new course is proposed, the instructor is asked to identify what SLO the new course would address, explain how it will be addressed, and describe how the instructor will assess the work related to the SLO. That information will be helpful in providing a strong list to show how the SLOs are being met across campus.

Squier asked if it will be done for new courses or for revised courses as well. Finzel answered that each time a course is proposed or changed in ECAS, the question should be answered. Meek stated that it will be a big increase in work for the divisions. From the point of view of a division chair, this is one more layer of work for staff that can't do one more thing. Helsper replied that the faculty would be providing the information. The staff would only have to copy it into ECAS. Rudney asked if a drop-down box could be inserted to require less typing. Squier stated that the forms that she created for faculty to use are easy to revise. Changes to the online ECAS system will have to be done centrally by a Twin Cities campus office that is busy with the ESUP project; they may not get to it for a while. If they can't do it right away, we can capture the information on the paper form and input it into ECAS later. Finzel asked Squier to come up with a checkbox system that would make the process easy. The committee will review it at the November 11 meeting.

The remaining agenda item will carry forward onto the next meeting's agenda.

Submitted by Darla Peterson