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Curriculum minutes 12/09/2013

Curriculum Committee

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**UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
2013-14 MEETING #4 Minutes
December 9, 2013, 1:00 p.m., MFR**

Members Present: Bart Finzel (chair), Joe Alia, Donna Chollett, Mark Collier, Carol Cook, Clare Dingley, Pilar Eble, Eric Gandrud, Pieranna Garavaso, Sara Haugen, Zach Johnson, Leslie Meek, Peh Ng, Kenyon Nyangai, Gwen Rudney, Jeri Squier, and Emily Sunderman

Members Absent: None

Visitors: Vicki Graham, Nancy Helsper, Michael Lackey, and Kellie Meehlhause, Tisha Turk

In these minutes: Creative Writing Minor proposal (for discussion), Program Review Reports (English and Latin American Area Studies), and EDP Review Committee Recommendations

Announcements

Dean Finzel reminded members to provide Darla with their spring semester schedules, keeping in mind that this is one of the largest and more difficult committees to schedule, so flexibility would be appreciated.

The Curriculum Committee has been asked as part of Resource Allocation Review (RAR) to create a subcommittee to examine UMM online initiatives, particularly how the UMM curriculum could be strengthened by offering online offerings. The Curriculum Committee will assign a couple of members to a larger task force that will report back to campus at the end of 2014. The call for volunteers will occur early spring semester.

During the spring semester the committee will revisit the discussion of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in ECAS. At the last meeting there was a discussion about the ASLC's suggested Gen Ed description revisions and what essential elements should appear in program descriptions and program objectives in the course catalog. Finzel will work with the division chairs to bring something to this committee early in spring semester.

Approval of Minutes – November 11, 2013

MOTION (Cook/Chollett) to approve the November 11, 2013 minutes. Minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Creative Writing Minor proposal (for discussion)

Professor Lackey stated that the English discipline looked at ways in which to innovate and improve the major. One suggestion that was taken very seriously was a creative writing minor. We already offer all of the courses for this proposed minor. He gave examples of how this minor and track could help two very different (imaginary) students:

Imaginary student #1: Jimmy Togas is a chemistry major, but he loves creative writing. He started at UMM in 2008 and graduated in 2012. Here are the courses he took in English:

Fall 2009: 2121 (Intro to Creative Writing) with Chrissy Kolaya
Spring 2010: 1131 (Lit Studies, which is now 2501) with Brook Miller
Fall 2010: 2106 (Environmental Imagination) with Vicki Graham
Spring 2011: 3015 (Writing Poetry for the 21st Century) with Vicki Graham
Fall 2012: 3153 (19th Century British Fiction) with Brad Deane

Jimmy may be an imaginary student, but the schedule of classes is not. Had UMM had a formally recognized Creative Writing minor in 2012, Jimmy would have graduated with a Chemistry major and a Creative Writing minor based on resources already in place. In other words, it has been possible and it will continue to be possible to complete the requirements for the minor with our course offerings as they currently stand. What we are asking is that you approve this minor so that students like Jimmy can get the formal credit they deserve.

Imaginary student #2:

Lorde Barber is an English major, but she wants to become a professional creative writer. Knowing how difficult it is to break into the field of creative writing, she realizes that it would be best to get an MFA in creative writing post-UMM. She started at UMM in 2008 and graduated in 2012. Here are some of the courses in English she took.

Fall 2009: 1131 (Lit Studies, which is now 2501) with Brook Miller
Spring 2010: 2121 (Intro to Creative Writing) with Argie Manolis
Fall 2010: 3332 (African American Women Writers) with Michael Lackey
Spring 2011: 3015 (Writing Poetry for the 21st Century) with Vicki Graham
Spring 2012: (Advanced Fiction) with Chrissy Kolaya

Again, Lorde may be an imaginary student, but the schedule of classes is not. Had UMM had a formally recognized Creative Writing track in 2012, Lorde would have graduated with an English major and a Creative Writing track based on resources already in place. This would have given her an advantage in getting into an MFA program.

Lackey stated that the Admissions Office is frequently asked if we have a creative writing program. Students are interested in it. Students will see their futures in this particular way as the field continues to change. New graduate programs in editing and professional writing programs are cropping up. One of our students received best graduate student of the year in the editing program at West Virginia.

The proposal is for a Creative Writing minor and a Creative Writing track in the English major. Professor Graham spoke about the courses in the minor. Of the five courses for the minor, two are literature courses. There is a literary studies course and another in a genre of interest to the student (e.g., novel or minor poetry). All students will take the intro to creative writing course and 2 upper level writing courses.

Finzel asked if the intention is to activate it with the next catalog. Graham stated that was the intent. Finzel asked if the discipline discussed the low number of credits for the minor (20). Graham noted that there are other minors that require 20 credits. Finzel stated that 20 credits may be an issue when two literature classes are required in the minor, leaving a relatively small number of actual courses in writing. Meek and Dingley identified several existing minor requirements that range from 20 to 31. Finzel stated there is time for the discipline to consider the number before the minor is brought back in the spring for formal PCAS approval.

Eble asked if the special topics classes are always filled when offered. Graham answered that they are filled every year. Eble added that it is important that classes are offered and available. Graham noted that the classes are offered every year or every other year. Eble asked if there will be more courses in this area and less in literary studies. Graham answered that it may take a year or two before there will be a need to add more.

Rudney stated that she was worried about the track overlap since the only substantial difference is three courses. Graham explained that there is a 10 course plan for English. One is literary studies. Then, requirements like theory and grammar skills, language, and understanding writing are added. Then they have to take three surveys. There are upper division electives and lower division electives. So, it is very possible for a student to choose as the 2xxx electives two upper level creative writing courses. Rudney asked if the literary studies is the only course every English major takes. Professor Turk answered that they all have to take three of the four surveys. They will all have that experience in common. Eble noted that it doesn't seem like it could be packaged without the major. Ideally, it would be better if it added more creative writing courses to the curriculum. Turk stated that students can do the major and track now. The minor is the thing that is really new. The English minor now is literary studies focused. It is hard to get into the introduction to creative writing course so a minor for students not already majors is the big difference that will make these courses more accessible. Meek stated that she completely supports this minor. She has had many advisees who have not been able to get into the creative writing course. Johnson noted that when a survey was given to English students last spring, the class was solidly in support of the minor.

Collier stated the he is worried about the claim that this minor is completely cost-neutral since many of the courses are taught by non-tenured faculty. Finzel stated that it does harden up this curriculum, given our current population and demand for those courses. It also offers a program that will draw students to UMM. Turk added that having additional sections of creative writing will benefit not only those in the major. Introduction to creative writing fulfills the ArtP general education requirement. This bolsters our Gen Ed offerings and is a nice bonus for students.

Dingley noted that if the proposal is approved as a track, then that will actually be a part of the degree and will show up on their transcript. Finzel thanked guests Lackey, Graham, and Turk for introducing the proposal.

Academic Program Review Reports

Finzel explained that a few years ago academic programs that have gone through a program review were asked to present their findings to the Curriculum Committee in order to have something on the public record for the program. Each program will be asked to return in four years to give an update of its progress toward goals. English and Latin American Area Studies have been asked to address the following areas in their presentation: distinctiveness of the program, curriculum link/relationship to other programs (including Gen Ed), innovation in the last few years, program goals or where you hope to improve in the coming years.

English

Lackey stated that the main change in the English program has been the shift from College Writing to the Gen Ed requirement of Writing for the Liberal Arts (WLA). English decided to make it mandatory for just about everyone on campus. He has already noticed the level of writing improving in his class. WLA students have been surveyed and asked to compare the course to a college writing course in high school. Many stated that it is substantially different. They can now talk about the nature of an argument, how to organize an essay, to perform contextualization analysis, etc. The biggest transformation is that the course was planned so that under no circumstances can a student get out of WLA anymore. The course is a lot of work, but he loves it and recognizes that it's the most important course he teaches on this campus.

Turk stated that, as one who teaches upper level writing, she will be interested to see what happens to the upper level courses as a result of WLA. The current upper level courses are filled with those who opted out of College Writing. It will be interesting to see the difference in the writing of those who have taken WLA.

Graham stated that the Environmental Imagination class that she teaches every year fills the ENVT Gen Ed. She gets a lot of students who are interested in the environment but are afraid to take a science course. They get a really different view of what it is to care about the environment. English took a leap to 4xxx-level courses several years ago. The senior research seminar is now in good rotation and students are expecting it right from the beginning and lead into it with the current course. Students have a real sense of pride when they reach the 4xxx-level seminar and stand in front of classmates and faculty to give a successful presentation.

Finzel asked what the goals are for the next 4-5 years. Lackey answered that the program has been fixated on the Creative Writing minor now. The national trend is going down for English majors and the program has been paying attention to it. Changes will need to be made to the discipline in order to accommodate the national trend. Turk noted that although the national trend is going down, the number of English majors at UMM has not gone down. A lot of students are double majors. They are taking fewer additional electives because of the additional major or minor. One other thing English is working on is offering a lot of courses that support other majors and programs, e.g., Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies; American Indian Studies; Environmental Studies; German Studies; and African American Studies. Maintaining those courses that support other majors is very important to English.

Latin American Area Studies (LAAS)

Chollett provided the following report on the LAAS program:

The Latin American Area Studies program is one of the most unique programs at UMM. The major is indispensable for meeting UMM's mission and strategic priorities. It provides a rigorous liberal arts education by encouraging interdisciplinary thinking. As an interdisciplinary program, it engages majors and non-majors in discovering, broadening, and deepening knowledge regarding a significant region of the Global South that is directly connected to the U.S. through historical relations, trade agreements, cultural and political issues regarding migration, etc. The program does an outstanding job of enabling students to look at the broader international picture and to make connections among cultural, social, economic, political phenomena and forces for change so that they can become better global citizens with inter-cultural competence. LAAS is educating a generation of students who have skill in foreign languages and who are knowledgeable about and savvy regarding a range of perspectives on foreign affairs and the Global South. The program links to changing demographics of the country, region, and UMM efforts at Community Engagement (dairy research projects, English as a second language, Jane Adams, etc.): In 2008 the Hispanic population in Stevens county grew by 69%. The program is strong, with dedicated faculty support from Anthropology/Sociology, History, Political Science, and Spanish. LAAS is a relatively low-cost program; the entire faculty are hired by other disciplines.

LAAS offers unique courses. In 3100, students meet to view current Latin American films and bring in researched news articles to keep them updated on current events. 3201-Bibliographical Tools exposes students to library resources for doing research on Latin America. 4901 is a new capstone with the flexibility of allowing seniors to work in a related area to fulfill the capstone requirement.

The program is unique in that although it does not require students to study abroad, most do. Many of the students have done significant internships (Department of State, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, OAS, Latin Am. Working Group-migration advocacy, Guatemalan domestic abuse center, legal services to Dominican women, and Representative Collin Peterson's office). LAAS students have won Fulbright scholarships and have gone on to graduate studies in international relations. One is working in the NDSU immigration office.

As an interdisciplinary major, LAAS links to other programs by offering elective credits in a broad range of disciplines. Gen Eds covered in LAAS electives include Env't, Hist, HDiv, IP, and SS.

Following the retirement and loss of one core course, 4901 Capstone in LAAS was instituted that allows students to take 4 credits of research with an LAAS faculty member, or to combine a 2-credit research project with an LAAS or non-LAAS faculty member in conjunction with a 2-credit research project with an LAAS faculty member. Four new History courses have been added to the program: HIST 2608 - History of Cuba:

From Colony to Revolutionary State; HIST 3612 - Social Revolution in 20th-Century Latin America; HIST 3613 - U.S.-Latin American Relations in Historical Perspective; and HIST 3614 - Race and Ethnicity in Latin America. We have added 4 new history courses to LAAS, and a new course on Latino experience will begin this spring: ANTH 3502 – Latinos in the Midwest.

Based on the recommendations of the program review committee, LAAS has established goals that they hope will improve their program in the coming years. Two of the goals should be completed this spring. The first plan is to establish an LAAS minor with approximately 23 to 26 credits. There is an increasing student demand for a minor, especially among double and triple majors. The program has not had a minor in the past because the LAAS major is relatively light compared to other majors. It didn't appear to be an appropriate approach to get a minor. In response to increasing demand by students, in response to the program review, and in response to the need to increase enrollment, the major is now prepared to propose a minor in LAAS. Secondly, simultaneous changes will be made to the major. The number of credits will be increased from 31-34 to 39-42. The discipline is continually seeking new courses to add to the electives. There have been a lot of courses on the books, but many are not offered every year. They plan to delete electives from the course catalog that are offered less frequently than alternative years, to better reflect available courses. There is an intent to eliminate mostly Spanish courses that won't fall into a single catalog. A third goal is to continue to build up enrollment in the program. That can be done by establishing a minor. It can also be done by establishing a study abroad program in Mexico. An exchange proposal was prepared and there has been recent involvement in a new grant program that includes an exchange program. Enrollments were larger when regular study abroad programs were offered. LAAS needs to do a better job of tracking graduates. All LAAS students do an exit survey, and all are asked to keep in contact with the program and report on what they are doing. The best way of tracking graduates is by working with the alumni office. A most important goal is to hire a dedicated Latin American faculty member to teach capstone courses that are now being covered by teaching overloads and to cover courses and program when people are on semester leaves or sabbaticals.

Sunderman stated that she is currently a Spanish major in the Education program. The Secondary Education program has prereqs and a coaching endorsement, and it is difficult to incorporate an LAAS major as well. Having the LAAS background is important, especially in education, so she is pleased that they are proposing a minor.

Johnson added that he was pleased that the need for a dedicated LAAS faculty member has been expressed. A lot of students have discussed the need for it in LAAS and GWSS. He asked what specific student concerns were expressed in the program review. Chollett answered that they did not have students' written feedback in the review, but from exit reviews students were overwhelmingly positive, want more courses, and are concerned that the major is relying on people hired in other disciplines.

EDP Review Committee Recommendation

As chair of the EDP Review Committee, Alia reported that the review committee proposed that 10 of the 14 applications be awarded EDP grants for summer 2014:

Mark Collier, English: hybrid course – Introduction to Philosophy
Jennifer Deane, History: Interdisciplinary course - Global Histories of Science
Kenneth Emo, Education: Child and Adolescent Learning and Development for Education
Seung-Ho Joo, Political Science: hybrid course - World Politics
Paul Kivi, Econ/Mgmt: online version of ECON 1112-Principles of Macroeconomics
Benjamin Narvaez, History: History of Brazil: From Sugar to Sugar Cars
Denise Odello, Music: flipped/hybrid course – MUS 1041-Introduction to Music
Roger Rose, Political Science; and Jayne Blodgett, Briggs Library:
flipped/hybrid course – POL 2001-Political Science Research Methods
Jimmy Schryver, Art History; and Jennifer Deane, History: interdisciplinary honors course –
Crusader Art and History / Art and History of the Crusades
Ted Pappenfus, Chemistry; and Jennifer Goodnough, Chemistry:
hybrid Laboratory Activities for General Chemistry Curriculum

Finzel stated that he was able to find some additional resources so that ten courses could be funded rather than eight.

Garavaso voiced concerns that the course proposed by a Studio Art instructor was not funded. Alia stated that the major concern with that proposal was that it would not affect a large number of students compared to other proposals. Meek added that the review committee liked the proposed course, thought it was a good idea, but had to make a tough decision. Garavaso asked if hybrid courses alter the time that faculty spend with students in the classroom. Alia answered that the amount of class time is the same but it is devoted to activities rather than to a lecture.

Chollett asked if there was any concern about one individual who is being funded on two proposals. Finzel answered that EDP is not full-time employment in the summer and a faculty member can do additional work in the summer. Meek added that for one of the proposals the faculty member is only awarded one-third of the total funding.

Finzel thanked the review committee and added that the hardest thing the committee does is to give away money. The committee did a very good job.

Motion: (Ng/Garavaso) to approve the funding recommendation of the EDP Review Subcommittee. The motion passed unanimously (14-0-0).

Submitted by Darla Peterson