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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

2013-14 MEETING #5 Minutes

January 20, 2014, 10:00 a.m., MFR

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

Members Absent: Clare Dingley, Hector Garcia

Visitors: Chlene Anderson, Nancy Helsper, and Kellie Meehlhause

In these minutes: Latin American Area Studies Minor Proposal (for discussion), and Online Task Force discussion with guest Chlene Anderson, Coordinator of Online Learning

Announcements

Dean Finzel announced that a new student will be on the committee this semester, but he wasn't present at the meeting. At today's meeting the Latin American Area Studies minor proposal will be discussed. The LAAS minor and the Creative Writing minor will come for vote later this semester. He would like to have them done before the catalog changes are made in the fall.

Approval of Minutes – December 9, 2013

MOTION (Ng/Garavaso) to approve the December 9, 2013 minutes. Minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Latin American Area Studies Minor proposal (for discussion)

Professor Chollett, discipline coordinator for LAAS, stated that students have asked her for years why there isn't an LAAS minor. Her answer had always been that the major is relatively light compared to other majors on campus. Students can complete a major within 2 years. She had never recommended students major only in LAAS. LAAS students are double or triple majors. Enrollment in the major is low. Having a minor will expose more students to learning about a significant region to which we are connected. LAAS is an interdisciplinary major, which fits well with the goals at UMM to get students involved in a variety of disciplines. Even the proposed minor will require students to take a portion of the electives in three different disciplines. One of the recommendations that came out of the recent program review was the recommendation that we add a minor. The proposed effective date is for the next catalog.

Rudney asked if Chollett could speak to the distinctiveness of a program when other majors can add an LAAS minor by adding a couple of courses. Chollett answered that the distinctiveness is that it covers regions historically, culturally, politically, and economically. Rudney stated that the courses are very Spain-centered. Chollett replied that it would be nice to have a lot more courses on campus that address Latin America.

Collier asked if it is possible to satisfy the minor if one only takes the Spain class. Chollett answered that electives have to come from three different disciplines, not including LAAS.

Meehlhause noticed that four semesters of Spanish is required. Can that be at any level? Chollett answered that students can test out of Spanish. For them to take a 3xxx level, they would already have to finish the first two years. Rudney noted it should be reworded to say that students "must complete intermediate Spanish" instead of "4 semesters." Squier noted that it is worded the way it is because of the way ECAS is set up- you get to pick the number of semesters.

Finzel asked if there are hidden prerequisites connected to the courses across disciplines. Meek listed a few intro courses that are prerequisites for elective courses on the list. Chollett stated that it would be true for any discipline.

Alia asked what impact the minor would have on the major. Chollett answered that she was concerned that it would reduce the number of majors because it is easier to get a minor, but it might also be so close to the major that minors might switch to a major. Finzel noted that the same question was voiced during the program review.

Johnson stated that the sociology courses are just multiple listings for the anthropology courses, and vice versa, depending on how one registers for them. For a minor, students can have up to two course overlaps. Is that true for other majors? Chollett stated that it was her understanding that most of the disciplines allow a two-course overlap. Squier noted that LAAS is the only major with this verbiage because there aren't a lot of LAAS classes. They are pulling from other disciplines, so it makes sense. Rudney added that's one of the ways the program is distinct.

Finzel stated that, unlike most majors and minors, this program is actively managed by the coordinator. The requirement that students must enroll through the LAAS coordinator is unusual, but it provides an opportunity to fashion the minor. Chollett explained that a student has to come to her office, and together they fill in a form that helps students plan and organize their major or minor program. The form lays out the expectations, and is forwarded to the Advising Office, the Dean's Office, and the Registrar's Office. She follows through to see that the plan is being followed. A series of assessment requirements have to be met, and a sheet has to be turned in before the student is allowed to graduate. Finzel added that it is a very unique process, with clearly stated and articulated objectives. It would be helpful if the objectives were rephrased and recast in light of our Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). For example, evidence of the first SLO (Knowledge of Human Cultures. . .) and the fourth (Capacity for Integrative Learning) fit very well. Squier noted that it has already been done. It was taken out but can be put back in. Finzel stated that we are moving in that direction going forward.

Online Learning Task Force Discussion

At the last meeting Finzel had noted that the Resource Allocation Review (RAR) process had resulted in a request that a task force be formed to look at UMM's online curriculum program and make recommendations of how we might move forward with this program. It is important that the Curriculum Committee own this discussion in a real way. The committee will talk about the charge for the task force, as well as a timeline. Currently, UMM has a small, modest online learning program offering two to three classes each semester which are entirely online. The stated purpose of the program involves three elements:

- 1) There are a limited number of students who for one reason or another are unable to physically be on campus. Offering a modest number of courses is a way to keep those students linked to Morris. This is a good retention tool and a nice service to our students. Each course serves 3-4 students in this way.
- 2) Online Learning helps to keep UMM faculty current with technology and instructional methods. We continue to explore the current technology to see if it may enhance our

regular curriculum in this way. The fact that this committee approved many hybrid courses in our last EDP award process is proof that we are able to do that type of instruction.

- 3) Online Learning is in line with our land grant mission. Providing educational opportunities to non-degree students and particularly Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) students is part of our service to the region.

Johnson asked how much we do with offering lectures from other universities via ITV. Chlene Anderson stated that we don't do that. We strictly use Moodle and our own instructors. In the past there has been some ITV use but there is a cost involved and a more rigid structure. Collier asked if we have the capacity to upload to iTunes. Anderson answered that it is not heavily used. Cultura or Voice threads are more user-friendly and are more popular with language instructors.

Gandrud asked if there is a tentative list of courses available. Anderson answered that there are modest offerings in the fall and spring. Summer has been quite popular because it allows students to continue their degree program while away from campus. Course offerings are listed on the Online Learning web page.

Alia asked if there is a plan in place for faculty to attend workshops or conferences on how to teach an online course. Anderson answered that we have a Quality Matters program that is paid for by the Twin Cities campus. She had them come to campus. Professor Sungur is a qualified trainer. They haven't pursued it because when it was done for the current online instructors, they didn't want to be committed to the time it takes to be trained and certified in the program. She hasn't offered it again but if more interest arises she can offer it again on our campus. If an individual is interested in the training, she can arrange for the person to take the course. There is free Moodle training via videos. She has a Google site web page. If anyone is interested, let her know and she will add them to the site where there are links to explore. There is a posting to campus of trainings every semester. She and Pamela Gades have hosted breakfast, lunch, Wine & Wikis, and training, none of which was heavily attended. Finzel noted that the task force might be charged with looking into training needs.

Johnson asked if the intro courses were offered on a rotation and if they are required. Finzel answered that we don't currently offer any required online curriculum. Courses are offered on a voluntary basis, if a faculty member's workload will allow them to do it, or we go back to people who have done it for a number of years. Anderson added that in the summer we offer some 3xxx-level courses, but we tend not to do so during the year.

Garavaso recalled years ago when there was a concern that online teaching was taking away students from campus. The charge should include improving communications with the campus in the way of what faculty can do or are already doing for training faculty and maintaining a level of technology that is very different from the curriculum we already offer. The campus isn't aware of the program or who supervises the courses. The three purposes are very important, but the campus knows nothing about it. Maybe the division chairs haven't done enough in telling faculty the importance of Online Learning. In some cases there is a very good connection with the faculty, e.g., English faculty are involved in online courses. Only those disciplines that are involved know how they work. Others don't know that online courses are integral, and have the same standard and goals as traditional classes.

Finzel agreed that communication is important but we have intentionally been waiting to take steps to make new initiatives until the task force is completed. We don't go outside UMM to hire people and we only hire instructors who are already on the faculty or who have been on the faculty. These are people who know our standards for our entire curriculum.

Ng asked what the timeline is. Finzel replied that a report is due by the end of the 2014 calendar year. He hopes to use this discussion to come up with a charge. He will solicit volunteers from this committee and go out to relevant people with more experience in the online environment as well as people with technological knowledge. Collier noted that the charge should be limited. Meehlause asked how our Online Learning program compares to others in our system, MNSCU, or other campuses of similar size. Finzel answered that we should compare ourselves to our comparison group. Alia stated that there should be some opportunity to internationalize the curriculum as well. Students studying abroad could take a course here.

Gandrud stated that the Crookston online offering is massive compared to Morris. However, he was able to take two German courses online here and was able to finish his major in a timely manner. Anderson noted that the UMM online courses have helped students finish a major in statistics as well.

Finzel stated the charge could include a look at whether the curriculum can be grown and enriched by Online Learning. We could talk to other institutions about the possibility of sharing an online environment in which courses are taught online that includes students from a different college taking a UMM course, and vice versa. A general inquiry could be made on how online learning might enrich our offering.

Garavaso stated that doing something in the music lessons area would be a good possibility. We currently pay mileage costs for an instructor to drive to Morris to teach a student 15 times a semester. Some faculty are savvy in technology and could offer interactive lessons. This is being piloted this spring.

Rudney stated that in the fall a specific secondary education course must be taught for licensure. We have been relying on a hybrid model, hiring award winning instructors who can't always get to Morris to teach a small group of students. We just tried it this year and it was a success.

Cook asked if our current online students are mostly UMM students or from all over? Anderson answered that there is a higher enrollment of PSEO students in fall semester and not as heavy in the spring. The reason might be the choice of classes or some might find it more difficult than they had thought. During the academic year UMM students are vetted to ensure that they are unable to enroll in the same on-campus course. Spring has a high enrollment of UMM students.

Finzel stated that we get enough non-degree and PSEO students to support the curriculum. As coordinator of Online Learning, Anderson monitors this pretty carefully so UMM students who wish to take an online course during the academic year have to have a pretty good reason why they cannot take the on-campus course.

Gandrud stated that our online German language course is an instructional model. We should offer more foreign languages online. He took an online Russian course from another campus and was sent the book and was basically told to teach himself. The quality of the instructional model is important.

Finzel asked for membership considerations. He had argued that this committee should play a vital role on the task force, offering significant membership from this committee. However, the Curriculum Committee membership doesn't have the expertise that is also needed on the task force. Ng suggested instructors who have been active in teaching our online courses. Garavaso suggested some students with experience with taking an online course. Gandrud volunteered to be a student representative from the committee. He has taken three courses online. Finzel stated that he will put out a call for volunteers from this group at the next meeting. Alia stated that he would be willing to play a role as an enthusiast who has not yet taught an online course. Other suggestions were someone from the foreign languages, a music lessons instructor, a technical expert (Pam Gades who does the training would be a good choice), and Anderson as a non-voting member who will serve as a resource.

The next meeting's agenda will include a WLA proposal.

Submitted by Darla Peterson