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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
2014-15 MEETING #14 Minutes
April 3, 2015, 2:15 p.m., MFR

Members Present: Bart Finzel (chair), Sarah Ashkar, Mary Elizabeth Bezanson, Donna Chollett, Mark Collier, Stephen Crabtree, Janet Ericksen, Pieranna Garavaso, Sara Haugen, Judy Korn, Peh Ng, Ricky Rojas, and Gwen Rudney

Members Absent: Pilar Eble, Maryanna Kroska, Emily Sunderman, and Sonja Swanson

Visitors: Nancy Helsper and Jeri Squier

In these minutes: Discussion of General Education Program (review of 2011 Gen Ed Forums, and report on the 2014 National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) Institutional Report

Announcements

Finzel mentioned that the committee will take the remainder of the meetings this semester to talk about General Education. His goal is to solidify the committee's understanding of the program and the major themes that came out of the 2011 review, and to devise a strategy for moving forward next year.

Approval of Minutes – March 27, 2015

MOTION (Bezanson/Garavaso) to approve the March 27, 2015 meeting minutes. Minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

General Education Program

Finzel stated that the Gen Ed Program Review conducted in fall 2011 identified the following broad themes:

- **Writing** – We have moved forward with the Writing for the Liberal Arts (WLA)
- **Depth** – There has been a lot of discussion nationally about this
- **Packaging** – We have made modest progress
- **Different Gen Ed Requirements for Different Students** – This would customize the Gen Ed program specific to a major
- **Foreign Language**
- **Fitness and Wellness**
- **Diversity at Home**

Finzel asked if the themes still resonate, and how we should move forward. Ericksen stated that what has changed since 2011 is the direction toward Environmental Studies and Sustainability. It's in our mission, but it's not reflected in our Gen Ed program. Korn noted that Morris is the only campus in the MNSCU and UM systems that doesn't require ENVY. Finzel explained that two concerns brought up in the 2011 review were that our Gen Ed program is too complex and that we should add more to it. Putting ENVY as an option under Global Village was a compromise. All four areas listed under Global Village

are important but we are not able to fit all of them into the program. Students now choose two of four.

Rudney asked what people found complicated about the program. Helsper answered that they see it as a check-off system, so they don't understand what it is about. Ericksen added that it also adds complexity to scheduling. Bezanson noted that St. Olaf's program is more elegantly represented, MNSCU is more flexible, and Global Village is complicated. She added that a Public Speaking requirement should be added to the Gen Ed program.

Finzel stated that we should think hard about how our Gen Ed program dovetails with our Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Collier stated that since students see Gen Ed as a checklist, what philosophically makes something Gen Ed? Is it something a well-rounded person should be exposed to? What is the definition? Finzel answered that our SLOs should give us a map showing what we hope students learn and which Gen Eds will move students in that direction. Crabtree noted that currently students don't connect the SLOs with the Gen Eds in any way.

Ericksen suggested looking at Gen Ed in two stages: what we can change right away, and what is the next tier of changes to be done. For clarity of connections to SLOs, we could pick two to adjust and rethink. For example, the Science requirement might change to Sustainability and Environment. Each year we would do another round. It would give people a chance to see how specific changes work by doing them in stages. Ng added that another example is that writing across the curriculum should be addressed now that WLA is in place.

2014 National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) Institutional Report

Helsper was asked to share information from the latest NSSE report relevant to Gen Ed. Helsper noted that in spring 2014 freshmen and seniors were surveyed across the nation. The first report compares UMM responses to those from COPLAC schools (23 institutions). Other reports showed responses from baccalaureate liberal arts colleges, and all NSSE.

One question that pertained to Gen Ed was Writing. Our numbers fell in 2014 from the 2012 survey in the number of drafts a student prepares before turning in a paper. Ericksen noted that it is surprising to see that result since we now require WLA and students are required to submit multiple drafts of papers.

The reports are available from the IR website at <http://reports.morris.umn.edu/surveys.php>.

Submitted by Darla Peterson