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## Curriculum minutes 09/18/2015

Curriculum Committee

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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE  
2015-16 MEETING #1 Minutes  
September 18, 2015, 3:30 p.m., MFR

*Members Present:* Bart Finzel (chair), Arne Kildegaard, Pieranna Garavaso, Peh Ng, Tracey Anderson, Mary Elizabeth Bezanson, Stephen Crabtree, Kellie Meehlhause, Christi Perkinson, Sarah Ashkar, Kerri Barnstuble, Judy Korn

*Members Absent:* Gwen Rudney, Jennifer Deane, Madison Hughes, Emily Sunderman, Lauren Velde

*Visitors:* Nancy Carpenter, Nancy Helsper

***In these minutes: Introductions and discussion of the committee's charge and process; recap of 2014-15 academic year; topics for academic year 2015-16; EDP timeline and Sustainability Leadership Program funding; and Online Learning Task Force update.***

### **Announcements**

Finzel welcomed the members of the committee and thanked everyone for being accommodating with their schedules. The time for the meetings this semester is not ideal, but it is the only time when a reasonable majority of the members are available. He encouraged members to send Darla their spring schedules as soon as possible so that she can identify five or six times to hold on people's Google calendars as options for meetings next semester. If this can be done before people commit to research, office hours, or other committees, we may find a standing time that works for everyone. Finzel then asked members to introduce themselves and shared the committee's charge as defined by the campus bylaws. The committee's mandate is broad. Because this is not a catalog year, the committee will have time to address the general education program, hear oral reports from academic programs, and address curricular issues that come forward.

### **Recap of 2014-15 Curriculum Committee Accomplishments**

Finzel stated that 2014-15 was a catalog year, so the committee met weekly during the first seven-to-eight weeks of fall semester. Agenda Items considered ranged from small to significant curricular changes. Significant program changes included the Liberal Arts for the Human Services major's name change to Human Services, and the addition of sub-plans. Significant changes were also made to the French and Political Science programs. A sub-plan in creative writing was added to the English major, and a Creative Writing minor was added. The committee endorsed a small change in General Chemistry, resulting in more than 60 credits in other majors. The action led to a proposed task force to examine the maximum number of credits in majors required of students at peer institutions. That task force has yet to begin its work. His hope is to have the work of the task force finished before the next catalog cycle begins. Other work of the committee last fall included approving the recommendation of 14 of 18 applications for Educational Development Program (EDP) grants. The committee also heard reports from the Art History and Statistics programs.

### **Topics for Academic Year 2015-16**

The committee will look at our general education program again this fall. Three main issues still resonate from past discussions. Concerns about the requirements in the Global Village GER

need to be addressed. The committee may examine the possibility of allowing courses to fulfill more than one Gen Ed. Another issue is the desire to add depth (a.k.a. laddering) to the Gen Ed program by requiring some Gen Eds to be filled at levels higher than 1xxx, thus integrating Gen Ed throughout one's career. Another area that will be considered is comparing the weakness of UMM's foreign language GER to that at peer institutions.

Finzel stated that, since this is not a catalog year, now is the time to have broader discussions about curricular issues. The best way to thoughtfully bring something forward with enough time for the campus to consider it is to have it on the Curriculum Committee docket this fall and to send it to Campus Assembly in the spring semester.

This year will be the first year that programs will be invited to return to the Curriculum Committee to report on the progress they have made since their last program review. Program reviews are on an 8-year cycle. We will particularly be inviting those programs that have not already been through the process of reporting to this committee.

### **Educational Development Program (EDP)**

Finzel reported that EDP is our primary mechanism to influence curriculum by offering faculty the opportunity to apply for grants to work on new courses or substantial revisions of existing courses during the summer. This year funding will be roughly at the same level of \$18,000 to fund six proposals at the full level of \$3,000. In addition to the EDP funding, we have for the second year received substantial funding from the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation to fund additional course development with a focus on sustainability leadership.

It was agreed that the timeline will include a proposal deadline of Monday, November 2, 2015. An EDP review committee consisting of three members of the Curriculum Committee will review the proposals and generate a recommendation report that will be due to Darla on November 16, 2015. The review committee will present their report at the November 20, 2015 meeting of the Curriculum Committee. The November deadline should give faculty time to be aware of funding before the course schedule is finalized.

Last year, EDP program grants had 6 priority areas:

- 1) Courses that meet the Human Diversity (HDiv) General Education Requirement.
- 2) Program revision or 1xxx level courses taught by multiple faculty in programs that are in need of significant renewal (note that funding can be split among teams of 2-3 people).
- 3) Courses in majors with new faculty.
- 4) Courses that incorporate instruction in discipline specific writing.
- 5) Courses that generate artifacts to assist assessment of the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs): written communication, critical thinking and problem solving, and quantitative literacy.
- 6) New or revised courses that explicitly include a sustainability and/or a leadership component.

The criteria for this year's EDP grants will be revisited at next week's meeting.

## **Online Learning Task Force (report from the chair)**

Finzel welcomed Professor Nancy Carpenter to the meeting and explained that this body appointed a task force last fall charged with proposing changes to the existing Online Learning program. The Task Force was charged with addressing the following five questions:

1. Should the existing online program be changed to better align it with our desired education outcomes? If so, why?
2. How can the expertise of the faculty and staff with experience concerning best practices in online education be better utilized to enhance traditional classroom instruction?
3. Are there untapped opportunities to enhance curricular offerings or other educational practices and programming (certificate programs?) at UMM by using online or hybrid courses?
4. Are there significant facilities implications for expanding online and/or hybrid curriculum?
5. What will be the training needs for faculty and staff to fully realize the potential of online course delivery systems?

Finzel invited Carpenter to share her report with the committee. Carpenter stated that the Task Force sought input from division chairs, the Office of Instructional and Media Technologies, the Academic Support Services Committee, as well as the coordinator of the Online Learning Program. Two members of the Curriculum Committee were members of the Task Force (Meehlhause and Rudney). She stated that they tried very hard to limit their focus and keep in mind UMM's liberal arts mission at all times.

A summary of recommendations was shared with the Committee. Carpenter stressed that online courses should be primarily taught by regular faculty, not adjunct, and they should embrace our liberal arts mission. It was agreed that the summer online program is running well, the question of whether to expand the online program further in the academic year was considered. Students want that flexibility to help them get through their undergraduate career. To have a successful program in the academic year, the courses must count toward the faculty member's regular workload, and there must be a need, expertise, and desire by the faculty members to teach online; it can't be mandated. We must keep in mind what UMM can offer that the internet cannot offer, such as mentoring students inside and outside of the classroom. A further recommendation is the need for a limit to the number of online credits that can count towards a UMM degree. We should not offer a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), because that's not who we are. Again, we must keep our mission in mind.

Carpenter stated that there is a desire to move ahead, but faculty don't feel they have sufficient support, training, or peer mentoring. Understanding that there are limited resources, Morris should consider leveraging the connection with the Center for Educational Innovation on the Minneapolis campus. They can help us with web-based tutorials and they can lead workshops. Carpenter stated that UMM should strengthen and expand ties with consortia as well. The infrastructure is also in need of an upgrade for online courses to expand. And finally, the only way progress will take place is when students and faculty drive it. That will require cultural changes as well.

Finzel thanked Carpenter for reporting on the work of the Task Force and stated that there is a lot in the report, some of which falls well outside of the Curriculum Committee. For example, online credits is a Scholastic Committee matter. Kildegaard stated that the general principal that online courses should be taught by fulltime faculty is good.

Finzel noted that he would support a limited number of online course credits that can count toward a UMM degree. However, when courses are transferred to us, there is no indication that a course was taught online. Helsper stated that for UMM online courses, the section number defines it as online. A letter could be added to the course number to define it as online on a transcript. Finzel asked Carpenter if any other institutions were trying to do this. She answered that the Task Force did not look at that.

Anderson stated that the Biology program has had students petition to have an online course count toward their major and almost invariably, the petition has been denied because elective upper level classes need to be classroom classes. She also noted the courses are often science courses with labs. Bezanson stated that in CMR, such petitions are almost invariably approved.

Barnstable asked if the Task Force looked at how students who have taken online courses at UMM have progressed through them. Carpenter answered that the Online Learning Coordinator, Chlene Anderson, prepared a special report in 2014 that was very detailed and data driven. Barnstable asked if it showed whether students are successful. It might be helpful to track the ramification of online classes in the future. Carpenter answered that it is not in the report. Bezanson stated that we don't want students to come to Morris with an associate degree from high school, expecting to get a UMM degree in one year. That's not the UMM experience.

Korn noted that with her experience as the transfer coordinator, when you hear the words "online" coming out of a student's mouth, it's usually out of desperation. Either there is a class conflict, or the student forgot to get a Gen Ed. It is her sense that students want to be in the classroom, and they are looking at online classes beyond what we are offering. Finzel stated that more often than not, students are looking at taking online courses elsewhere to seek courses to meet their degree requirements. Ng asked if the Task Force looked at how many online courses would be best. Carpenter stated that they did not come up with a magic number. They recommended ramping up the offering to four or five regularly offered courses. Finzel added that we have historically offered two or three courses, targeted at PSEO students.

Carpenter stated that the Task Force recommends increased staffing for training and help with more physical resources. Finzel noted that there is a student fee for online student courses to generate some revenue. If we grow the program, those resources will grow.

Carpenter stated that if anyone wants a copy of the full report she would be happy to provide it.

Submitted by Darla Peterson