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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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10-9-2015

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Recommended Citation

Curriculum Committee, "Curriculum minutes 10/09/2015" (2015). *Curriculum Committee Minutes*. 60. <https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/curriculum/60>

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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
2015-16 MEETING #3 Minutes
October 9, 3:30 p.m., MFR

Members Present: Bart Finzel (chair), Pieranna Garavaso, Peh Ng, Gwen Rudney, Tracey Anderson, Mary Elizabeth Bezanson, Stephen Crabtree, Emily Sunderman, Lauren Velde, Kerri Barnstuble, and Judy Korn

Members Absent: Sarah Ashkar, Jennifer Deane, Madison Hughes, Arne Kildegaard, Kellie Meehlhause, and Christi Perkinson

Visitors: Nancy Helsper

In these minutes: EDP Revisited; and Preliminary General Education Discussion

Announcements

Finzel announced that the committee will not meet on October 23. Curricular proposals will be considered at the next meeting, November 13, in time to make it on the December 1 Campus Assembly docket.

Approval of Minutes of September 25, 2015 Meeting

MOTION (Bezanson/Anderson) to approve the September 25, 2015 minutes. Minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote, with one revision.

EDP Revisited

Finzel announced that the plan to send out the EDP call for proposals was delayed because he received word that Morris is receiving grant funding for a Native American Student Success (NASS) Project. The grant includes substantial money for curricular development, and we can roll it into our EDP call for proposals as a fourth category, as we have done with the Cargill Foundation's SLF Program funding for sustainability and leadership. He asked for a motion to include the new priority.

MOTION (Garavaso/Bezanson) to add a fourth priority category for "Proposals that infuse significant Native American content into existing courses or programs." Motion was approved by unanimous voice vote (7-0-0).

Finzel noted that EDP brings \$18,000, Cargill brings \$12,000, and there is another \$18,000 from this grant. If we are not be able to spend \$18,000 on courses with Native American content, the PI of the grant, Hilda Ladner, will ask if some of that funding can go forward into the next year's EDP round. Rudney asked if some of that money could go toward transportation to tribal schools for students in field experiences. Finzel replied that EDP grants are used for salaries in support of curricular development, and not for implementation of the course. Anderson added that travel to a class site would be equivalent to lab expenses in a course and is not part of the course development. Finzel agreed and noted that since this is the only pot of money we have available for curricular development, it should be used to develop courses.

Preliminary General Education Discussion

Finzel stated that he was interested in having a conversation about the Global Village GER. During the open forums on Gen Ed that were held four years ago, a couple of themes came forward. One was addressed with the new Writing for the Liberal Arts (WLA) requirement, and another was Global Village. It consists of four categories, with only two of the four required. In addition to these, there were a great many ideas of what more might be included. Rather than talk about what the list might be, today's conversation is about the structure of the requirement. One of the four requirements concerns People and the Environment (ENVT). The environment is very important, yet the Gen Ed isn't required of all students. Human Diversity (HDIV) is also very important, yet it is not required of all students. It does seem that we should think about how we might make these requirements universal expectations of our students. The question for discussion is whether all four categories in Global Village should be required.

Bezanson stated that Global Village is confusing; none of the other GERs come under a thematic heading, and she doesn't see the connection between Global Village and ENVT. Finzel answered that Global Village does talk about an interdependent world, which is how ENVT fits under that thematic. Ng read the catalog description of ENVT: "To increase students' understanding of the interrelatedness of human society and the natural world." It's the human aspect that fits Global Village. The Global Village is "To increase students' understanding of the growing interdependence among nations, peoples, and the natural world."

Finzel asked the committee to focus on the number of requirements. There was a clear campus consensus that we already require a lot. Anderson stated that under quarters, student could use one course to count for multiple categories. If we increase the number of Gen Ed categories, we need to find a way to do that without expanding the GER component of graduation requirements. Helsper clarified that when courses carried multiple Gen Eds in the past, students could only choose one. Bezanson added that two students in a class could meet two different requirements by taking the same class.

Rudney asked whether we have enough courses in the existing categories, and if it's known how many students are already taking all four of the Global Village Gen Eds, and how many more have the requirements by their own choice? Korn answered that she imagined we have quite a few. Students ask why they can't have a course count on their APAS. The answer is that after two of the four are satisfied, APAS spits out any others. Rudney stated that there must be double-dipping between Gen Eds and major requirements. Bezanson added that if they play the game correctly, they can do that by choosing the Gen Eds that fit their major most closely, but that seems to take away the flexibility and fun of taking courses they wouldn't normally have taken. It might also get too big and require even more checklists. Anderson added that it presupposes excellent advising. Finzel stated that there are currently 12 requirements, excluding FL, requiring a minimum of 30-32 credits. Are there some classes that count as a Sci-L that could be double-listed? An example would be a lab science that is an environmental lab. Or, could there be an environmental economics course that is listed as a social science class? A strong rationale could be made for double-listing.

Rudney stated that we just removed Gen Eds from 3xxx-level and 4xxx-level courses. We could target these courses to add requirements. Helsper stated that we could target for EDP funding an

environment class that has a Native American infusion. Crabtree stated that adding Gen Eds to upper-level courses would result in fulfilling the Gen Ed purely within the major. Bezanson asked how many Ethical and Civic Responsibility (E/CR) classes we offer. Finzel noted that the lowest number of courses fulfilling Gen Eds are ENVT, followed by HDIV.

Ng cautioned that if this committee decides to go the route of double-dipping for the Global Village, checks and balances need to be in place to ensure that a course truly has sufficient content to meet the requirement of both Gen Eds.

Garavaso stated that bringing Gen Eds back to upper-level courses is not a good idea. We want to give a certain depth to Gen Ed Requirements, but if a student is required to take four courses instead of two, and we ask them to take an upper-level course, that would be too cumbersome. Sunderman stated that her secondary education and Spanish courses were prescribed. To take an extra course wasn't feasible within her schedule. Requiring a student to take an upper-level course for their Gen Ed takes them out of their cohort and with students who are taking it for their major. They are no longer there for an exploratory purpose. Velde stated that going from biology to English limited the amount of time to finish. She had taken her Gen Eds earlier and also took classes in the summer to make up for the time. Adding more Gen Eds would have complicated it even more.

Bezanson stated that we used to have a requirement that students had to take a 3xxx-level course outside of the division of their major. Science and math courses often came with prerequisites for the major. That requirement was ultimately dropped. Rudney remembers that students would complain about the prerequisites. The intent was to have an in-depth understanding of something other than your major.

Korn stated that she had created a chart to show how we differ from other campuses and MNSCU. In the area of global perspectives, Crookston, the Twin Cities, and MNSCU require all, but UMD does not require E/CR. The Twin Cities model has their core traditional historical liberal arts areas and these types are allowed to become a theme within those. They are not talking about double-dipping with those core areas, but the history course could study the civic rights and carry an E/CR. These themes roll up into the core. History is part of the core, and another history of the environment would be history that satisfies the environment. Everybody requires the critical thinking component. We are the only group that has an IC course. We are in the 4-credit system, so our Gen Eds add up faster than the others on the 3-credit system.

Ng noted that on the Twin Cities campus there is a counsel of liberal education that approves every course on the list. Finzel replied that on the Morris campus, it would fall on this body. There is always a challenge when new faculty come and want to teach an existing course. If they decide not to include adequate content, then the Gen Ed should be removed from the course.

Helsper stated that we dropped the requirement of a 3xxx-level course outside the major during semester conversion, when we went from 180 credits to 120 credits to graduate. We had to reduce Gen Ed requirements to make it happen. We want to be very careful. Our Gen Eds are at 60 credits and some majors have grown to 60 credits, leaving no room to explore.

Anderson stated that not all 3xxx-level courses with prerequisites enforce them. If the intent is to have students take prerequisites and move up to a 3xxx-level course, that's different from finding a 3xxx-level course without a prerequisite. Finzel stated that it has become commonplace nationwide that GERs are scattered throughout a student's career. We have students who do them their first two years and never come back to it. This proposal doesn't address that problem. Sunderman stated that a first-year student comes in with PSEO credits, and could take a 3xxx-level history class to fulfill the Gen Ed. That doesn't show that we are preparing our students.

Finzel asked if all four categories under Global Village should be required of all students. In a world where we double-dip or double-count, we would need good advising and a policing body. For some students we would be decreasing requirements. Adding two extra courses, but allowing double-dipping for persons late in their career opens up freedom with good planning. Anderson asked if double-dipping meant counting a single course in multiple categories. Finzel answered that only courses in Global Village, and only those four courses would be involved. He could imagine social science courses clustering the courses thematically. Velde stated that it would box some people in. Social Sciences and Humanities cover Global Village in different ways. There are not a whole lot of classes in the sciences in that area. In a major requiring a lot of classes and then having to take all four of the Global Village courses, would be an overload. Finzel noted that there are some ethics classes in science and math and environment.

Sunderman asked if double-dipping could be done with transfer credits. Korn answered that we do it all the time because of all the transfers coming from MNSCU. Her office is taking a look at our courses and our Gen Eds and how the syllabi fits.

Helsper stated that it seems we are lacking some data and suggested that we might want to pull out last year's graduating class and see, for example, how many math majors are getting their HDIV, and look at the data in many different ways.

Korn stated that she stumbled across a college that offers a minor in liberal arts. Another offers a minor in community leadership and engagement. It's pulling straight from our mission statement. A lot of Gen Ed requirements were building the minors with 3xxx-level courses fleshing them out. We so often think of Gen Ed as a checking-off list. If we could shape it in a different way, with different results, it would be cool if a student could have a Morris minor in community engagement.

The discussion will continue on November 13.

Submitted by Darla Peterson