

3-7-2016

Curriculum minutes 03/07/2016

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Curriculum Committee, "Curriculum minutes 03/07/2016" (2016). *Curriculum Committee*. 54.
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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
2015-16 MEETING #9 Minutes
March 7, 2016, 2:15 p.m., MFR

Members Present: Bart Finzel (chair), Pieranna Garavaso, Gwen Rudney, Tracey Anderson, Mary Elizabeth Bezanson, Stephen Crabtree, Kellie Meehlhause, Madison Hughes, Christi Perkinson, Lauren Velde, and Judy Korn

Members Absent: Arne Kildegaard, Peh Ng, Jennifer Deane, Sarah Ashkar, Emily Sunderman, and Kerri Barnstuble

Visitors: Matt Johnson, Mike Bryant, Ray Bowman, Tammy Berberi, Stacey Aronson, Melissa Bert, and Jeri Squier

In these minutes: Sport Studies and Athletics (SSA) Program Review Report (Ray Bowman, Mike Bryant, and Matt Johnson); Foreign Language proposal discussion

Announcements

Finzel announced the committee will meet next on the Monday following Spring Break.

Approval of Minutes of February 22, 2016 Meeting

MOTION (Bezanson/Crabtree) to approve the February 22, 2016 minutes. Minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Sport Studies and Athletics (SSA) Program Review Report

Finzel welcomed Matt Johnson, coordinator of SSA, football coach, and assistant athletic director; Mike Bryant, faculty member in Sport Management, and Ray Bowman, head athletic trainer. He reminded the committee that, as a conclusion of the program review process, the program representatives are asked to come to the committee to address the following:

1) distinctiveness of the program, 2) Curriculum link/relationship to other programs, 3) challenges of the program, 4) recent program innovations, and 5) program goals and objectives. SSA will be asked to return in 4 to 5 years to share the progress toward the goals expressed today.

Johnson began by stating that SSA is not a major. It's a wide range of classes that has three major goals: 1) the promotion of general fitness and wellness, 2) the Sport Management major, and 3) Coaching Certification. Currently 16 different instructors are working within SSA (all non-tenure-track, many of them athletic coaches).

One area of distinctiveness of the program is that many of the instructors in SSA are also coaches and mentors, providing a different relationship that is not just classroom related, but also takes on a coaching perspective. The SSA program provides community outreach opportunities and the program prepares students to be global citizens through the universal language of sport. National trends indicate students' interest in this area of study is growing rapidly. Prior to 2012,

the Sport Management major existed only as an area of concentration, a way for students to create their own major. Since the creation of the Sport Management major, declared majors have increased from an average of 3.5 per year to 46.3.

The SSA curriculum ties into many UMM Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). There are currently 12 different courses being taught that contribute to the following Gen Eds: SS, IC, SCI, SS, HDIV, and E/CR. The Sport Management major is interdisciplinary, with courses ranging over 6 different disciplines required for the degree. Only 28 credits are SSA courses.

Challenges for the program include the lack of tenure-track faculty. The addition of Mike Bryant has helped a lot by adding more teaching hours to the major. The necessity for experiential learning opportunities is challenging in Morris. Also, there is a challenge of negative perceptions of SSA. The program and courses aren't taken seriously. SSA is trying to address that.

Recent program innovations include new course offerings, including an IC course. The Intro to Sport Management course (SSA 2302) has been increased from 2 to 4 credits, and the amount of diversity course work has been increased. An evaluation is being done of who is teaching courses and whether the needs of students are met. A new hire of a full-time faculty position was made this year, and a sport-focused study abroad program has been approved.

Bryant stated that part of his charge was to help extend the Sport Management major into other areas. They are now in the position to develop two new courses, funded from the EDP program, that are designed to feed off our founding commitment to Native American community and culture. The intent is to work with other majors and encourage a partnership across campus. GWSS now offers a course that is part of the major. The long-term goal is to expand the socio-cultural focus in Sport. The IC course that the Curriculum Committee approved this year focuses on the Olympics, is offered every 2 years to coincide with an Olympic year, and brings an international perspective to globalized sport. The study abroad committee approved an SSA course to study abroad in Australia. We currently have no representation in that area of the world and more specifically, it will allow SSA to engage in indigenous work globally. They will work with indigenous youth there and incorporate the experience into the major. Bryant has taken students to the internship fair that the Twins host every fall, and he has mentored students into graduate school in a sport field program.

Goals and objectives of the program include a continued development of the alumni network, as well as data analysis to examine graduate placement, SLOs, alumni feedback, retention in the major, and GPA and academic progress of students in the program. Further development of the curriculum is also a goal. The major does not have a senior seminar. They would like to develop a capstone that consists of a research class or internship/practicum option. An important goal is the addition of tenure-track faculty.

Anderson asked if all of the coaching certifications were acquired by Education students. Johnson replied that the majority are.

Finzel asked if the program has thought to create more activities classes to promote the goal of fitness—to reach out and expand the number of options for the students to keep fit. Finzel noted that based on a 4-credit module, having some 1-credit course options in the area is really valuable. Johnson answered that it should be explored because fitness is a very important aspect of the liberal arts education. He has had an encouraging conversation with the athletic director to see if coaches could make it work with their course and coaching load.

Meehlhause asked if there are students who double major in other areas. Johnson replied that some Sport Management majors also minor in management. Bryant added that there are some double majors, but he couldn't recall the specific disciplines involved.

Revision of the Foreign Language General Education Requirement Discussion

Finzel stated that the Foreign Language (FL) Gen Ed requirement revision is very close to being finalized and he has asked professors Tammy Berberi (French) and Stacey Aronson (Spanish) to present their proposal for a preliminary discussion with the Curriculum Committee, since the proposed change will have fairly broad implications across campus.

Berberi stated that a workgroup has been discussing the proposed changes since May 2014. The changes include a name change within Gen Ed, from Foreign Language (FL) to World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (WLLC). Currently, students are required to have 2 semesters of language study or the equivalent. The proposal removes “equivalent” from the requirement. Students could no longer “test out” by means of a proficiency exam. The exam would be purely for level placement, and not exemption purposes. A lot of students who can exempt out actually like to study languages and continue anyway.

The change would impact students who come in with one semester of a language and do 1002 and 2001 at a minimum. With the change, another 15% of students who graduate from UMM without taking any foreign language at all would be required to take two semesters. They could take two semesters in a language they are competent in, or take two semesters of a new language. The change has almost no resource implications. Spanish gathered a lot of data and found the impact would be minimal. Within our comparison group of 10 schools, 7 have our current FL requirement, and 3 encompass more. In the aspirational group, 4 of 5 have a stronger requirement than UMM. CLA requires 4 semesters of language study. Berberi noted that it's not important just because of what she does in her vocation. We need to think of our liberal arts Gen Ed program as more than a checklist you have to complete before you graduate. A lot of Americans have a fixed mindset about languages or math and say “I am not a language person” or “I am not a math person.” The requirement would foster growth from the mindset of “I don't do well in this area” and “I won't do this if I don't think I will do well.”

There is new research in language study about the so-called golden period when 3-year olds absorb language seamlessly and perfectly. That has been debunked by theories of adult neuroplasticity. Lots of emerging research shows that exactly what we do here is very good for young adults.

Finzel asked if the 7 institutions in our peer group who have similar programs to ours allow an exception. Berberi answered that they very likely use the exact same placement test that we use, and require two semesters or equivalent. In our aspirational group of 5 schools, Kalamazoo requires 3 semesters or equivalent, St. Olaf and Macalester require 4 semesters or equivalent, DePauw is similar to ours, and Coe and St. Mary's College of Maryland require one 3- or 4-credit course.

Bezanson asked what number of people would be affected by the change. Berberi answered that in a five-year span of graduates, 229 took no language whatsoever, out of 1,564 total students. Garavaso added that between 30-40 students currently take no language at all.

Anderson stated that this change would still offer some possibilities for exemptions for students with sufficient AP, CLEP, or IB exam scores, transfer of 2 semesters of college credits, or if English is not the student's first language. Berberi stated that the rationale for allowing the exam and transfer credits is because the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MTC) requires us to accept them. Korn replied that the Scholastic Committee makes the decision whether to accept AP classes, and foreign language is not part of the transfer curriculum for the official MTC (the agreement across MNSCU and the University of Minnesota). Berberi stated that they understood as a group that MTC implied that they were a part of it, and they don't want to distinguish themselves to that degree. Anderson noted that we already do that with WLA. Even a transfer student has to take WLA. Berberi stated that even those students that get a good score of 73% or above and test above 2101 level choose to continue on their own. It isn't very many that test out. Anderson replied that she wouldn't base a requirement on what most kids do. You want a requirement that they do two additional semesters above their level of proficiency. Why is AP treated differently by the Scholastic Committee? Korn answered that not all high school programs are AP. Berberi stated that they could revisit that, now that they know that the MTC does not apply. Requiring two semesters from the starting point seemed a bit bold. Accepting AP scores was seen as custom. Anderson replied that Biology does not accept them in the major. Korn noted that we accept AP because the professors review the courses that are substituted.

Hughes asked if there were any concerns about incoming freshmen who have a proficiency, are placed in an upper level class, and find it jarring for them. Aronson stated that we have a lot of students coming in as freshmen with 2nd or 3rd year proficiencies. If a student states that they don't want to take any more language, they have to do it and get it done because it's a requirement. It is an interesting benefit to have students continue to stretch themselves. Berberi added that they do have the option to take the beginning level in another language. Finzel noted that the committee talked about this last fall. The intent is to try to incent students to stay with a language by adding a value to the student who takes a 3xxx-level sequence rather than a 1xxx-

level sequence. Berberi stated that one way to add value would be to do something similar to a program called FLAC (Foreign Languages Across the Curriculum), where a student enrolls in a 1- or 2-credit directed study doing work in one area of study (fine arts for example) and then works in conjunction with a language like Spanish as part of a capstone. This has been done by request, but not on a programmatic level at UMM. Aronson stated that it would utilize a whole lot of human resources we don't have.

Rudney stated that she was curious how the proposal is resource neutral. Berberi answered that the proposal spreads enrollment across classes that are electives and have a lot of seats in them. A lot of students who do a directed study continue beyond the 1002 level. A large percentage of personnel power is given to fulfill the Gen Ed in French, and then the students are gone. In German Studies it's the same. When framed as a requirement that some students don't have to do, it's hard to shake the mindset of doing no more than what you have to do. Enrollment in the languages is concentrated in the first year structurally. Rudney asked if it would mean taking seats in classes that are under-enrolled. Aronson answered that Spanish has more flexibility to structure resources to accommodate the additional seats. The only place where they may potentially need an extra section is in intermediate level I in Spanish. But with some restructuring, no resources will be needed.

Perkinson stated that she is a Spanish major who tested into the 3xxx level. Bezanson stated that Perkinson is also exceptional with four majors. Would other students be turned off by this notion? Would it affect whether students will take classes in high school if they know that they wouldn't count? Would it affect students wanting to come to Morris? Perkinson answered that a lot of students who come here understand that we have a large range of requirements. A lot of languages pair very well with other majors, especially marketing or business.

Hughes stated that she tested into the 3xxx level and took two semesters anyway. She did not think it would be a deterrent. Berberi stated that students without language backgrounds would still take two semesters at the beginning level. That's what 38% of students already do. It's not a jarring change.

Velde noted that when explaining language placement tests to students when giving a campus tour to prospective students, she is asked if their high school language will allow them to test out. She does not think everyone would see it as a great thing, even though it's not a completely different system that is proposed.

Anderson stated that, on behalf of biology students who may not be coming in with language proficiency, they will need to get into biology or chemistry their first semester. If their math skills are hit-or-miss, they often take a math course their first semester, and then IC, and WLA their first or second semester. Language instructors may not be seeing students beginning any language for 6 months to a year after they arrive. The problem would be similar in math. A student in that situation may wait until the junior year and take sign language. The point being that it might not affect all students equally. Berberi answered that they think a lot about how to

get students to start as soon as they can, before it loses its allure. Students can meet with the language faculty to talk about ways to get it done fitting the restrictions of a major. Aronson stated that they get a lot of Biology and Spanish double-majors.

Crabtree stated that he was one of the students who came in and had to do a freshman seminar, math class, chemistry class, and placed out of Spanish so it crossed it off his list. Most definitely science majors having to enroll in entry level biology, chemistry, and math, languages are far out of their minds. His advisees have put it off until their junior or senior year because there are essential sequential classes that are needed in the major. Aronson noted that when a student takes a placement exam as an incoming freshman, it's no longer valid if they wait until they are a senior. Korn added that it's only good for a year. Finzel noted that this proposal doesn't increase the requirement. Majors should be thinking about this when designing their own program. It appears we have a problem with students meeting their current expectations.

Berberi stated that students should be taking the skills Gen Eds early on. She would advise the same for science majors. Anderson answered that they would be here 5 years. Berberi added that it feeds the mixed mindset of how hard and less useful language is.

Velde stated that for non-major languages, if a student tested out of the 1xxx level and then took the two required semesters, it would cause a burden on faculty in those languages to do directed studies or more. Berberi answered that data shows that over a 5-year span, no students came in with a competence above the 1002 level in non-major languages. Students know this is not the university to come to for a Latin major. They could continue using study abroad, directed studies, National Student Exchange, etc.

Korn stated that she contacted the APAS team on the Twin Cities campus. It will not be an easy change in APAS but they do anticipate a lot of exceptions and exemptions. She suggested that we state the requirement as two semester in sequence, if that is the intent. Anderson stated that another suggestion would be to state the number of credits required to fulfill the Gen Ed. Berberi stated that in French they would say 8 credits. Aronson stated that Spanish has some 2-credit courses at the advanced level.

Finzel thanked professors Berberi and Aronson and stated that there are a couple of suggestions to roll into the proposal. The question of sequence and the credit count should be clarified before bringing the proposal back to the committee.

Submitted by Darla Peterson