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University of Minnesota, Morris
Campus Assembly Minutes

April 30, 2004

The Campus Assembly met on April 30 at 4:30 p.m. in the Science Auditorium to discuss the Variable Topics Courses as presented below.

At the October 15, 2003, meeting, the Curriculum Committee resolved to revise the policies that currently regulate those courses known as Variable Topics Courses. It had come to the attention of the committee that courses presented under the rubric of Variable Topics had become permanent parts of the university curriculum without ever having been approved by the Committee or by the Campus Assembly. The principle of Variable Topic was to assist disciplines in adding courses without having to await the potentially lengthy process of approval through the Curriculum Committee. Nevertheless, this benefit is out-weighted by the institutional need to have broad-based scrutiny of course offerings. As well, the provisional course approval process guarantees that reasonable proposals can be approved within a matter of days. As a result, the major reasons for the existence of the Variable Topics courses no longer reach the level of importance necessary to continue the practice. Therefore, the Committee approved the following policy:

I.   All courses must receive Curriculum Committee approval (either provisional or regular) before being offered.
II.   Courses receiving provisional approval would remain active for the duration of the current catalog. If a course is to be offered beyond the current catalog, it must be presented to the Curriculum Committee for regular approval in time for Campus Assembly approval, to allow inclusion in the next catalog.
III.   All variable topics courses (xx00) with either be converted to course cluster headings or be eliminated from the catalog, as each discipline thinks best.
IV.   New course cluster headings must be approved by the Curriculum Committee before being included in the catalog.

Fritz Schwaller said this would be a very helpful tool to have because there have been courses that were added within the discipline that did not go through the Curriculum Committee and Campus Assembly. He also believes it would provide clarity for students as they look at our catalog. Mary Elizabeth Bezanson asked how we will deal with provisional courses. Schwaller said in the same manner we do now. He added that we are confronted with calendar issues because this is a bulletin year and the catalog copy must be in the Twin Cities by December. Harold Hinds expressed concern about the lack of attendance today and noted that he is aware that two of his colleagues could not attend the meeting but he thought they would be opposed to this. Leslie Meek asked if he knew why they were opposed. Hinds said he could not speak on their behalf. There was some concern that the term variable topics looks more official when listed in the catalog. Schwaller said the essence of the argument is that the Curriculum Committee is asking that all courses go through them for provisional approval. Pete Wyckoff noted that this was presented from the Curriculum Committee unanimously and he called the question. Schuman asked for a voice vote for all those in favor of approving the motion. Motion carried.

Adjourned at 5:15 p.m.