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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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### Curriculum minutes 05/02/2016

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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE  
2015-16 MEETING #13 Minutes  
May 2, 2016, 2:15 p.m., MFR

*Members Present:* Bart Finzel (chair), Pieranna Garavaso, Arne Kildegaard, Peh Ng, Gwen Rudney, Tracey Anderson, Mary Elizabeth Bezanson, Stephen Crabtree, Jennifer Deane, Kellie Meehlhause, Lauren Velde, Kerri Barnstuble, and Judy Korn

*Members Absent:* Madison Hughes, Christi Perkinson, Emily Sunderman, and Sarah Ashkar

*Visitors:* Melissa Bert, Lisa Bevevino, Stephen Gross, and Nancy Helsper

***In these minutes: Action on Foreign Language (FL) Gen Ed Requirement: World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (WLLC); Further limited (due to time constraint) discussion on Medieval Studies Major/Minor Proposal***

### **Announcements**

Finzel announced that this is the final meeting of the year. Minutes recorded today will be sent out electronically within a week or so, asking for electronic approval. He thanked Lauren Velde, who is graduating, for her work on the committee. [Emily Sunderman, who is student teaching this semester is also graduating.] All faculty will be returning to the committee next year.

### **Approval of Minutes of April 18, 2016 Meeting**

MOTION (Kildegaard/Garavaso) to approve the April 18, 2016 minutes as presented. Minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

### **For Action: Revised World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (WLLC) Proposal**

Finzel stated that there have been people very hard at work to address the concerns that the committee and the Scholastic Committee have communicated about the proposal. He had communicated with the chair of the Scholastic Committee, Professor Stephen Gross, who is attending this meeting. Ng asked if Garavaso would recap the rationale for the proposal.

Garavaso stated that a proposal similar to the one that is considered today was approved by the Humanities Division with a vote of 28 in favor and 1 abstention in February 2016. The goal is to make the requirement for a world language more rigorous and more in line with other colleges and institutions of higher education that are comparable to UMM. The proposed change is especially important in light of UMM's mission to educate global citizens. Global citizens can understand other cultures and hopefully also other languages and systems of thought. The new proposed requirement remains lower than the Twin Cities College of Liberal Arts (CLA) requirement of 2 years of a foreign language. The division feels strongly that college students should not satisfy a college level requirement with high school level study.

This proposal allows for a more rigorous requirement without requiring an increase in resources. This can be done with at most the possible addition of one section of Spanish. French and German will not be affected as the hope is that more students will be encouraged to take intermediate and advanced level courses to satisfy this requirement. There are spaces in those courses. The number of students who would need to take 1 or 2 additional courses they wouldn't have to take under the current requirement, is small. Korn stated that 24% of the students would be impacted by the new proposal.

Garavaso stated that she received a list of 13 questions from the Scholastic Committee today, some of the concerns that have been raised in opposition to the proposal itself have less to do with the proposal than with procedure. For example, she has been told that this committee should not make a proposal to change a Gen Ed Requirement without first consulting with the Scholastic Committee. That concern doesn't have anything to do with the value of the proposal. It has been pointed out to her that because of the new requirement, the Scholastic Committee policy will have to change. That may be true, but that is the purview of the Scholastic Committee and has no bearing on the authority of the Curriculum Committee to propose a change to the Gen Ed. The Scholastic Committee should be at the table when the decisions of this committee are made (by the ex-officio membership of the Registrar), but it should not impact the vote of this committee. The proposal as presented is the motion that should be discussed today. Finzel asked for the motion to continue the discussion.

MOTION (Garavaso/Bezanson) to amend the FL Gen Ed Requirement to require completion of a minimum of 8 credits in a world language or demonstrated proficiency equivalent to two years of college study.

#### DISCUSSION:

Ng stated that FL is not the only Gen Ed that can be met with high school course work. Math and science courses can be used to meet UMM Gen Eds. Korn added that the same is true for HIST 1101. Students who come in with skills can take a special exam overseen by Scholastic Committee procedures. Students can take a proficiency or placement exam with discipline approval. The special examination procedure in the Scholastic Committee exempts language from that kind of testing.

Korn stated that the second way a student can meet the WLLC requirement in the proposal refers to "UMM's proctored placement exam; or achieving a sufficient AP, CLEP, or IB examination score." The Scholastic Committee oversees that kind of test score and is having a discussion on CLEP now that may impact AP and IB, so assumptions made about it in the proposal may not be true. Gross added that the statement Korn quoted refers to a "sufficient....score." The Scholastic Committee determines the scores that it will accept for Gen Ed, so he wondered what was meant by "sufficient." Garavaso answered that the Scholastic Committee can ask the discipline what is sufficient. Gross stated that the Scholastic Committee may not concede to the discipline's answer. Finzel stated that the Curriculum Committee can propose a higher general education

requirement. This proposal requires that a student have proficiency to two years of college study before being exempted from the required 8 credits. The current requirement calls for only one year. The Scholastic Committee can interpret what the equivalent of the requirement is, but the setting of the Gen Ed is not that committee's purview.

Gross stated that the new requirement seems to be an arbitrary sliding scale. One student can take 2 semesters of 1xxx-level coursework and others are doing work that's more extensive. Deane stated that is the same with most Gen Eds, for example HIST can be satisfied by a 1xxx-level course or a 2xxx-level course.

Barnstable stated that a lot of GER is satisfied by taking one course. Korn added that a small group of students will be required to take a 3xxx-level course if they place at that level by exam. Finzel replied that students can meet the requirement in one of four ways. If they place at a 3xxx-level, they have satisfied the requirement. Korn noted that they would have to take the extra step of taking a proctored exam in order to satisfy it. Gross stated that part of the purview of the Curriculum Committee is to set policy that guarantees students do what they need to do to be liberally educated. Part of the purview of the Scholastic Committee is to make sure students don't have to do something they've already done. Garavaso replied that the point of this proposal is to encourage students to challenge themselves. We aren't asking them to do what they've already done.

Rudney noted that she does not see the proposal as requiring students to take a 3xxx-level course. There are four options for students to fulfill the requirement. The first option lists three ways in which UMM coursework can satisfy the requirement. We have a commitment of increasing knowledge in language and a student can prove it by an increased in-depth study in a language they already know, or by taking another year in a different language at a lower level. No one will be required to take a 3xxx-level class unless they choose to do so.

Kildegaard stated that the initial proposal started out as an experience-based requirement of 8 credits. Then, there was a concern about heritage learners, and it was hiked up to include a 3xxx-level course. Then, the CLEP, IB, and AP examinations were added, so there's competency at both ends, and at the middle is the experiential aspect. Now that we have competency in the language at either end of the spectrum, it's a harder sell.

Anderson stated that she does not dispute the value of a foreign language, but to have a sliding scale, where one year at the introductory level satisfies the requirement but if the student passes the intro level then that's not good enough and they have to take more. That's a double standard. Crabtree agreed and said that it requires a higher level of competency of someone who has proven they have a higher level of competency. Garavaso replied that if the current requirement stays as it is, we are not rewarding anyone and not encouraging anyone. The proposed requirement does not penalize a student, but rather is acknowledging that the student has knowledge and is helping them to move on and do even better. The students still have the opportunity to take 2 semesters of a college level language. If we want to be consistent, we should require 4 semesters of language.

The prior discussion revealed that we aren't even able to have one extra course for 10 or 20 students. This is a pragmatic proposal to have a student do a year of language starting from the level they are at. Ng noted that CLA is not asking for a number of ways students can meet their requirement. They have an ending point that everyone has to achieve. We can't require 4 semesters, for a number of reasons, but with this proposal, students can come in at whatever level they are and it's OK if they only do 2 courses at the 1xxx level. That does not convincingly satisfy the global village requirement.

Kildegaard stated that, once again, we started out requiring 8 credits of language on this campus. The Scholastic Committee said there has to be a "competency off ramp." Now science and math is saying your competency is not consistent. Finzel stated that consistency is a nice thing, but is it the most important thing? This is a way to improve what we are doing, within our resources. Gross stated that students will see it as a fairness issue and it will scare admissions.

Rudney stated that she is starting to like the original proposal better and better. Our commitment was a year's college growth in language: wherever a student enters, our general education requirement will grow their competency. We based it on where the students were. Garavaso agreed that the original proposal was simpler because it required one year of language. If a student comes to Morris with no language, they take one year. If the student has prior knowledge, they take one year. Everything else has been added to the proposal because of the Scholastic Committee issues.

Anderson stated that a number of people had expressed concerns about looking at the FL proposal in a vacuum, rather than looking at the bigger picture of the global village requirement. Bezanson stated that it is important that this campus can demonstrate that we admire, accept, and celebrate the notion that not every human being speaks English. The proposal is complicated, and questions should be raised, but the core values of this proposal can be explained. Kildegaard stated that in an earlier version there were a number of "WHEREAS" statements. That formatting would help make this proposal look less like a turf grab for Gen Ed space. Finzel noted that the justification for the proposal will be included when it goes to Campus Assembly.

Korn proposed that we say "by proficiency exam, by transfer credit, and by petition," and let it move forward. If approved, the Scholastic Committee would do its work to determine how each of those three would work. Finzel stated that it might be a good idea. The descriptive language is included because it's in the catalog. By including it, it signals to the Scholastic Committee that all things remain the same, except we require proficiency equivalent to 2 years of college study. Numbers 2, 3, and 4 of the proposal are all current catalog content.

Crabtree stated that for fairness, all students will need to do this. We need a good rigorous language requirement but the idea of coming in with one language and having to take 8 credits more of language is less appealing than fulfilling the requirement by placing into a 2xxx level and putting those 8 credits toward pursuing a second major instead of a second language. Garavaso agreed, but as a campus we may choose whether we want students to have 2 majors or instead

have 1 or 2 majors as well as the ability to understand language and culture, making them global citizens.

Korn stated that she would like students to be excited and encouraged to study language, but only a few students will be impacted by this change to the GER. The proposal's goal of wanting to make the requirement more rigorous applies only for a few students. Students choosing to continue in a language on their own accord is quite different than being forced to take those courses. Bezanson replied that 24% is not a few students; it's a lot of students.

Garavaso stated that the point of this proposal was to tell students that we value what many of them are already doing. By making a GER we stand by the choice of those who already do it. We are attempting to change a culture in which students try to exempt out of the foreign language. We are trying to make it an important part of each student's education.

Gross asked if the Scholastic Committee would have a chance at the proposal if it passes the Curriculum Committee. Finzel replied that if the proposal passes this committee, it would go to the Assembly.

VOTE: The motion to approve the motion as presented was approved by a vote of 7-1-2.

### **For Further Discussion: Medieval Studies Major/Minor Proposal**

Finzel welcomed Professor Bevevino to the meeting and apologized that there are only two minutes remaining for this agenda item, but stated that it would benefit the committee to have lingering concerns addressed before further discussion on the proposal is done in the fall when the proposal will come forward for action.

Deane stated that there was a concern about a lack of a single methodology course in the program. She explained that the faculty involved in this proposed major realized that Medieval Studies is fundamentally interdisciplinary, using multiple methodologies. Any medievalist who teaches it will be interdisciplinary. There is a strong thread through the courses. Meehlhause asked if, since it is highly interdisciplinary, would there be limits on the number of credits that can count toward the major/minor from any one discipline. Bevevino answered that a limit is built into the major since there aren't enough medieval courses in any one discipline to make it unbalanced. Meehlhause said that could make a double major very attractive to students.

Finzel stated that the discussion will be revisited in the fall.

Submitted by Darla Peterson