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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

2016-17 MEETING #15 Minutes

April 17, 2017, 2:30 p.m., Moccasin Flower Room

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

Members Absent: Jessica Gardner, and Stephanie Ferrian

Visitors: Nancy Helsper, Janet Ericksen, and James Wojtaszek

In these minutes: Global Village Task Force Update; and Spanish Program Review

Announcements

Finzel stated that the committee can expect to discuss the Global Village Task Force Proposal for the remaining meetings of the semester.

Approval of Minutes from Meeting #14, April 3, 2017

MOTION (Garavaso/Deane) to approve the April 3, 2017, minutes. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Global Village Task Force Update

Finzel welcomed task force member Janet Ericksen to the meeting and thanked the task force members for the work they accomplished under a tight timeline. Ericksen stated that the task force began its work by reviewing minutes of the Curriculum Committee, results of the student forum, and division meetings on Global Village. They looked at what was said about the existing Global Village requirement and found strong support for keeping its content areas. They also found that all four areas of Global Village are important to the campus. Task force member Barry McQuarrie had run some data that showed which existing classes fill those categories now. The goal was to suggest improvements in the least disruptive way. Although people want to keep the four categories, they also did not want to increase the number of Gen Ed courses students are required to take. They focused on clarity, equal importance, and easy assessibility. They consulted broadly with faculty who are currently teaching in Global Village, asking how their syllabi might work with the new proposed requirements. They also met with staff in the Office of the Registrar.

Deane stated that they walked through the benefits and challenges of the proposed approach. In the proposal, the General Education program has four distinct pieces:

- 1) IC
- 2) Liberal Arts Skills
- 3) Liberal Studies: Ways of Knowing
- 4) Integrated Liberal Studies: Making Connections

The fourth category, Integrated Liberal Studies, would break into four areas:

- A) U.S. Cultures and Connections (currently Human Diversity)
- B) International Cultures and Connections (currently International Perspectives)
- C) Environmental Stewardship (currently People and the Environment)
- D) Ethical Reasoning and Civic Engagement (currently Ethical and Civic Responsibility)

Deane stated that in working through the Global Village changes, the proposal affects more than simply Global Village. They worked to reduce the categories to four, with language that reflects our Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), and our mission. She noted that the Gen Ed program requires an ongoing revitalization of its structure, but the task force was given a more specific charge and focus.

The language of category 3, “Liberal studies: Ways of Knowing,” refers to specific disciplines and particular methodologies. These provide an introduction to disciplines. The larger change is focused on the 4th category, “Integrated Liberal Studies: Making Connections.” These are more advanced courses, and for the most part, are 2xxx- and 3xxx-level courses where the focus is not only on distinct methodology, but also synthesis across fields of knowledge or kinds of analysis. The only way to think through solutions is to have classes that address both Ways of Knowing as well as Integrated Studies.

A clear path to identify/approve courses that would satisfy category 4 would need to be established, such as an explanation of what is being synthesized, how the requirement is being met, and perhaps a draft syllabus. Over time, it would become a straightforward process, but it would be necessary at the outset that this body have a clear understanding of what will satisfy those requirements.

The task force proposes keeping the four categories under what was formerly known as Global Village, and wants students to take each one of them. Each category has been redefined to reflect the way courses are currently being taught. They have taken into account recommendations and the will of the campus, alignment with parameters, no increased classes, and an equitable distribution of Gen Ed across campus.

Elinson presented the perceived benefits of the proposal. This strongly addresses the mission of the campus which refers to all four categories. This is a clear way for students to understand the goals of the campus and will help instill in students the desire to focus on areas of study and how it relates to the context in which they live. For students, it’s a more accessible program because it offers a broader range of courses for students to take over a broader area of study. It also distributes Gen Ed more broadly across campus and provides more pathways rather than obstacles to graduation. And finally, from a student’s point of view with the recent MCSA statement in mind, there may be more opportunity for students to take courses in environmental studies or Native American and Indigenous Studies. Also, Native American sports could possibly be integrated into liberal studies. Deane added that the feedback from the Social Sciences division showed a lot of concern regarding faculty of color having to provide the majority of HDiv courses. This proposal can alleviate that burden a bit.

Garavaso stated that she liked the proposal but was concerned about using the term “Ethical Reasoning” in category D. (It was originally titled “Ethical and Civic Responsibility” and would instead be “Ethical Reasoning and Civic Engagement.”) This suggests there is a type of reasoning other than ethical. She would suggest keeping the original name or changing it to “Ethical and Civic Engagement.” Ericksen stated that the language came from the Learning Outcomes, which she pointed out was an explanation and not a defense of the choice of words. Finzel added that the Learning Outcomes refer to “Ethical Reasoning and Actions.” Perkinson stated that finding the appropriate words was a struggle for the task force.

Perkinson stated that another concern involves Advanced Placement (AP) credits. The integrated requirement is really unique to Morris. It might be hard for people to fulfill them outside of Morris and it would be difficult to verify the synthesis. Deane added there is obviously a systems angle to consider as well. Korn pointed out that AP decisions with respect to general education requirements would be made by the Scholastic Committee.

Perkinson stated that in the four different areas you can have a 1 and a 4, a 2 and a 4, but not a 4 and a 4 in the same class. This would create more upper level 2-credit classes. This would not be a barrier for students to graduate. It would provide more options for students to try out different areas.

Barnstable stated that when students work with advisers and mentors to make action plans, they sometimes go to the class option and pull up an attribute. She appreciates the complexity and thinking creatively about what can happen all at once; because of limited tools, different students will get through this in different ways. She asked how courses can be identified and selected. Korn answered that the Twin Cities campus has a core of 8. They use Schedule Builder and Core selection tool.

Deane stated that we shouldn't go back to using the term “double-dipping” and need to find a way to reframe what these courses are doing. Double-dipping is a negative term and what they are proposing is different from double-dipping. Garavaso agreed that it is very different. The proposal involves integrated learning. Bezanson asked if allowing a course to meet two Gen Ed requirements in this way could lead to another course meeting two other requirements. Perkinson answered that the difference is the immersive and integrative factors that show the two Gen Eds are more specifically combined. Korn stated that on the Morris campus “double-dipping” has a negative connotation and it is seen as getting away with counting a course twice. On the Twin Cities campus students are encouraged to do so. The students don't see it as getting by with something. It's simply the way their system is set up. Bezanson noted that if we take this path double-dipping will have to be brought up as a separate issue at Campus Assembly. Ng stated that if it's described as its own combined category, instead of categories 1, 2, 3, and 4, it would be also categories 2+4 and 3+4. That's the big picture of the proposal. It will mitigate the notion of double-dipping. Ericksen stated that it makes sense and it is their intention. Bezanson stated that the fourth category, Integrated Liberal Skills, should be saved for the double Gen Eds.

Barnstable stated that there are Gen Ed courses that aren't open to everyone. For instance, Geology has 3xxx level courses with Gen Eds that students can't get into without instructor consent. Faculty have put a safety belt in place, but we don't really have as many Gen Ed courses to choose from as we say we have. That's another place where we need to up the dialogue.

Crabtree noted that if we envision encouraging double-dipping as they do on the Twin Cities campus, would faculty and advisers be inclined to advise students to take a course that will combine the Gen Eds rather than advising them to take a, b, c, and d? If so, would the enrollment go down in those courses that aren't combined? Barnstable stated that if they don't encourage it, then the student will need to take more credits. You do need to encourage students to move through it in a strategic way. Finzel added that it would critically depend on the program.

Kildegaard asked if the discussion can continue before a vote is taken. Finzel stated that he would bring a catalog copy of the proposal to the next meeting where discussion will continue.

Spanish Program Review Report

Finzel welcomed James Wojtaszek, discipline coordinator and associate professor of Spanish. 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. Spanish will be asked to return in 4 to 5 years to share the progress toward the goals expressed today.

DISTINCTIVENESS. Wojtaszek stated one distinct aspect of the program that came out of the program review was that, as a mid-sized discipline, Spanish provides an excellent balance and breadth of coverage for our Spanish majors and minors. Faculty are now evenly balanced between Latin American and Spanish specializations, and time periods and areas of expertise within those broad areas. Spanish also has a position dedicated to language methodology which includes practical components like a conversation table and various outreach initiatives.

Another distinction is that the faculty work together on covering the curriculum consistently and fairly, rotating course assignments and sharing work at all levels. Faculty are able to teach a course in their area of expertise every other year. The faculty are active researchers and have been successful in obtaining grants to fund their research. The faculty bring the research into the classroom as much as possible. They are also regular participants in student research programs like UROP and MAP. They send students abroad and help them identify programs that best meet their needs and interests. For the most part, students also reach a high level of engagement with community outreach programs.

Wojtaszek took a moment to clarify, on behalf of his colleagues, that some of the perceived gaps in coverage in the program—need for more culture courses, for example, or Latino content—are covered in various ways throughout the program, even if not in designated courses. There are ways to expand and improve these areas, but they are not ignored the way it may seem from the outside or by students who are still moving through the program. Culture and language are taught in a complementary fashion throughout, and literature is still one of the most effective ways to teach language, culture, and history together, far more efficiently than artificially separating them. They are doing far more than meets the eye.

LINKS TO CURRICULUM/GENERAL EDUCATION. Spanish provides a significant number of Gen Ed sections through the beginning and intermediate offerings as well as IC. A healthy number of double majors/minors see the value of Spanish as a complement to a number of fields, including education, sciences, political science, and psychology. Spanish provides coursework that contributes to LAAS and GWSS. The program is in a position to contribute to Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) going forward as well, if resources permit.

INNOVATION. Wojtaszek stated that extra-curricular programs, such as ESL, bring service to the community. The appropriate technology added to the classroom at all levels provides students with exposure to much that can help to prepare them for study abroad. He spoke with parents of a prospective student and was asked what kind of Spanish our students are learning, e.g., Spain, Latin American, etc. He reassured them that no one's language experience should be dependent on one person. The technological aspect can bring that in and maximize the broad variety of Spanish language and cultures.

GOALS. Wojtaszek listed the following goals for the Spanish program:

- They are currently working on assessment and improvement of the senior symposium capstone course, which will then require adjustments to core courses leading up to the 4001 level. Both of the newest faculty members are working on it this year—one teaching and the other “shadowing,” and they’ve been asked to come up with a wish list for what they’d like to see going forward, and how they can better get our graduating students to the level where we would like to see them. That will be the assessment focus.
- Spanish continues to look for ways to collaborate more with other language disciplines with the resources available to offer courses with shared content. Translation is a valuable practical skill shared by the languages. They could have a translation course that could be rotated, but they are not in a position to do so at this time. They would also like to collaborate in areas such as linguistics, theory, history, and an IC course on language issues could be shared with other disciplines. They are hoping to have a few options to offer in the 2019-21 catalog.
- They would like to find ways to add—pending resources—additional practical, more professionally-focused courses. It would take a lot of time to develop such a course, and unless it could be offered consistently, it wouldn’t be viable.
- They would like to formalize some of the “extracurricular” and currently optional components. They would love to encourage that, but in reality there would be a way to recognize extracurricular activities with credit. It gets tricky when you try to add it to the required curriculum without credit. They would need to have students consistently participate, which would require rotation among the faculty in coordinating the activities. The music discipline has concert attendance as a regular component of their curriculum and they make it happen. It makes a lot of sense and they are trying to find a viable way for the discipline to manage it.
- They would like to continue to offer IC courses but also find a way to participate in the honors program. Finding ideal course materials at all levels may necessitate creation of customized materials, but this, again, requires time and resources.

Finzel asked for questions from the committee. Bezanson suggested that a class in multiple languages focused on fairy tales would be interesting, told in different ways, with different cultural importance.

Korn asked if Wojtaszek was familiar with the software package that Student Activities uses called "Campus Connections." It may be a helpful tool to showcase a student's extracurricular activities.

Korn asked Wojtaszek to speak about the new exchange program with Mexico. Wojtaszek answered that the exchange program with the Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla (UPAEP), in Puebla, Mexico, is new and much of the planning for it happened in his absence. This is the first year of the exchange. Korn stated that it's a wonderful program and less expensive for students to study there. Wojtaszek noted that they want students to go to programs that fit the students. It is not clear how many students will go there and how many should go abroad. He is looking forward to seeing who comes here as well.

Finzel thanked Wojtaszek and adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by Darla Peterson