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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

2016-17 MEETING #17 Minutes

May 1, 2017, 2:30 p.m., Moccasin Flower Room

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

Members Absent: Gwen Rudney, Jessica Gardner, Christi Perkinson, and Stephanie Ferrian

Visitors: Janet Ericksen, James Cotter, Sylke Boyd, and Nancy Helsper

In these minutes: Environmental Science Program Review Report; and Discussion of Proposed Global Village Gen Ed Revision

Announcements

Finzel stated that it was the last meeting of the year and thanked everyone for serving on the committee. It was a very busy fall with the catalog cycle of course and program revisions. The spring was less intense but nonetheless productive.

Approval of Minutes from Meeting #16, April 24, 2017

MOTION (Bezanson/Meehlhause) to approve the April 24, 2017, minutes. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Environmental Science Program Review Report

Finzel welcomed James Cotter, professor of geology and advisory board member of the interdisciplinary ESci program. Sylke Boyd, associate professor of physics and advisory board member will join the conversation later. Cotter noted that Tracey Anderson, Curriculum Committee member and associate professor is also on the ESci advisory board. He explained that the ESci program came about as a result of two confluences. Chancellor Johnson saw an environmental emphasis in her vision of UMM. A call went out for programs that were innovative and entrepreneurial. At the same time, the National Science Foundation (NSF) was asked by Congress to increase the number of scientists. NSF started a program called Science, Technology, and Math (STEM) Enhancement Program. A call went out to institutions to come up with good ideas to encourage students to be science majors. An interest in the environment on this campus fit nicely with NSF and they gave UMM a half million dollars to offer an environmental science major and to encourage Native American students to participate. The NSF funding would put students in the dorms, provide research funds, and develop new courses for ESci. The program was approved and the major began in 2009. In year one, there 16 majors enrolled in ESci. Now there are around 60 students enrolled in the major. Its growth is impressive when you consider that the program is being run with three faculty to teach the senior seminar. Two Chem courses are rotated every two years. The program is built on an existing curriculum that faculty are teaching. The graduation rate was a concern, but they have been very successful graduating 4 or 5 students a year. Seventy-five percent of the students have graduated. Of those students, 28.78% have gotten a job in environmental science or have gone on to graduate school. Also, 2-3 Native

American students in the program have graduated. This puts us in the top 4 or 5 in the country. We are a success in being an institution that values the environment and serves Native American students.

Finzel asked what the program goals and objectives are going forward. Cotter replied that since the initial NSF grant, UMM has received two additional large grants. The first grant encourages Native Americans in the environmental sciences and includes a program for high school students. They are trying to partner with a tribal college for a summer program. Bridge programs would help bring a tribal college student to UMM. We had a partner from Red Lake College, but she left. They are now looking for a new partner. The summer program will continue. We have been successful in placing eight Native American students with the soils lab, WCROC, and with environmental consultants. We have contacts in the Twin Cities and have a scholarship program that will fund 20 students in the next six years. They receive \$24,000 in scholarship funds for STEM programs, based on need. This covers three-quarters of the financial need of a student. If FAFSA says they need \$8,000, the program will cover \$6,000. Internships will continue. With continued growth of the major they are looking to get an independent faculty member. There are currently two groups of faculty that make up “the family” that puts together the major. Since its inception, they have had a four-person ESci advisory board working with the ESci major in addition to their regular jobs in their respective majors. With a dedicated faculty member or two, it could be better. They had 36 students apply for the ESci program this year.

Bezanson asked if they have been thinking of looking at ways in which golf courses might require less water and have less of an impact on the environment. Cotter answered that there is a fellow in the Twin Cities working on green golf courses.

Cotter stated that the internships are for UMM students. The other programs are designed to get the students to come. Ng asked if the STEM scholarship covers fees or tuition. Cotter answered that he knows there are students in the program who are taking out loans.

Garavaso proposed questions that have been raised when other interdisciplinary majors have been designed, which is “what distinguishes this program in such a way to make it a major instead of a collection of courses?” “Do you see an intro course in the future?” Cotter answered that he will propose a faculty position in ESci. He also proposes, in its second year, a requirement of taking water courses. What ESci is good at is that individual disciplines aren’t combining water courses, fuel courses, etc., and students are choosing five electives that associate water with geology. The focus on water will help UMM graduates find jobs. The focus in the news is on water. The governor has declared a water year. Hiring a water position would be good. There is a push for a 2nd year ESci course that would be about hydrosphere and the environment. It will involve all the issues that are around water. It will also bring ESci students together to plan their electives cohesively. The cohesiveness is always an issue.

Garavaso stated that one issue the division chairs saw as a challenge was that the program requires too many credits. Would it be possible to divide it into tracks? Cotter answered that even with the number of credits required, students are graduating on time. He asked Professor Boyd to speak to the question of tracks. Boyd stated that ESci students do have tracks. Students choose an emphasis in biology or geology. One should realize also that some of the requirements are flexible in the credit load. Not everyone needs to max out and take what’s listed in the catalog. It’s not perfect, but it is very attractive to students. We have students coming to UMM because we have an ESci program.

Kildegard stated that this is a 72-76 credit major. He could not think of any other major on campus that requires more than 60 credits. Programs with such a high credit load tend to be in engineering science at Green Bay (100 credits) or Duluth (100 credits) and are staffed by faculty who offer specific courses. We not only can't do that, but here we prohibit students from taking courses outside of the sciences, with the exception of Gen Ed requirements. Cotter answered that if the question is should students do liberal arts, the answer is yes. This is a liberal arts education. He has no trouble convincing students or their parents that they should come here. We offer a small program, small classes, hands-on advising, internships, practicum, and a personal program at a very good school. Kildegard replied that there are 12-16 fewer credits that a student could be taking outside the major. Ng noted that the requirements are not all in one discipline. Kildegard stated that other liberal arts colleges are able to require fewer credits by offering tracks.

Crabtree asked how many ESci majors graduate with an additional major or minor. Cotter answered that up until last year, almost 50% have had double majors. That has dropped off. Crabtree asked if they were thinking of doing something with green energy. Cotter answered that a position was proposed two years ago and didn't get much support in the division.

Finzel thanked professors Cotter and Boyd for coming. ESci will be asked to return in 4 to 5 years to share the progress toward the goals expressed today.

Discussion of Proposed Catalog Copy of Global Village Revision

Finzel welcomed task force member Janet Ericksen to the meeting and stated that he didn't know if a consensus and vote could be reached in this meeting, but he did expect a lot of conversation. He began by making a few points on record:

- 1) The most criticism that he has heard about the proposed change was that it is too localized and should be considered in a broader review of the entire Gen Ed program. However, this was his choice, and it is what he asked the task force to do. Most institutions that undergo significant revision do so over a course of many years. It was his assessment that the faculty on this campus was not prepared for that, nor is it the right time to undertake such an effort with the enrollment challenges that would make many programs feel threatened.
- 2) The second criticism he has heard is that there are inequities in the proposal. Some students would take more credits or more courses than others. Those inequities exist in our current system because there are a variety of ways students can fulfill the requirement. It's true of our majors as well. Rather than an inequity, it is an opportunity for students to fashion their own program.
- 3) The third criticism is how the proposal treats the AP and transfer students. There is no mention in the proposal about how those courses would be treated. A 1xxx-level AP class may meet IP, HIST, etc. There isn't a change in this area. The only suggestion made by the task force was the extra piece of an integrated student component course that meets that requirement and also meets two requirements. Those would be subject to special review and those courses would not likely be transferred in. It doesn't mean that we won't accept them. Also, we aren't looking at a large number of students.
- 4) The fourth criticism is that the proposal is complex and hard to discuss. This is true. It is complicated. It creates challenges. That exists in our current Gen Ed program as well. We

have history courses that carry the HDIV. We have history courses that carry the HIST Gen Ed. Certainly the proposed change would have challenges as well.

Finzel then recounted the following benefits of the proposal that the task force has mentioned:

- 1) It encourages students to do more advanced work. The integrated studies piece would not be required by anyone. Students who want to do more would be rewarded by receiving two Gen Eds. Those who are thoughtful and want to get the maximum out of their education have the opportunity to do so. They have the opportunity to think harder, and reach deeper into the curriculum. That's what is accomplished by this proposal.
- 2) The second advantage would compel us all to think about the curriculum a little bit. It has gotten quite stale. This would make faculty think hard about what they do and think about synthesis, on a limited scale. This is not compelling faculty to rewrite their curriculum. This is creating an opportunity to think hard and to propose courses that might have a special place in the curriculum. It gives programs and faculty an opportunity to seize it if they want to do so.
- 3) As the task force noted, it ensures students will have exposure to four areas we call out in our mission statement and learning outcomes. That is a clearer message than what we currently have.
- 4) Finally, it does modernize the language and get rid of some archaic language. It's good thinking and would be a mistake to walk away from it altogether.

Garavaso stated that as she looks at it for advising students, they need to satisfy four requirements. They can look at 2-credit courses in each of the four areas for a total of 8 credits, or they may be able to have a 4-credit course that will satisfy category III and IV, and then have fewer courses to take but the number of credits will be the same. Bezanson agreed. Students will have a choice and the lowest number of credits, taking 2 credits in each category would be 8 credits. It would not be hard to explain.

Deane stated that she wasn't sure she could follow the implications of how it plays out. She sees Garavaso's explanation as having four pockets and a need to fill at least two of them. If a student is concerned about credits, it's not different. Kildegaard added that they still have to cover all four of the categories and could do it with the same number of credits or with eight additional credits.

Crabtree wondered which courses satisfy both category 3 and 4. How many have the same prereq in the category 3 field. Finzel answered that it is hard to know. There are some 3xxx-level courses that do not have prereqs. There are courses students should be taking. This would encourage students to take an advanced course in FL.

Ng stated that she consulted the faculty in the Division of Science and Mathematics. On record, the faculty appreciate the efforts of the task force in drafting the proposal. However, there was not even a niblet of support among the faculty and student reps for the changes as proposed.

Criticisms included that it contains more complexity and more requirements. There are concerns about double-dipping and whether there will be enough courses available to meet critical mass. They are also concerned with the limitation of connections, e.g., why should it only be between A-B-C-D? There are a lot of connections between other categories. And finally, the definitions of categories need wordsmithing. There was also a concern about environmental stewardship. They might not feel their classes could fit.

Garavaso agreed that the statements are too long and hard to follow, but if we don't make the change, we go back to the old language which doesn't fit a lot of courses already. We needed to do something. This proposal was a compromise. Kildegaard stated that it's much better than it was but the descriptions would need to be simplified.

Bezanson wondered if there would be enough seats on campus if students have to take two more classes. Finzel answered that we have evidence that shows that 90% of our students are taking 3 of the 4 now.

Finzel stated that Perkinson was not able to attend this meeting but shared her thoughts about our Gen Ed program. She imagines three pieces to our curriculum: Gen Ed, the major, and an open-ended opportunity Finzel has named the co-curricular experience. She imagines a pyramid, with IC as the introduction, then skills sets of foundation, then ways of knowing, and then making connections. Her idea resurrects the idea of a capstone in Gen Ed and gives the idea of laddering so Gen Ed is not fulfilled entirely with 1xxx-level courses, which she believes is a dated idea. Anderson stated that is a shame that the view of the capstone in the liberal arts can't be fulfilled in all of the divisions. It is focused in the social sciences and in the humanities now. Finzel noted that there are capstones across all majors now. Anderson explained that she was thinking in the context of our Gen Ed. All divisions should be able to contribute to our Gen Ed.

Meehlhause stated that we have the possibility of an abbreviation confusion with IC and ICC. We may want to entertain considering an alternative to ICC.

MOTION (Bezanson/Garavaso) to accept the spirit of the proposal of integrated liberal students making connections.

Ng stated that she appreciates the motion but accepting the spirit of the proposal is saying we approve the skeleton of this idea of changing Gen Ed, and not the details that require much more discussion.

The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0, with 4 abstentions.

Submitted by Darla Peterson