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University of Minnesota, Morris
Morris, Minnesota

MINUTES-1997-98 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING #4

November 25, 1997; 8:00 a.m.; Behmler Conference Room

Present: Asmus, Ballou, Beiswenger, Ellis, Kissock, Korth, Lee, Leroux, McIntosh, Nylander, Schuman, Taylor

Absent: Farrell, Frenier, Thielke

Guests: John Bowers, Karen Johnson, Roger McCannon, Nic McPhee

[In these minutes: approval of general education categories for political science quarter courses, discussion of GenEdWeb project, assessment of general education, semester materials defined as administrative or action]

QUARTER CURRICULUM CHANGE PROPOSALS:

Schuman asked CC members to consider the four curriculum change proposals from political science: Pol 1300 (add C2), Pol 3230 (add W), Pol 3267 (add W), Pol 3267H (add W).

MOTION (Kissock, Ballou): To approve the curriculum change proposals from political science: Pol 1300 (add C2), Pol 3230 (add W), Pol 3267 (add W), Pol 3267H (add W).

At this point, Schuman was called away from the meeting and turned the chair over to Kissock.

McIntosh wondered why these changes were being proposed now. Some of the changes are retroactive. He thought the CC should discourage retroactive changes. Kissock indicated that Lee, as Chair of the Division of the Social Sciences, would have an opportunity to answer McIntosh's question at a later time.

VOTE: Unanimous in favor (9-0-0).

[At this point, Lee arrived at the meeting.]

GENEDWEB PROGRAM:

Kissock reminded CC members that they should have received copies of a memo from McCannon, dated November 19, 1997, about GenEdWeb. McCannon is the Director of University College at Morris.

Schuman returned to the meeting and resumed the chair. He asked McCannon for comments on GenEdWeb. McCannon thanked the CC for inviting him and the GenEdWeb Steering Committee to the meeting. Kissock serves as faculty coordinator to the program. The statement in the 11/19/97 memo answers the question of how the GenEdWeb program fits with the mission of this campus. University College, formerly Continuing Education and Extension, administers the program. As background, McCannon said the idea for GenEdWeb started about a year ago when Ruth Thielke (the Registrar) sent an email message indicating that she was seeing a lot of institutions creating web-based courses and she wondered if UMM should get involved. The Dean picked up on this, had a more thorough discussion with interested people, and decided UMM should be doing this. Dan Granger, Director of Distance Education for the University of Minnesota, came out to UMM for a visit. Granger oversees the Distance Education Council which has funding for institutions wanting to get involved in distance education. UMM applied for and received a \$23,000 grant from the U of MN Distance Education Council, another \$30,000 was granted by the University College Program Innovation Fund, and UMM supplied an additional small amount of funding. The funding has been used for stipends for faculty to develop web-based courses. Six courses were developed over the summer of 1997. The total number of courses in the program will eventually be about 10, matching the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. When a student completes the entire GenEdWeb program, he or she will be given a certificate verifying completion of the MN Transfer Curriculum which

can then be taken to any college or university in Minnesota and used to meet the general education requirements at that institution.

McCannon said this project has been on a fast track. Of the six courses developed this past summer, two had enough enrollment to be offered this fall. Another five courses will be offered in the spring. All of these positions UMM and University College as players in the distance education market. Distance education is a priority for Mark Yudof, U of MN President, and Bob Bruinicks, Executive Vice President and Provost. More money is being made available within the University of Minnesota for web-based instruction. We need to build this into our campus planning statement. There are lots of student support issues and faculty issues involved with this project. There has been a steep learning curve. The 11/19 statement gives more background.

Schuman commented that this is an important project--one that he has supported from the beginning and that he continues to support. None of the people involved in the project is unambiguous. UMM is clearly the kind of institution that has as a core a very strong learning interaction between human beings sitting in the same room, etc., but Schuman also thinks that the kind of virtual learning represented by GenEdWeb is clearly an emerging, perhaps "emerged," element of extraordinary importance in American higher education. What has persuaded him to support the project is the scary thought that it is going to happen without us if we don't become involved. The University of Phoenix, with 60,000 students, didn't exist four years ago. It is a for-profit, computer-based institution. Schuman is convinced that if schools like UMM don't make a serious effort in this area, then it will be done for us and we will be swept aside. Our choice was to do this or to bury our heads in the sand and let it happen around us.

McIntosh said you can also spin it the opposite way. It is not the "best liberal arts institutions in the region" that are doing this. It is part of the schizophrenic nature of UMM to be doing this at all. UMM is the liberal arts campus of a major research university and it is the continuing education and extension branches of major universities that are providing web courses. Kissock said GenEdWeb is offered by a major research university. He is teaching one of the GenEdWeb courses. Quality is a key issue. Defining what quality consists of is not easy. If there is anything that UMM is, it is undergraduate education. In 32 years, this is the first technological tool that Kissock has seen that offers everything he needs. How do we try to use that? One of the first things the GenEdWeb faculty asked was whether they could use the web technology in their day school classes. Faculty are already asking to do that. We need to take the best of who we are at the same time we are moving toward the best technology.

Schuman noted that GenEdWeb is an experiment. All of the people involved in the project are watching to see how it goes. It is not a bad thing for UMM to experiment now and then.

Leroux asked if there was any limit put on the number of credits that students can earn in this way. Schuman said that most students would be transferring the credits in. McCannon corrected him: GenEdWeb courses are like UMM evening classes. If students complete all ten, then they will have met the general education requirements. Schuman noted that we have said that UMM students can't use GenEdWeb courses in place of a regular UMM class. McCannon said the intent was to offer this program to outside students.

Ballou wondered what the relationship of the GenEdWeb courses is to the Curriculum Committee. McCannon said the campus approves the courses in the normal way. The GenEdWeb program has not had to seek approval because all of the courses in the program have been approved previously. McCannon said he did not see GenEdWeb as a CC issue. The purpose of coming to the meeting was to inform people about the project. The GenEdWeb Steering Committee had offered to visit other campus committees as well.

Schuman said there was no more time for this discussion. He wondered if CC members wished to continue the discussion at another meeting. McIntosh remembered that the CC had set up a subcommittee 3-4 years ago to develop a policy on ITV courses. He suggested that the CC set up a similar subcommittee now to develop a policy on web-based courses. Schuman wondered if the Academic Support Services Committee (ASSC) should be asked to look at this issue. McIntosh thought it should be a short-term, ad hoc subcommittee of the CC. Schuman wondered if the CC wished to have McCannon present at the next meeting when this is discussed. McIntosh said he was sure Kissock could represent the steering committee.

ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL EDUCATION

: Schuman said the CC has had before it since the beginning of the month a request from the Assessment of Student Learning Committee (ASLC) to do something about the assessment of general education. People with long memories will recall that UMM was asked by the NCA (National Council for Accreditation of Colleges and Schools) to produce a proposal for assessment of student learning by June 1995. Dean Blake formed a committee which worked under time constraints to produce a proposal. UMM did not hear from NCA about the proposal for over a year. In summer of 1996, we heard that the proposal was rejected, partly because we needed to formalize an assessment of student learning committee. We have now done that. Bert Ahern is the Chair of the ASLC. The ASLC worked hard last year to revamp the UMM proposal. It did succeed. NCA was positive about this proposal and decided there would not be a site visit this year. Our next regularly scheduled NCA reaccreditation visit will be in 1999-2000. For that visit, we need to assess general education. We need to know if we are doing an effective job with that part of our curriculum.

Schuman said the ASLC believes assessment should be done by the unit responsible for the activity. There isn't a unit responsible for general education. Oversight of the program was by the General Education Committee, but we abolished that committee last month. So now, the responsible unit is the Curriculum Committee. The CC needs to work with the ASLC to figure out how to assess general education at UMM. This is a weighty task. Schuman suggested that it might make sense to form a joint subcommittee with the ASLC to take on this task. The subcommittee could have 2-3 members from the ASLC and a student, faculty member, and Division Chair from the Curriculum Committee. Another alternative would be to have every person teaching a general education course say how they are assessing the student learning in general education. Where does the CC wish to go with this?

Leroux wondered if the assessment was of how the course meets the general education requirements or how the student is learning in general education. Schuman said the assessment should be of student learning in the context of the goals of general education rather than the overall goals of the course. We need to study not whether the institution is teaching general education, but whether students are learning general education.

Kissock said we are being asked to assess things that he instinctively feels we cannot assess. For instance, in ELTAP, neither he nor the student involved will ever be able to tell someone exactly what they learned. Schuman said the assessment doesn't have to be quantifiable, although NCA does like to have numbers. Kissock suggested surveying students about whether the course helped them move on in liberal education. Schuman thought a focus group might work where students are asked what they learned. Kissock said whatever method is used, it will have to be subjective. Ballou suggested pre- and post-tests. It could be done randomly. There are ways to assess general education. One question is when to do it. It could be done on a pilot basis at the beginning.

Leroux thought the CC was thinking along the lines of having a committee do the assessment rather than having each faculty member do it. Schuman said he was interested in hearing from students. Nylander said she would not want to do be assessed for general education learning after taking 90 credits at UMM. At that point, she didn't have many general education courses. Taylor suggested surveying graduates about what they feel they have learned. Nylander said the survey could be sent to students after taking a general education course asking them if they felt the course fulfilled the requirements.

Kissock commented that the ASLC are experts on this. The CC could give them some suggestions about how to do it. Schuman did not think the ASLC would want this assignment. They might suggest a joint meeting so they could give the assignment back to the CC.

Leroux thought a general education assessment committee should have members from both the ASLC and the CC. Could we look at the 90 credits of GER alone, or would we have to look at how the general education courses work with the rest of the courses in a student's degree? Ballou suggested that the subcommittee gather ideas to present to the ASLC and CC. There is a short time line.

MOTION (Ballou, Nylander): To create a subgroup of the CC and ASLC to solicit ideas from across the campus and report back to both parent committees.

Kissock suggested keeping the subcommittee small--4 members. Schuman said he wanted three members from the CC.

VOTE: Unanimous in favor (10-0-0).

Schuman asked for student, faculty, and Division Chair volunteers. The following people volunteered: Taylor, Kissock, Leroux. Schuman said he would take this motion to the ASLC.

DIRECTED STUDIES POLICY

: Schuman indicated that there was no time for the discussion of directed studies policy at this meeting. This item will appear on the agenda for a future meeting.

SEMESTER CURRICULUM FORMS:

Schuman asked Mooney to explain the forms that were distributed at the beginning of the meeting. Mooney indicated that there were several types of information that had been requested about semester courses this fall: GER designators for each course, bulletin copy revisions, and Form C Addendums were all due in the Dean's Office on Monday, November 24. A checklist was distributed at the beginning of the meeting showing that very few of those forms have been submitted. The listing of quarter prerequisites for each semester course is due on December 15.

Mooney is wondering which of this information should come through the CC for approval. After some discussion, it was decided that most of the information on the Addendum should be considered administrative. The only question from the Addendum which the CC would like to see is the question about repeatable courses. Mooney will prepare a summary of the repeatable question responses, similar to the GER listing. The CC also wishes to review the GER designations, but not the quarter prerequisites.

Leroux commented that the totals on the types of the courses might be interesting.

EMAIL MINUTES:

Schuman said the proposed motion on email minutes will be first on the next agenda.

NEW MEMBER:

Nylander introduced a new student member, Leah Beiswenger, who will be replacing Tinisha Davis on the CC. [Beiswenger was warned that not all CC meetings are as exciting as this one was!]

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 3, at 8:00 a.m. in the Behmler Conference Room.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 a.m.
Submitted by Nancy Mooney

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