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MINUTES-1997-98 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING #6

January 6, 1998; 8:00 a.m.; Behmler Conference Room

Present: Asmus, Beiswenger, Frenier, Kissock, Korth, Lee, Leroux, McIntosh, Nylander, Schuman, Taylor, Thielke

Absent: Ballou, Ellis, Farrell

Guests: None

[In these minutes: approval of standard semester directed studies and senior honors project policy; continued discussion of semester GER category proposals]

DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS:

Mooney distributed copies of a semester geography bulletin copy proposal and revised semester GER list for University College courses.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF SEMESTER DIRECTED STUDIES POLICY:

Schuman indicated that the first item on the agenda was continued discussion of a directed studies policy for semesters. He reminded members that the question on directed studies is the number of credits to be published in the catalog. Mooney reminded Schuman and the CC that the major issue is the levels at which directed studies are to be offered. Will it be all four levels, only the 3xxx and 4xxx levels, or varying levels depending on the wishes of each discipline? Schuman said the Division Chairs were to discuss the directed study policy with faculty members in the Divisions.

Korth reported for the Science and Math Division that two disciplines wanted only two levels listed, one discipline wanted all four listed, one discipline was flexible, and two disciplines didn't care about the levels.

Lee reported for the Social Sciences Division that there were mixed feelings about directed studies. In a straw vote, 50% of the Division favored all four levels, 25% wanted only the 3xxx/4xxx levels, and the other 25% voted for disciplinary discretion. Some of the rationales included: faculty resources are too limited to open up a 1xxx-level directed study offering; listing the 1xxx and 2xxx offerings, if rarely used, would increase the number of "ghost" offerings; there was some sentiment that freshmen should have the opportunity to take directed studies, since directed studies are offered at the discretion of the instructor and instructors are not obliged to supervise directed studies. It does make sense to have the lower level offerings in case upper division students want to explore an area where they don't have much experience.

Kissock said he had missed the last meeting and did not poll the Division of Education about directed studies. He did not think there would be much interest in his Division for lower level directed studies, however.

Leroux said there was not much interest in lower level directed studies offerings in the Humanities Division.

Thielke said she had done an email poll of disciplines and received responses from eleven of them. She distributed copies of her report on the responses.

Schuman concluded that the way to proceed seemed to be to let each discipline decide on their own. We would have to gather their opinions. The negative aspect to this route is that the disciplines would be locked into their choices and it would be more difficult to make changes. If all of the levels are listed in the bulletin, then disciplines could be more

flexible, with faculty agreeing on the levels which would actually be used. The negative aspect of listing all of the levels is the suggestion to students that all levels are actually available. He does not like the idea of listing courses which will not actually be offered.

Leroux wondered if the idea was to have the bulletin reflect the choices of disciplines if they are given the option of choosing the levels. Schuman said that was the idea. A problem would arise if, for instance, a discipline did not list the 1xxx or 2xxx options, but then an opportunity arose where a faculty member wanted to use the lower division offerings.

MOTION (Kissock, Korth): To have the default directed studies listing for semesters include all four levels (1xxx, 2xxx, 3xxx, 4xxx), but give each discipline the opportunity to revise the directed study listing for the bulletin.

Schuman said that Mooney would write to each discipline, make the changes requested, and, if there is no response from a discipline, all four levels will be listed.

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

Schuman said the other issue with directed studies is the credit level. Mooney said the same question needs to be asked of senior honors projects. Kissock said he would like to see 1-5 credits as a standard for all directed studies offerings. There are some 5-credit semester courses, even though 4 credits is the standard. The credit level is then negotiated with each student. Leroux asked if there is a demand for one-credit directed studies. Schuman said that there is. McIntosh pointed out that we have some .5-credit semester courses.

MOTION (Kissock, Nylander): To set "1-5 credits" as a standard for all directed studies offerings.

Korth did not think the credit level was critical. Why not leave it as proposed by each discipline? Thielke said that some disciplines assumed that the credit level would have to be 1-4 credits since 4 credits is the standard credit level for semester courses. Mooney thought that, in some cases, faculty simply copied the bulletin listing for directed studies under quarters and that is why 1-5 credits is listed.

VOTE: In favor--6; opposed--3; abstentions--1 (6-3-1).

Schuman indicated that the motion carried. With the Chair's discretion, he proposed the same motion for senior honors projects.

MOTION (Understood): To set "1-5 credits" as a standard for all senior honors project offerings.

VOTE: In favor--9; opposed--1; abstentions--0 (9-1-0).

Schuman reminded the group that we are feeling our way with the semester curriculum. If problems occur, we can be open to change. The second semester bulletin may look a lot different from the first one.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF SEMESTER GER DESIGNATIONS:

Schuman noted that some revisions to the semester GER designation proposals were attached to the agenda for this meeting. He asked Mooney for a summary of where the CC was at in the GER discussion. Mooney said the discussion had started with the Division of the Humanities. There were no comments about the art history and studio art proposals. The English and French proposals were sent back to the disciplines for reconsideration. Discussion of the German proposal was not finished due to the question of whether any directed studies offerings should have GER designators.

Thielke was concerned about the table Mooney distributed which shows the number of courses proposed in each category. If there are not enough courses in a category, will it be required? Schuman suggested that the CC go through all of the proposals first, and then deal with that question. He also suggested that today's discussion begin with the Science and Math Division, since Farrell was not able to attend this meeting.

Biology--

Thielke was concerned that none of the biology courses were designated in the "Envt" category. That is one of the categories which is undersubscribed and biology courses were expected to fit under that category. McIntosh said the biology discipline believed that those courses should be double-listed with GER designators. If only one designator can be chosen, then the "Sci" designator is more appropriate.

MOTION (Korth, Nylander): To approve the Biology proposal for GER designators.

VOTE: In favor--9; opposed--0; abstentions--1 (9-0-1).

Chemistry--

Kissock was concerned about the designators assigned to the directed studies (DS) and senior honors project (SHP) listings. Korth said that each discipline interpreted the general education program differently. Kissock didn't think that any discipline's DS or SHP should have GER designators. Schuman said it was difficult to imagine that a major would still need a GER designator within the discipline of the major by the time they take a DS or SHP.

MOTION (Kissock, Korth): That the Curriculum Committee determines that directed studies and senior honors projects not be given a GER designator in the bulletin.

Schuman said he would interpret that to mean that DS and SHP would not be allowed to have GER designators. Korth said students could still petition the Scholastic Committee to have a GER designator assigned to a DS or SHP. Schuman wondered if a special explanation of that would be required in the bulletin. Mooney and Thielke did not think a special paragraph would be needed. This would fit under the usual expectations of petitions.

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

Schuman asked if there were any objections to the chemistry proposal with the DS and SHP changes. There were none.

Computer Science--

Schuman wondered why CSci 3901 was not designated as "Hum" if the discipline feels it belongs there. Korth said computer science faculty want their majors to take the "Hum" course outside of the discipline of the major. Schuman wondered about nonmajors who would want to take a "Hum" class in computer science. Kissock agreed that there is the question of the basic principle we are applying that all courses are supposed to be designated. Schuman suggested as an alternative that the proposal be approved with the suggestion that the designator be given to nonmajors. After Korth pointed out that the quarter bulletin lists the course as having a prerequisite of senior standing, Leroux thought the question might be moot. In other words, only majors will be taking the course.

Kissock suggested that the proposal be approved with the one course being sent back to the discipline with a request for a designator. There was agreement from the CC.

Geology--

Thielke said this was another discipline with some environmental study but all of the courses are designated as "Sci." Korth said the environmental aspect is not the primary focus of any of the geology courses. The environment is used as a way to get at science in some courses; that is why the faculty designated all of the courses as "Sci."

Leroux suggested that we could appeal to the discipline to consider the environment when creating topics courses. Thielke said the geology topics courses are low in enrollment. Schuman said that topics courses are also offered on an irregular basis.

Schuman asked Korth to communicate to the Science and Math Division at the next Division meeting the Curriculum Committee's concern about a lack of "Envt" courses. Korth said the Division already had that discussion and the faculty explained their GER designator choices then. Lee suggested that the CC could make a plea to the Division for more "Envt" courses. Schuman said he was concerned that the "Envt" category will mean something other than what was intended if none of the courses are from the Science and Math Division. Korth said an alternative would be to revisit the general education program.

Schuman commented that if he were a cunning instructor, he would come up with a course like Literature of the Environment or Environmental Politics or History of the Environment and really pack in the students.

CC members agreed that the geology proposal was acceptable.

Mathematics--

Schuman noted that the question of how far back into "high school" math to give credit is also implicit in this proposal. Kissock wondered why 1001 has a designator, but not 1011 or 1021, and why isn't 2211 a "Hist" course? Korth said the math faculty did not think that the courses met the criteria as stated. They don't do proofs in those courses. Kissock said he accepted the reasoning on 1011 and 1021, but what about History of Mathematics? Schuman said he would guess that the History of Mathematics course does not use the methodology of historians. Kissock did not think that methodology was a requirement for all of the categories. Korth said it is not, but it is specifically mentioned in the goals for "Hist" courses. Kissock noted that we seem to be incorporating contradictions into the GER.

CC members agreed that the mathematics proposal was acceptable.

As Beiswenger was leaving the meeting, Schuman asked her if she had any comments on the proposal. She responded that she thought courses should be allowed to have more than one GER designator. Schuman cringed.

Natural Science--

Schuman asked about the "Sco" category. Mooney said it was a typo and should be "Sci." CC members agreed that the natural science proposal was acceptable.

Physics--

Kissock wondered if the 1-5 credit courses were taken for 1 credit, would the GER category not apply? Schuman noted that the courses need to be at least 2 credits to count for the GER. We would have to ask the computer to catch the 1-credit registrations. Mooney said there should be a statement in the prerequisites that tells students that they must take the course for 2 or more credits to get the GER designation. Lee said the discipline could change the offering to read "2-5 credits." Schuman asked Korth to have the discipline indicate which way they want to handle this problem.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 20, at 8:00 a.m. in the Behmler Conference Room.

Meeting adjourned 9:05 a.m.
Submitted by Nancy Mooney