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MINUTES-1997-98 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING #8

February 3, 1998; 8:00 a.m.; Behmler Conference Room

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

Absent: Asmus, Ballou, Ellis, Thielke

Guests: Yimin Yang, Tap Payne (current and past chairs of the International Programs Committee); Vicente Cabrera, Rod Oto (current and past chairs of the Minority Experience Committee)

[In these minutes: adjunct committee review for International Programs Committee and Minority Experience Committee; continued discussion of semester GER designator proposals]

ADJUNCT COMMITTEE REVIEW FOR IPC AND MEC:

Kissock opened the meeting for Schuman. He noted that the Curriculum Committee (CC) had invited this year's and last year's chairs of the International Programs Committee (IPC) and the Minority Experience Committee (MEC) to discuss the continuation of those committees.

International Programs Committee

Payne distributed copies of the 1996-97 Annual Report of the IPC. He indicated that the 1996-97 IPC recommended that the committee be continued. International programs has become an important area of the campus.

McIntosh wondered how many students had taken advantage of the international opportunities. Payne said the last report he had listed 120 students. Kissock said the number was up to 150 the last he heard. Payne said that number compares with about 100 students at the U of MN, Duluth. It is quite an accomplishment for UMM to have sent 50% more students abroad than UMD. Kissock said Minneapolis sends about 400-500 students. UMM is getting close to the private colleges in numbers of students getting international experiences. McIntosh wondered if those numbers included all of the various programs. Payne and Kissock said that they do.

Payne noted that a major portion of the Ford Foundation grant is left to be distributed. The IPC was important in deciding how to distribute those funds.

Kissock asked Yang, the current chair of the IPC, if he had any comments. He did not.

MOTION (Frenier, Nylander): To recommend continuation of the International Programs Committee as an adjunct committee of the Curriculum Committee

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

Minority Experience Committee

Cabrera said this is the first time he has been on the MEC. There are two subcommittees this year. One subcommittee is working on a diversity survey which will be administered first to students this quarter and then to faculty and staff next quarter. The other subcommittee is in charge of new guidelines for the Minority Mentorship Program and the summer gateway program. He suggested that the MEC have continuity of membership from year to year. Members of the MEC are convinced it is achieving its tasks for students and the campus community.

[Schuman and Farrell arrived at the meeting at this point. Schuman resumed the chair.]

Oto said he also believes the MEC should continue as is. His observation is that the MEC serves a couple of functions. It is advisory to the MSP staff, but also could become more visible as a place to bring minority issues both for individuals or for larger issues. That has not happened recently, although he understands that the MEC was instrumental when the Halloween incident occurred some years ago. About 14-15% of UMM students are minority, but the MEC plays a larger role than just minority issues--it deals with diversity in general.

Frenier wondered who the members of this year's MEC are. Cabrera said he serves as the chair of the MEC. Also serving are Susan Bernardin, Solomon Gashaw, Carol Ford, Bill Stewart, Sam Schuman, and four students.

Korth wondered if the charge of the MEC should be generalized a bit. Cabrera wondered if Korth was referring to a title change. Korth said yes. Cabrera said he has thought that the MEC covers other things. Oto said that changing the title to include diversity may dilute its focus. The MEC might want to discuss the possibility of a title change.

Schuman said that in the three years that he has attended MEC meetings, he has had the feeling that the MEC is in part a sort of safety valve for the campus. That is not to say that the MEC doesn't do anything valuable in the interim, but it is most valuable when there is a problem. If we had a reason to believe there would never be another problem involving minority issues, then we would have a reason to consider eliminating the MEC.

MOTION (Kissock, Farrell): To recommend continuation of the Minority Experience Committee as an adjunct committee of the Curriculum Committee

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

Schuman asked if the IPC had met this year. Payne said that they have met.

Completion of Adjunct Committee Review

Schuman indicated that the CC has now finished its review of all six adjunct committees, recommending the continuation of four of the committees and the elimination of two. He thanked the guests for attending the CC meeting.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF SEMESTER GER DESIGNATIONS:

Schuman reminded CC members that they had begun review of the Social Sciences Division GER proposals at the last meeting. The CC asked the anthropology discipline for a report on the character of the course proposed for "Sci-L." Donna Chollett sent a response and it was distributed to the CC.

Anthropology

Since Korth had raised the question about the qualifications for a lab course, Schuman wondered if he wanted to comment on Chollett's response. Korth said he appreciated the explanation and had talked to the instructor personally. He is encouraged by the description but remains a little uncomfortable with the definition of what a lab is. Lee said there is some confusion about what a lab is since there is no definition on campus. In the absence of guidelines, he thought the CC should approve the anthropology course.

McIntosh said there are no criteria for a lab course of which he is aware, but he did talk to his colleagues in the Science and Mathematics (S&M) Division. Some thought that there was an expectation of a certain number of hours connected with the credits but McIntosh was not able to find any documents about this. There is an understanding in the Science and Math Division that a lab should be at least two hours long. Many S&M labs are three hour labs. There is concern about the time spent in the lab for the anthropology course. Another concern is that the instructor would have to be in charge, not student TAs. Lee said the instructor is very much involved with the anthropology lab. McIntosh says her written statement says the labs are taught by TAs.

Frenier wondered if instructors in S&M are in the lab at all times. McIntosh said they are present in the lab the vast majority of the time. Nylander said she had one lab that was mostly with TAs and another that was mostly with the instructor. Taylor said he has had 6-8 labs and never had an instructor who was not present for 90% of the time. TAs were there only to help out. He was concerned that a general education requirement might be met without the instructor present most of the time.

Farrell suggested asking the instructor about the amount of time she would be in the lab. Lee said that he did ask her. His impression is that she is heavily involved. He can check for more specifics. This course was accepted last year as an E9-L course. The conversion to semesters simply echoes what we already approved.

Kissock wondered to what extent the lab part of this course is tied to a particular instructor, not the discipline. Lee said the course could be taught without a lab, as Nord taught it, but Chollett has expertise in this area. She thinks the course is better with a lab. Schuman thought this area was like astronomy; it could be taught with or without a lab. Physical anthropology could be taught either way, but it is not idiosyncratic to have a hands-on portion.

Farrell said that, for him, the question is not whether it should be a lab course, but to what extent the instructor is present. People believe that the instructor should be there most of the time. He still wanted an answer about that. Lee suggested that the proposal could be passed provisionally. Chollett carefully selects the TAs and is very conscientious about the class. This is a matter of philosophy or principle. Farrell said that we expect courses to be taught by the instructor, not TAs. If TAs are grading papers, then the answers had better be clear cut.

Schuman outlined some choices the CC could make: a) ask Chollett to come to a CC meeting to answer questions; b) ask Lee to act as an intermediary and ask her the questions; c) vote the proposal up or down. Farrell said he would like to have Lee go back and find out about the instructor's time in the lab. Schuman suspected that there are other courses where students spend a significant amount of time being taught by TAs. Different cultures exist across the campus. Lee said in the Social Sciences Division, after the main discussion led by the instructor, TAs are responsible for about one hour per week of discussion. This lab could be equivalent to that hour of general discussion. He will find out if that is the case.

Leroux wondered if there were notes about the discussion last year when the course was approved for E9-L. Lee was sure that there were. Schuman thought that last year's decision should not bind the CC since this is a new general education program.

Schuman said an interesting abstract question is raised here. When the general education requirements were promulgated, the group was specific about not linking the requirements to a specific discipline or division. They explicitly de-linked the requirements from the academic areas. That seems to be a process that is giving the CC pause. The CC tends to think that the Science and Math Division "owns" labs, and the Humanities Division "owns" the "Hum" category, etc. The General Education Committee considered the option of requiring courses by Division and rejected that proposal. When we say "lab" in the General Education Program, do we mean a lab as taught by scientists in the Science and Math Division?

Lee commented that one of the goals of the general education program is breadth--meaning the crossing of divisional and discipline lines. If we can find qualified courses crossing those lines, that is encouraged.

MOTION (Farrell, understood): To ask Lee to go back to Chollett to get further clarification about the amount of time the instructor is in the lab.

Frenier wondered if we know what percentage of time the instructors are in Science and Math labs. Farrell said he just wanted to know if the instructor is there most of the time. Lee noted that students say some Science and Math labs are done mostly by TAs. We need some guidelines for all of the lab courses. Korth said, if there is a rule, it should be that instructors need to be in the lab 100% of the time. Lee wondered what CC members would think if the instructor said she hadn't been in the lab that much in the past but would be willing to do so under semesters. Schuman was reluctant to interfere with the pedagogy. Farrell said he just wanted to know how much the instructor was in the lab. He wasn't sure yet how he would vote after he has the information.

Schuman wondered if the question was really whether the course should be "Sci-L" or if it was instead a question of whether this experience should get credit at UMM. In other words, is this the way we give class credits at UMM? McIntosh thought there were two questions. One is the GER question. The second question is what is the Dean's policy. Schuman said, at a college like this, administrators do not make that type of decision. It is made by the faculty and the Curriculum Committee, which is charged with oversight of the curriculum across the campus. That is a faculty decision.

Schuman noted that there are a lot of courses not taught in the way he would choose to have them taught. It is not his prerogative as Dean to change those courses if the collective faculty are comfortable with them. He can, however, argue about it and complain to the Division Chair. Farrell said he would like to see the statement changed to say that the TAs are under the instructor's supervision. Schuman agreed.

Kissock thought the fundamental issue was our expectations of what constitutes a lab. A premise of general education is that people will take courses out of their major area. Kissock suggested that we need a definition of labs and then anthropology could meet it. Farrell said we should not let the science faculty decide alone. That can't be done at this meeting or in the next meeting. Taylor thought the question is whether any general education requirement could be met if taught by a TA.

Schuman suggested that Lee needs to get the clarification from the instructor and then the CC can return to this discussion. Are there other questions about the anthropology proposal?

Lee identified some corrections to the GER proposals in the Social Science Division: For Anth 3411, the title should read "Seminar in Anthropological and Qualitative Methodology." The same is true for Soc 3411, which is double-listed with Anth 3411. The GER category for Soc 3411 should be the same as Anth 3411, which is "E/CR." Psy 3201 and 3211 should both be "Sci-L."

Schuman wondered if the title of Anth/Soc 3411 should be "Anthropological and Qualitative" or "Anthropological Qualitative." Lee thought the former was the way the faculty wanted it, but he would check.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 10, at 8:00 a.m. in the Behmler Conference Room.

Meeting adjourned 8:55 a.m.
Submitted by Nancy Mooney

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