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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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MINUTES 2000-2001 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING # 13

March 5, 2001 3:30 p.m. Behmler Conference Room

Present: Neuharth, Urness, Evans, Chabel, Carlson, Mooney Gooch, De Jager, Korth, Finzel Lee, Behrens and Thielke

Absent: Nellis, Kissock, and Ostrowski

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Korth asked for a motion to approve the minutes from February 19, 2001

MOTION: To approve minutes from February 19, 2001.

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

Korth asked for discussion on the second agenda item regarding enforcement of prerequisites (prereq). Should and can they be enforced at the time of registration? Thielke responded that yes they should be enforced however they do not have a way to enforce them electronically at this time. The way in which data is stored in PeopleSoft does not allow checking of prereqs without dramatically slowing down the system. A member questioned how holds work. Thielke responded that holds are stored with student information and are easily accessed for the current term.

A member stated that we should be able to access the information regardless of the amount of information, the size should not be a deciding factor for not being able to access the information to enforce prereqs. Thielke agreed but noted that at the time the University made the decision to purchase PeopleSoft there was no computing system on the market that could handle the complexities of the University of Minnesota. The University purchased the Beta version of Peoplesoft. Another member suggested that if PeopleSoft is not completed then this would be an opportune time to request that the program accommodate enforcement of prereqs. Thielke noted that it is on the list of things to be added to PeopleSoft but right now there are about 50 fixes that are top priority and this is not one of them. Another member noted that he has discussed with the Registrar before that enforcement should be able to be done outside of PeopleSoft. Even an imperfect system would be better than no enforcement. A member offered the suggestion of having faculty bring the issue of prereqs to students the first day of class. Thielke noted that the Registrar's Office and Computing Services had looked into writing an administrative computing system for just the Morris campus years ago however, the cost at that time would have been 1.5 million/year and would surely be more today. A member questioned if there is any enforcement system wide and Thielke noted that there is no enforcement throughout all of U of M system. Another member stated that then the University is not servicing our students. Thielke disagreed as she noted that the University is the only system in Minnesota that has APAS reports and that is very beneficial to the students. A member noted that the problem of not enforcing prereqs is that students realize half way through the semester that they really do need the prereqs and then it is too late to sign up for another class. Students should be asked to leave on the first day of class if they don't have the prereq. Thielke noted that is an option as another member stated earlier.

It was the consensus of the CC that prereqs should be enforced, the problem is how to do it. Thielke suggested that registration in some courses could be blocked by adding "instructor consent required" to the courses, allowing faculty to verify completion of prereqs. The TC_Registrar's Office did research two or three times on the need for prerequisites and they couldn't demonstrate that students were disadvantaged by not completing the prereqs. Another member stated that he agreed with what another member suggested earlier that the faculty bring up the issue on the first day of class. Prereqs may also be considered "hard" or "soft" and the instructor may allow a student to stay without the prereq if it is considered a "soft" prereq. A member noted that this can already be addressed in the course listing where a prereq can be either recommended (soft) or required (hard).

Korth asked what the CC should do about this issue. One member suggested that he doesn't think he has the power to tell a student they can't take the class without the prereq or to fail that student for the same reason. How can the faculty be empowered to respond to the issue? Can they write to the Registrar to un-register the student? Thielke noted that they do not un-register students with the exception of behavioral or academic dismissal. Cancellation below full-

time, or part-time status can adversely affect the student and their parents in regards to financial aid and health insurance. Another member noted that University regulations allow the faculty to remove a student if they do not show up on the first day of class. Thielke agreed but stated that this has never been done. The previous member noted that if a class was full and a student who didn't show up the first day was removed then they could allow another student into the class. Thielke again stated that because of tuition charges, financial aid, etc. students need to cancel themselves; the Registrar's office won't un-register them. A member questioned if a faculty member could fail a student for not showing up for class the first day or for not having the prereq? Another member noted that students couldn't seek out every faculty member for approval to register if we required instructor consent as a way to enforce prereqs. In a discussion between two members one questioned how many students who don't have the prereqs stay in the class after they have been told about the need for them. The other member stated that they all do and when questioned how many of those students failed the member said 50%.

Another member questioned if the advisors could address this when meeting with the students and suggested having all students get their advisors signed approval before registering for class. Other members stated this would not work either as students change their course choices after the adviser has signed off and also that an advisor in one discipline may not be fully aware of the need for prereqs in another discipline.

It was suggested to look at a sampling of courses and the number of students without the prereqs and compare grades with those that had the prereq. However several members suggested that this would not give an accurate picture because courses that have the prereq are slowed down and taught at a lower level due to the students in the class that don't have the prereq.

A member suggested that CC should suggest a statement of what the instructor can do if a student does not have the prereq. Another member suggested to include having an end goal to work towards a technological solution. Korth asked for a motion. Thielke noted that before we make a statement we should know the seriousness of the problem, we need something to back up our statement on the issue. A member noted that he did not see a problem with making a statement about the importance of prereqs. There is a clear statement in the catalog but the faculty members have no recourse when faced with the problem. There was discussion regarding wording of a motion. Currently the statement in the catalog (on page 63) reads as follows: "*Before enrolling in some courses, students **must** have completed or be concurrently enrolled in certain other courses, or possess some particular qualification or class standing. These requirements are known as "prerequisites" (prereq).*" A suggestion by another member was to add to this statement that faculty may enforce this and the student can be un-enrolled from the class. Thielke again mentioned that before they can be removed financial aid/admissions would need to be contacted. A member noted that the "must" isn't being enforced and another member suggested giving the students the option to withdraw from the class and if they don't then the instructor can remove them.

The following motion was made:

MOTION: (Finzel, Urness) The Curriculum Committee recommends that the prerequisites be enforced and that the Registrar's Office pursue means to enforce prerequisites during registration.

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

The discussion continued to find the best means to enforce prereqs and the instructor having the ability to remove a student from their class or fail that student if they don't have the prereqs. A motion was made at this point.

MOTION: (Gooch, Neuharth) The course instructor is empowered to remove from any course any student who has not completed the required prerequisites.

Discussion on the motion brought up the question if this would violate any policies. A member stated that he wanted a resolution but not a confrontational issue and doesn't want to look to faculty as police regarding this problem. Several ideas were brought up. One member suggested questioning students at the time of registration Thielke stated that some students enroll on the web. Also the student staff who help at the registration counters already have too many things to check. Another idea was to have prereqs discussed at Freshman Orientation. A member noted that if the student is aware

that faculty have the power to un-enroll them if they do not have the prereq then the responsibility is shifted to the student. Another member noted that students should be aware of this because it is published, it gives prior warning. A member noted that she didn't think the students or the faculty would be aware of the financial consequences. A member suggested that if it is enforced that the instructor could send a note to the student and Registrar giving them a time frame in which to withdraw from the class before the instructor would remove them. The member continued that the fact that prereqs are required is already in the catalog as policy. The motion is clear and ideally the instructor would not have to use this authority however, it is there if necessary. Thielke questioned if the Registrar or the CC have the power to decide this or if it should go to Scholastic Committee. Korth suggested that this motion be a proposal to the Scholastic Committee, which has jurisdiction over cancel-add and registration policy. CC could adopt the motion with the understanding that it would then go to the Scholastic Committee as a recommendation. Another member questioned if a prior notice time limit should added to the motion and suggested a 48-hour prior notice time limit.

REVISED MOTION: With 48-hours prior notice to the student, the Instructor is empowered to remove from any course any student who has not completed the required prerequisites.

Discussion: A member stated that he is uncomfortable with the 48-hour prior notice time limit and that the motion is unnecessarily legalistic; if the prereqs are to be enforced they should be enforced at the time of registration not after class has started. Another member noted that the time limit is reasonable and even though we want to have enforcement done at the time of registration it is not possible and this is an alternative to ensure prereqs are being enforced. Another member questioned if we are making policy by passing the motion? A member responded that with this motion we are making a recommendation to the Scholastic Committee, which would have jurisdiction.

VOTE: Motion approved (6-2-1)

Meeting adjourned 4:35 p.m.
Submitted by Karen Van Horn

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