

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

Planning Committee

Campus Governance

3-5-2024

Planning minutes 03/05/2024

Planning Committee

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/plan>

Recommended Citation

Planning Committee, "Planning minutes 03/05/2024" (2024). *Planning Committee*. 154.
<https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/plan/154>

This Minutes is brought to you for free and open access by the Campus Governance at University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. It has been accepted for inclusion in Planning Committee by an authorized administrator of University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. For more information, please contact skulann@morris.umn.edu.

Planning Committee
March 5, 2024 11:40 a.m.
Zoom and Welcome Center 122

Members Present: Mark Collier (chair), Roger Rose, Elliot James, Stephen Crabtree, Emma Kloos, Laura Thielke, Arne Kildegaard (Division Chair – non-voting), Bill Zimmerman (non-voting), Bryan Herrmann (non-voting)

Members Absent: Nizhoni Marks, Bethanie Belisle

Guest: Sylke Boyd, Jimmy Schryver, Nina Ortiz, Barbara Burke, Priyanka Basu, Ray Schultz, Jennifer Rothchild, Mauri Systo

Minutes: Approved by Committee

Agenda:

1. Request for minute taker(s) – note: Bryan Herrmann and Emma Kloos will take notes again

2. Discussion with Guests about Assigned Task From Chancellor –

Collier explained the request from the Chancellor on developing the process for supporting small majors. Schryver requested more information about the request and general rules. Collier explained that the Chancellor has tasked the Planning Committee to come up with a process/report offering advice for disciplines challenged due to low enrollment. Sylke Boyd noted that hiring is at the center of all of this. Kildegaard noted that the discussion about process was challenging because empowering a review committee to think about this is difficult as it is better to discuss at the discipline level. Schryver noted he was questioning the Chancellor's request, explaining that a one size fits all approach will not work in these situations and that the data will have to be contextualized and discussion should heavily involve the affected discipline/division. No process is sufficiently generalizable to all disciplines across the liberal arts. Schryver also felt it important to investigate whether a program is suffering because of disinvestment by administrators.

Kildegaard noted that analyzing enrollment numbers is challenging because a small department will slip in enrollment – starved programs will have starved enrollment. Rose noted that Sports Management has been growing.

Boyd noted that the role of the discipline is to request the things they need to fulfill the mission they are trusted with, and it is up to the leadership to make the decisions from there. Ortiz noted that faculty are requesting Division Chairs to have a role in making the decision but that individual division chairs should not be solely responsible for these important decisions. Rothchild mentioned that she has advocated along with the Social Science Division Chair that the issues in Sociology need to be addressed but feels her efforts have fallen on deaf ears. Rothchild feels the administration is letting this issue sit and, as such, it can feel disingenuous to advertise the option to pursue a Sociology major to prospective students, or a quality Sociology program to current students.

Crabtree noted that it can be hard to recruit students and new faculty members if the discipline is already low enrolled. Ortiz noted a solution she has been contemplating that every third semester faculty would be allowed to teach fully online. Collier noted that it is one of the nine options that was on the document. He noted that AVP Watkins didn't say that was the focus of his department right now. Crabtree noted that it would be great to let Twin Cities students take our courses. Crabtree didn't feel that was something they considered.

Schryver questioned what is preventing graduate students from the Twin Cities to come to UMM and teach. Colier added that we could possibly subsidize campus housing.

Ortiz questioned what happens if a discipline decides that they can no longer offer the major due to low enrollment. Collier noted that he and others met with the Vice Provost at the system level about what happens to faculty members if the course aren't offered. Rose noted that faculty are tenured into the system and that people would retrain to something close in a field or to take on shared responsibilities. Rothchild stressed the urgent need to discuss the realities of low enrolled programs and is frustrated that faculty continue to be told to wait in vague terms. She is wondering if a Sociology major should be taken "off the books" during catalog revisions for 2025-2027. She expressed the need to take care of our current students and to decide what the new catalog is going to say – there is a time constraint for making these decisions but she feels faculty aren't being empowered or given the green light to make any decisions. It is above the pay grade of the faculty to take courses off the list based solely on staffing challenges. She noted keeping only the minor as unideal based on service courses. Ortiz said that she made the decision to cut an Anthropology course and then felt like it wasn't a supported decision. Collier noted that Planning doesn't have the power to make any decisions and that the committee could call a campus wide meeting about this but that currently isn't the decision making process.

Boyd questioned how you pay grad students to come to campus. Rose noted that we would need to have a bridge program to get people here to fund the program. Ortiz noted that we could expand the pre-doc fellows. Burke noted that this was done in the 90's. ABD instructors were provided housing and paid grad school wages. Elliot James noted that when he did the diversity pre-doc fellows program, there were initially two positions at Morris and he understood that Morris decided to only pursue one. Burke noted that the pre-doc fellows program was widely offered in the 90's.

Collier noted that one option is to make a major more interdisciplinary in nature – PPE has helped double the number of philosophy majors. Ortiz noted that Anthropology and Sociology have already been working closely and combined as much as possible, but at a certain point, any further combination of majors is a new program entirely. Schryver noted that online courses do interrupt community and retention. Boyd noted that she has been thinking about interdisciplinary ways to focus the Physics major and about how to combine with other areas that would allow for more flexibility (e.g., applied physics using more math courses, or pre-engineering).

Collier noted that it's challenging to find classes online. Boyd noted that having some of our courses taught hybrid would allow others to take the course. Collier noted that there was some brief discussion at campus assembly about our 4 credit classes and change to a 3 credit. It would adjust the teaching load which would require more discussion. Boyd noted that she has some students who are taking an asynchronous Intro to Physics course through the Twin Cities and find it adequate. Burke noted that Multi-I can be challenging at times for students who can't take too many courses in a row or semester back-to-back. Burke also noted that it can be tempting for students who do a spring/fall Multi-I enrollment to simply transfer to the Twin Cities the second spring. Kloos noted that some students don't like being told they *must* take online courses for their program based on additional fees or personal preference against asynchronous modality. Crabtree noted taking asynchronous online doesn't build a community in the course.

Kildegaard noted that we are a tuition driven institution and that 1500 students would be a much more sustainable number. Our ratios are at really challenging numbers right now given the recruitment and retention efforts, and they are not sustainable. We are adapting majors to fit the current courses that we have. Kildegaard and Ortiz noted that it is unfair to bait and switch students at admission, and that courses not being offered could cause retention issues. Burke noted that this is an admissions issue that we need to work on and questioned whether faculty could be more involved with admissions visits and events. Colier stated that the Planning Committee has been steered away from addressing enrollment issues. Ortiz and Collier discussed the need for top down leadership and decision making in the future.

Schultz noted that the division chairs would be the best liaison between the administration and the discipline. Theatre is grappling with these issues now from a short-term position (leaves and retirements). Theatre is making it work with people teaching outside of their expertise in lower-level courses. Schultz noted that the more you rotate courses the harder it is to do a three-year major and/or a double major.

Basu noted that the implication of this assigned task is that there will be a review of low enrolled majors. Collier noted he is worried that any report we write will be unfairly viewed as faculty buying in or supporting the discontinuation of programs. Collier noted that the Humanities Division Advisory Committee was asked to address this question but replied that it was not the appropriate place to take on this kind of work. Rose noted that he understood the original request to be more simply something to waive in front of the Regents to show that we are thinking about and working on these issues.

Ortiz noted that we need to make registration decisions. Collier said he could send an email to division chairs to determine where the faculty staffing issues lie. It was stressed again that Division chairs must call meetings for disciplines to review their own processes addressing low enrollment. Perhaps the Planning Committee's recommendation will simply be to devise a process where these conversations can happen at the Division/Discipline level. The class schedule is impending, and we need to make decisions on the number of instructors. Collier will send the document around to those who attended the meeting.