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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

MEETING # 14 Minutes

January 24, 2007, 8:00 a.m., Behmler Hall Conference Room

Present: Judy Kuechle (chair), Escillia Allen, Ferolyn Angell, Van Gooch, Harold Hinds, Michael Korth, Jenny Nellis, Gwen Rudney, Ray Schultz, Nancy Helsper, Sara Haugen, Jeri Mullin

Absent: Amanda Jasken, Jooinn Lee, Isaac Linehan-Clodfelter, Clare Strand, one student yet to be named

Visiting: Brenda Boever, Dorothy DeJager, Tom McRoberts

Kuechle opened the meeting and thanked the committee members for their hard work during the fall semester on course changes for the next catalog. She asked Helsper, catalog editor, to give the committee an update on the progress of the catalog. Helsper stated that her deadline to have all page proofs submitted to the Twin Cities is Friday, January 26. Kuechle mentioned that if something needs to be changed after the catalog has been printed, it will have to go through the Curriculum Committee and Campus Assembly for approval to become public and online. Helsper added that delivery of the hard-copy catalog is expected March 1. The web version will begin to be updated as soon as it is sent to the Twin Cities. PCAS needs to be updated in order to feed the majors and minors. Mullin stated that the new courses are effective fall 2007. Any changes to old courses will occur when the Twin Cities activates them. Kuechle asked if activation would occur in time for registration and annual planning. Mullin answered that she hoped that it would, although they may wait until mid-semester before flipping the switch.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 13, 2006

Kuechle asked for approval of minutes from the December 13, 2006 meeting.

MOTION (Angell/Nellis) to approve the minutes of December 13, 2006 as corrected.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Helsper noted one correction in the minutes on the second page under the new course AmIn 1101. She is quoted as saying "intro courses all start at the 11xx-level." She recalled her actual words were "entry courses for the major usually start at the 11xx-level." The change will be made before posting.

DISCUSSION OF FIRST YEAR SEMINAR

MOTION (Nellis/Angell) to form a small (5 or 6 person) committee to conduct a review of the First Year Seminar (FYS) and submit a report of its review to the Curriculum Committee.

VOTE: (7-1-0)

Kuechle explained that the most recent review of the FYS was completed in 2002, by a review committee of four (John Schwaller, Vicki Graham, David Roberts and Andrea Martin-Way). The committee's report was sent to the Campus Assembly, via the Curriculum Committee. It is time to review FYS again in conjunction with the First Year Experience (FYE) committee, a subcommittee of the Student Services Committee. Kuechle asked Boever, a member of the FYE committee, to brief the Curriculum Committee on what they are doing relating to FYS. Boever stated that the FYE committee consists of a dozen or more members, with Dave Swenson as chair. A current co-coordinator of FYS is a member. The charge of the FYE committee is to look at the whole first year experience, beginning with the Admissions process, and including a variety of areas such as social and classroom activities, housing, food service, student satisfaction, retention, and the course common to all first year students. Although they are looking at FYS, the FYE committee has no authority to make decisions or changes regarding FYS. They may make general recommendations or observations.

Kuechle stated that the Curriculum Committee needs to decide whether it should form a FYS review committee, and, if so, what the charge for the committee should be. Angell asked if there was a provision in place that the FYS be reviewed periodically. DeJager said that a review was to take place after three years.

Rudney asked if there were guiding principles for the review. Kuechle answered that the Curriculum Committee was free to decide what it wanted the review committee to review. Rudney asked if the review should be related to the

Strategic Positioning Plan. Kuechle answered that it should be related in terms of campus mission and the undergraduate liberal arts experience. Angell suggested that it would be helpful if the Curriculum Committee could hear from people who have served as FYS co-coordinators over the last few years, to provide a context of the changes it has already gone through. Korth recalled that the Curriculum Committee had revisited the question of whether to change the theme. Kuechle answered that it was discussed a year or two ago, but was set aside.

McRoberts stated that he felt there should be some common first year experience. UMM has a long history of offering a first year seminar experience. There has always been a level of discontent about FYS and an impulse to review it and improve it. A periodic review runs deep and each new rendering has come out slightly different than the previous one. The current FYS was probably the most thoughtful and workable effort that we've done. It has also been the most manageable over a period of time.

Kuechle stated that any changes that might come from the review will not affect the fall 2007 FYS. She asked the committee if it thought the review committee should look at our peer institutions to find models. Angell recalled that the Twin Cities had adopted our model.

Boever suggested that the review committee may also want to include a random sample of students surveyed to see what their experiences were. Nellis added that the previous review committee was small and therefore could operate fairly easily and quickly. She suggested that a new review committee be similar in size. She also recommended that one of the previous members be included to provide a longer view. The committee should probably wait to have a larger discussion until it has received a report from the review committee.

Hinds stated that there already is a horrible habit on the campus to create multiple structures to do the same thing. We appear to be duplicating efforts. He suggested that the FYE committee be asked to report their findings on the FYS to the Curriculum Committee. Angell stated that at the last review students were not part of the review. It would be good to have input from third and fourth year students as well as the surveys from first year students who have completed the course.

Mullin asked why faculty members aren't compelled to teach FYS. Hinds answered that participation in FYS should be part of their regular teaching load, but it is difficult in a small discipline. Rudney added that in Education all courses are required, so faculty take their turn teaching FYS as an add-on course load. One reason we can't just make people do it is that people come here to teach in their area of expertise. FYS, by nature, may not fit that area. Faculty members in her division take their turn teaching it, but she doubted that anyone is thrilled to teach it. Kuechle added that FYS fits better with some disciplines and faculty teaching styles. Helsper said that she understood new faculty had been hired with the understanding that they would teach FYS. Kuechle answered that only one or two were proven to have been hired with that understanding, although there may be more.

Kuechle restated that a group or committee is needed to bring recommendations to the Curriculum Committee. Angell volunteered to serve on a review committee. She would like the review committee to address the goals of FYS (dive into critical thinking and address topics of human diversity). She also would like to see addressed the shock that students experience when they receive Bs or Cs in college after having been an A-student in high school.

Allen said that she did not take FYS because she is a transfer student from Madison, where she took a seminar. Ferolyn responded that her input might still be helpful.

Hinds restated that he would not vote for the creation of a subcommittee to needlessly duplicate what FYE is already doing. That committee is already looking at it, and it has a diverse membership. It makes a lot of sense for them to report to this committee, and then have a discussion based on their work.

Korth asked what questions a review committee would be asking. He would rather see the questions in writing before responding to the request to form a committee. Gooch added that he is impressed by the statement raised in the previous review committee's report, "these questions were passed to the FYS Steering Committee." He asked if there was such a committee, and if so, whether it passed on to them. Mullin answered that she thought the Steering Committee members are the faculty currently teaching the course and the co-coordinators. The co-coordinators call a

meeting of the Steering Committee when needed. Korth mentioned that the FYS Steering Committee would not be a representative group, as it is made up of faculty who volunteered to teach. Their input would be valuable, but they would not be the group to make decisions.

DeJager asked if it might be helpful if the committee knew who brought this agenda item to the committee and why. Kuechle answered that the whole FYE is part of our Strategic Positioning Plan, including a review of the FYS. Chancellor Johnson requests the Curriculum Committee to review FYS. We do not have a written charge specific to the course. Kuechle stated that the Curriculum Committee is the right committee to take a look at FYS on a routine basis.

Kuechle said that she was willing to ask the FYE committee if they would be interested in including some of their members in a FYS review committee. McRoberts stated that he was very much interested in the topic and would be willing to join the discussion of whether the course is still relevant and how best to encourage faculty to take ownership.

Kuechle asked who should be on the FYS review committee. Nellis suggested that she would like to see a membership that included one of the two faculty members who were on the previous committee, a past co-coordinator, one student who has taken the course, and someone with a connection to the FYE committee and the Curriculum Committee. Kuechle said that she would be happy to serve on it, but did not think she should take the leadership of it. Nellis added that it should be a small, lean group with a relatively limited scope. She stressed that she was not in favor of duplicating work or making more committees, but was not convinced that the review committee would be duplicating work.

Korth asked if the FYS is achieving the goals that were set for it. Helsper added that one of the goals relates to retention. The first semester plays a crucial role in whether or not a student stays in college. Nellis stated that if faculty members are unwilling to teach FYS, it won't meet the goal. Jeri agreed that one of the questions considered is whether FYS should be required of all first year students.

Hinds stated that, although he would obviously not vote for it, any committee that is formed must include a representative from people who are not enthusiastic about the FYS. Nellis agreed that the Curriculum Committee should hear from that group. Hinds recommended going a step further and ask that such a faculty member be made a member of the review committee, to ensure that the review committee is representative of the Morris campus.

Allen asked if the review committee would only survey faculty again, or if students would be included this time. Angell stated that first year students are surveyed every year, but third and fourth year students have not been surveyed. She suggested that their comments would be very valuable. Rudney added that it is so true of education in general. A lot of times people do not realize the benefit of an experience they've received until later. We need to keep in mind also that we can't abandon everything that first year students don't like about their first semester.

Kuechle offered to bring a list of questions to next week's meeting for the Committee to consider.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.
Submitted by Darla Peterson