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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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**UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING #19 Minutes**  
**March 21, 2007, 8:00 a.m., Behmler Conference Room**

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

Absent: Escillia Allen, Amanda Jasken

Visiting: James Togeas, Dorothy DeJager

Kuechle opened the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 28, 2007**

Kuechle asked for approval of minutes from the February 28, 2007 meeting. Angell noted a misspelled name in the second paragraph of the last page.

MOTION (Rudney/Angell) to approve the minutes of February 28, 2007, as corrected.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

**EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (EDP) SUBCOMMITTEE**

Kuechle explained that an EDP subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee convenes each year to review EDP grant applications. The grants are provided to assist faculty in putting together new curricular initiatives or course improvements. There is funding to cover \$8,000 in grants plus the cost of fringe benefits. Four or five grants have typically been awarded each year, averaging somewhere around \$2,000 each. Faculty can jointly submit a grant application. The applications are due in the Dean's Office on March 23, 2007. The subcommittee generally consists of three members: one division chair, at least one faculty member, and sometimes a student. Kuechle then asked for volunteers to serve on this year's subcommittee. Gooch, Rudney, and Schultz volunteered. Kuechle thanked them and explained that the committee will be asked to report their recommendations to the Curriculum Committee for final approval.

**GENERAL EDUCATION DESIGNATORS AND THE USE OF MULTIPLE DESIGNATORS ON A SINGLE COURSE**

Kuechle welcomed guest Jim Togeas, chair of the 1997 General Education Committee. Kuechle mentioned that prior to 1997, the campus allowed multiple general education designators for courses. She asked Togeas to provide a brief summary of the work of the committee.

Togeas quoted from a report dated February 15, 1997, that was sent to Dean Schuman from the General Education Committee, and was later approved at Campus Assembly. The report recommended discontinuing the use of multiple designators on a single course (cross-listing of courses):

**No Cross-Listing of Courses in Expanding Perspectives.** The purpose of prohibiting cross-listing is to assure, as far as possible, that students will satisfy their general education requirements by taking courses in as many disciplines and from as many different instructors as possible. The purpose is to assure breadth of experience, which, to some degree, requires a narrowness of definition. At the same time, the requirements are not conceived as being narrowly disciplinary. However, if all restraint is thrown aside in staying within discipline labels, then opportunities arise for satisfying many requirements by taking courses from a few faculty in a few disciplines.

Togeas stated that if each course in a single discipline has many designators associated with it, with the restriction that

only one will count, students could potentially take many of the courses in the discipline of their major and satisfy many of their general education requirements. That would defeat the goal of a broad liberal arts experience.

Kuechle added that the current Scholastic Committee chair had notified her that the Scholastic Committee is not in favor of allowing multiple GenEd designators. DeJager explained that their reasoning was because at present there is a process wherein students can petition the Scholastic Committee to change a general education designator, and there are very few who do so. In fact, in the past there were typically 40 petitions a year, but so far this year there have been only three. The existing requirements are hardly so burdensome as to require a change.

Nellis stated that when she asked for this item to be discussed, she was thinking about it in terms of the flexibility that it would give faculty who desire to have more than one designator when courses really could fit two designators. Students should take many courses from many instructors to have broad experiences, but she would like to see more flexibility in the number of designators some of the courses can list, perhaps by allowing a maximum number of general education courses from any one discipline. A number of courses really fit under only one designator, but a course such as Art History could fit under more than one designator. Lee stated that it was a shame that no student member of the Curriculum Committee was present for this discussion. He voiced sympathy for the proposal that Nellis suggested, however, he would not be in favor of a course carrying more than two designators.

Angel agreed with Nellis and Lee and added that in her discipline of Dance, they had to choose whether Dance in Society was going to have an IP or an ArtP designator. It was a difficult choice. If they could have given students a choice of the two designators, it may have provided an opportunity for students to experience a course they may not otherwise have considered. Lee added that in his division of Social Sciences, quite a lot of the courses are listed with an SS designator only because they are limited to one designator.

Strand asked how multiple designators might affect an assessment of general education. Kuechle asked Togeas if he could answer the question since he is chair of the Assessment of Student Learning Committee (ASLC). Togeas answered that the ASLC hasn't talked about any kind of impact a change in general education requirements would have on assessment.

Hinds disagreed with changing the current restriction of general education courses and stated that the reasoning offered in the 1997 report is sound. We want exposure to breadth in terms of disciplines and instructors. He added that if he had not been required to take history as an undergraduate, he would not have become an historian. He concluded that general education requirements "saved" him.

Nellis recalled a Theatre course that had an historically low enrollment although it should have attracted a lot of students. They changed the general education designator, which threw another discipline out of whack (because they were advising that students take the course specifically to fulfill the original general education designator). As intended, the change drew a lot of students to the course. If the course could have maintained both general education designators, it would have met the needs of both disciplines.

Schultz stated that he changed Creative Dramatics because the students asked him why it was not an ArtP course when they were doing so much performing in this class. As he developed the course, it made more sense to change it. Rudney added that the change did cause the Education Division to adjust their advising, but it did work itself out.

De Jager stated that in 1997 under ProsPer, some disciplines didn't want to offer a course with any designator, let alone with multiple designators, because of resource issues. The resulting dearth of classes in certain categories caused access problems for students. The provision that all courses must carry a general education category eliminated that problem. Using general education requirement to curb enrollment was not the answer then, nor is using it to boost enrollment the answer now. However, assigning categories according to the goals of the course should be the bottom line. It should not be driven by the number of students it might attract. Hinds agreed.

Mullin suggested that a greater variety of general education courses could be introduced when new courses are offered. For instance, all Art History courses have been given the Fine Arts designator, even the newest ones. Nellis answered that she keeps getting asked by her division faculty if it has been decided whether they can have two designators. In the

meantime, they continue to choose the same category.

Angell asked Hinds to explain how breadth of experience would be limited if the number of general education designators per course were expanded to a choice of two. Hinds answered that more than one designator per course may prevent students from taking courses elsewhere. Undergraduate education is all about increasing breadth so we make good choices in where we land in life. When you can satisfy several general education requirements in one discipline, it is counterproductive.

Strand asked how faculty members are made aware of the available categories and how they should choose from them. Kuechle explained that division chairs provide information to them.

Gooch stated that, as an instructor, he would teach a course to fulfill the general education goal. If the course had two designators, he would risk diluting the course in order to fill both goals, and would not be meeting the full spirit of the requirements. Schultz stated that in a course like Art History, you are teaching art through an historical perspective, with two general education designators falling right down the middle. Hinds stated that he fundamentally disagreed. Togeas stated that he agreed completely with Hinds. Togeas offers a course on the history of chemistry and wouldn't dream of it carrying Hist designator. A student should get their history from a professional historian.

Kuechle stated her reluctance to request a motion at this time. The chancellor may charge the dean next year to look at general education in line with the upcoming accreditation visit. She suggested that it might be time to review the general education requirements as a whole, since it has been 10 years since it was last reviewed. Nellis stated that she would like to see the issue discussed in a much wider format. Korth stated that it seems the system isn't broken. The Curriculum Committee reviews general education every two or three years and has this discussion over and over. Nellis answered that there still seems to be a lot of faculty who would disagree with the current limit on general education designators. Her discipline coordinators ask her regularly to bring it up at Curriculum Committee meetings. Angell asked if there would be a way to survey faculty to get broader input. Strand answered that it can be brought up as new business on the floor of the Campus Assembly. Angell stated that she was more interested in a forum where the loudest voice does not get the most attention. It seems in our own committee we're quite split. Kuechle asked if the Committee would agree to leave it as a discussion point for now and wait for our self-study and next accreditation visit to begin a broader discussion.

Nellis agreed that it should be put forward for a broader discussion at that time. It's the business of this committee to listen to what faculty members are saying and to occasionally review things and introduce them as discussion items at Campus Assembly. Angell added that we could present the two points of view and facilitate a discussion. Strand disagreed with the assumption that there are only two points of view. Angell answered that at this meeting the discussion has taken two sides: 1) change with limitations, or 2) leave it alone. It seems we should begin the discussion. Kuechle stated that she would be in favor of holding discussion groups before bringing it before Campus Assembly.

Schultz asked if anyone knew offhand what other institutions are doing with general education. Kuechle answered that there are many models out there and reviewing the general education programs at comparable campuses could be helpful. Strand added that the General Education Assessment Committee has done that in the past. Kuechle suggested that it might also be a good idea to talk to the dean candidates about it when they are on campus this spring to learn more about their perspective.

Kuechle thanked Togeas for his participation.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m.  
Submitted by Darla Peterson