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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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9-13-2007

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## **UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

### **MEETING # 2 Minutes**

**September 13, 2007, 8:00 a.m., Behmler 130**

Present: Roland Guyotte (chair), Gwen Rudney, Pieranna Garavaso, Michael Korth, Pareena Lawrence, Ferolyn Angell, Van Gooch, Harold Hinds, Escillia Allen, Nate Swanson, Laura Thoma, Kim Ukura, Jeri Mullin, Clare Strand, Nancy Helsper, Sara Haugen

Absent: Barbara Burke

Visiting: Brenda Boever, Tom McRoberts, Dorothy DeJager

In these minutes: First Year Experience; First Year Experience Disappearing Task Force, Task First Year Seminar Review Subcommittee

### **1. FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE**

Guyotte welcomed Sandy Olson-Loy, vice chancellor for student affairs, who gave a brief history of the first year experience (FYE) committee. An adjunct committee in the late 1980s looked at FYE and revised the student orientation program. When committees were reduced on campus, The FYE committee was dropped, but now that we are looking more at student success and retention, it's good to look at FYE again, so the FYE subcommittee was formed again under the student support services committee to look at touchstones, key points, strengths and opportunities on the Morris campus. Olson-Loy shared that ninety percent of our first-year students live on campus without being required to do so. Chancellor Johnson would like a group to look at and find ways to strengthen the student's entire experience. This group is looking at a student's education and learning experience as well as the other things that contribute to student success, and lack thereof. The committee did not, at the time it started, include a review of the First Year Seminar (FYS).

Angell asked if the committee will be looking at diversity as it relates to the FYS and the changes happening to the multi-ethnic student body. Olson-Loy responded that it was not something the committee had considered because they were waiting for the charge by the chancellor before continuing. We know that the experience on campus is not the same as living at home. We have found that our entering students have less experience with people of different racial and ethnic background than other national campuses. But we have found that our students leave UMM having gained a better understanding of racial and ethnic diversity than those on other University of Minnesota campuses and nationwide.

Rudney asked to what degree the FYE committee has addressed the academic part of FYS. Olson-Loy answered that it has discussed retention and student academic success. Students who don't have success their first year are more likely to leave. A lot of students who come here haven't had to develop good study habits and find that transition difficult. Lawrence added that she was on the FYE committee and recalls that FYS was not the charge of the committee. The chair of the committee, Dave Swanson, didn't feel that it was right for the FYE committee to address the curriculum. Guyotte stated that there is an almost standard series of courses that are densely staffed by first-year students, such as math, introduction to psychology, and college writing, in addition to FYS. Olson-Loy added that Farmington has linked FYS and college writing closely together.

### **1.5. FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE DISAPPEARING TASK FORCE**

Guyotte stated that the hand-out he distributed to the curriculum committee members is a draft charge that came from the chancellor for a first year experience disappearing task force (DTF). The task force will consist of the current members of the FYE subcommittee of the student services committee of campus assembly with several additional faculty members, including one faculty member from the curriculum committee. The Gooch asked if this committee charge is for the third agenda item, FYS review committee. Guyotte answered that it is not the same committee. This is in addition to the FYS review committee. Strand recommended that assistant dean Meek be a member of the task force because of her role with scholastic committee and retention. Olson-Loy stated that the membership of the FYE committee (both last year and at present) included Dave Swenson (chair); Julie Phelps, Heather Nicole Christian, Sandy Olson-Loy, Brenda Boever, Fang Du, Chris Butler, Ken Crandall, Dan Magner, Leslie Meek, Tracey Anderson, Tammy

Berberi, Pareena Lawrence, Adam Yust, Adam Olson, Nate Giles, and Andrew Swan. Garavaso observed that it is a big committee. If all have to coordinate their schedules, it's an incredible number of people. Olson-Loy answered that they have talked about also breaking into focus groups who don't meet with the big group as regularly.

Angell asked why someone in the academic assistance area is not represented on the FYE committee. The office provides tutoring and develops academic support relationships with many first-year students. People in academic assistance have expertise in the area of the first year experience. Strand answered that the assistant dean supervises that unit and is on the committee. Lawrence added that Meek was a very strong advocate for that area when she served on the FYE committee. It was an integral part of her role on the committee.

Swanson stated that he was intrigued by point #7: "Include in its recommendation those related to administrative structure and leadership for the first year experience and those related to resources." Lawrence explained that it relates to having a director like the honors program currently has. FYS now has a coordinator on a rotating basis. The director would still report to the dean. Guyotte stated that, prior to her position as dean at UMM (1979-1995), Bettina Blake's role was dean of freshmen at Wellesley. Some colleges do that, but creating an extra administrative post at UMM may not be an option, given budget constrictions. That's obviously something the task force could study and look at other schools with that kind of approach. There are inherent historical separations of duties of the dean of faculty and dean of students.

Strand suggested that, although perhaps implied, the committee's charge should clearly state how it connects to our strategic position goal of improving our graduation rates. Guyotte agreed and added that it might be useful to add a phrase about retention in the first paragraph.

Angell asked if this committee would be under the purview of the assistant dean. Guyotte answered that it may do so if there were a full-time assistant dean. Guyotte stated that he would prefer someone who teaches and doesn't make a career of it. It may be a significantly important post. Garavaso stated that she was very much in favor of the added coordinator position. She added that she didn't think it can be successfully integrated without a person who can supervise and coordinate it.

Angell asked for clarification on what the curriculum is being asked to do about the charge. Guyotte answered that the committee is being asked only to look at and respond to the draft. A vote is not required, only consultation. We are in the process of hiring a visiting expert from the Center for the First Year, Randy Swing. He will be at UMM on October 1-2. There are various models of successful first year programs, such as University 101 in South Carolina. He will do a public presentation and lecture about first year programs and the experience at other colleges. This group will report to the student services committee and to the curriculum committee and will hopefully have their work done by January.

## **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Guyotte asked for approval of minutes from September 6, 2007.

**MOTION:** (Hinds/Rudney) To approve the minutes from September 6 (with changes)

**VOTE:** Motion passed (11-0-0)

**Discussion:** Strand asked that a correction be made at the bottom of page 1 of the minutes. In the discussion of the motion of the previous week's minutes, it states: "Strand agreed that the name is not public information." Strand asked that it be changed to "Strand agreed that the name and courses students are taking are not public information." Lawrence also requested a change be made to the last sentence in the first paragraph on page 4, which states: "Lawrence answered that each individual student would have to convince her that it would be appropriate." She asked that it be changed to: "Lawrence answered yes, that it is a concern, and each individual student would have to convince the discipline that it would be appropriate." Ukura asked that page numbers be added to the minutes.

## **FIRST YEAR SEMINAR REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE**

Angell recalled that the committee was formed last year but that it was waiting for the charge from the chancellor,

which did not come. Garavaso added that there was a review done years ago, which Jooinn Lee chaired. A proposal was made then to review the FYS every three years. It was later changed to every five years. Strand asked if FYS is assessed, how it is assessed, and if not, will it ever be assessed. Guyotte answered that it is one of the most assessed courses on campus. Strand asked what will be said about the FYS in the HLC assessment report that UMM will be submitting, and whether the curriculum committee needs to do anything about it. Guyotte answered that the curriculum committee will see the report, but what group deals with it is yet to be seen.

Ukura stated that there appears to be a big gap between the amounts of work required for the different FYS sections. Students want standardized classes. Some are required to put in more work than others for the two-credit class. Guyotte answered that the question of workload will always be with us. At a certain point the differences become intolerable. Some might have more hands-on work (dance and martial arts), while others might write more papers.

Angell added that another issue that comes up is the question of the purpose of the class and the way classes address diversity. DeJager answered that the diversity focus is not only ethnicity or racism. It can also refer to economic or cultural diversity. Angell responded that a lot of people expect it to be about race. It has a lot to do with the word. Strand asked where in the catalog the word diversity is mentioned; it is not found in the goals. Helsper answered that it is in the title of the course: Human Diversity. Gooch stated that the original concept of diversity was intended to cover subject material that would last a couple of years. Diversity was intended to be a focus that could change from time to time. It was reviewed, the curriculum committee liked it, and it hung on. Guyotte added that it was a broad umbrella under which people could teach a variety of topics.

Angell stated that the assessment questions for FYS don't match the stated goals. Lawrence answered that this was changed last year so that they do now match. Angell added that one of the goals has been to help students learn to live together and avoid some of the unpleasant confrontations that have happened in our school's history. FYS was seen as a way to address some of that and now we are broadening. Guyotte answered that the goal seems to be the charge of the FYE committee and has less to do with FYS. Angell responded that perhaps FYS has been asked to do more than it really can do. Garavaso asked if we have data that has assessment (faculty evaluating the experience rather than the students). She had heard feedback from the students only. Even if the students aren't happy with inconsistencies, faculty would be happy if the assessment showed that they were learning what they are supposed to be learning. Lawrence answered that a report went out 4 to 5 years ago that addressed faculty responses. It has not been addressed since.

Guyotte asked for a volunteer student and a volunteer faculty member to be the curriculum committee representatives on the FYS review committee. He stated that he will take names to the chancellor for final approval. Ukura volunteered to be the student representative. No faculty member volunteered. Angell volunteered in lieu of a regular faculty member. Guyotte answered that he would take it under advisement.

The curriculum committee will meet again in two weeks.

Swanson stated that the assessment of student learning committee could use more support from the curriculum committee. Guyotte agreed to speak to the chair about it.

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