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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

MEETING # 5 Minutes

November 1, 2007, 8:00 a.m., Behmler 130

Present: Roland Guyotte (chair), Barbara Burke, Janet Ericksen, Van Gooch, Michael Korth, Pareena Lawrence, Escillia Allen, Nate Swanson, Laura Thoma, Kim Ukura, Jeri Mullin, Clare Strand, Sara Haugen, Nancy Helsper

Absent: Ferolyn Angell, Gwen Rudney, Harold Hinds

Visiting: Brenda Boever, Dorothy DeJager, Peter Wyckoff, Tom McRoberts

In these minutes: Proposal for new major in environmental studies

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Guyotte asked for approval of minutes from October 25, 2007.

MOTION: (Burke/Swanson) To approve the minutes from October 25.

VOTE: Motion passed (8-0-0)

2. PROPOSAL FOR NEW MAJOR IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Guyotte welcomed Peter Wyckoff to present a proposal to the committee. Wyckoff distributed copies of a chart that showed a comparison of UMM with other colleges (Minnesota and COPLAC). Wyckoff explained that he was one of a group of faculty members who had been active in developing the new major proposal. Others were professors Breen, Chollett, Cole, Graham, Jones, Kildegaard, Kuchenreuther, and Stewart. Wyckoff stated that he was speaking to the committee as a representative of that group. Environmental studies and environmental science are areas where a number of faculty members with interests and expertise have moved in that direction. The majority of interest lies in the Divisions of the Social Sciences and Science and Mathematics, with added interest coming from the Humanities.

Wyckoff explained that the environmental studies area of concentration has existed at UMM for some years and as a template since 2005. Eight students have graduated from UMM with that major, all since the late 1990s. Helsper noted that the statistics she had provided for the proposal did not state that there were eight graduates. She asked that the proposal be corrected to state that there were eight approved areas of concentration in environmental studies from 1973-2005 and five graduates from 1990 to 2006 (none from 1990 to 1998). Wyckoff agreed to correct the proposal and said that eight moved on that path and apparently three were still working on finishing that up. He went on to say that the Admissions Office informed him that this is one area of study that students are requesting. We have a lot of information and promotional materials about our green initiatives, and are ahead of our curriculum in that area. This proposal takes care of the curricular part of it.

Wyckoff stated that the move toward adding the major was given a big boost when Chancellor Johnson came on board and showed a strong interest in such a major. The UMM Strategic Plan adopted last fall also references a need for green curriculum. U of M Campus Compact money this summer will include monies for a faculty position supporting an interdisciplinary environmental studies major. Twenty years ago it would have been difficult to find a template for such a major, but now there are standards for an environmental studies curriculum. The models are strong in the Social Sciences with Humanities contributions. In many colleges history is a Humanities discipline.

Wyckoff stated that the initial draft of the proposal was shared with the division chairs in early September 2007. On September 11, it was mailed to faculty, P&A staff, and students. Input was sought by way of e-mail, a weblog, and two public meetings. He was invited to and attended a Humanities Division meeting to discuss the proposal. Jamey Jones (geology) and Vicki Graham (English) presented the proposal to the Morris Campus Student Association (MCSA). CRPC has also endorsed the proposal as it applies to the allocation of resources. The proposal was then submitted to the Dean on October 4 for Curriculum Committee approval. The disciplines of biology, statistics, and English are willing to take on commitments for regularly offering required courses for the new major. Ericksen added that the Humanities Division has committed to the extent that should a faculty member leave, they would hire someone who would teach the course.

An internship and a senior seminar are included in the courses required for the major. Burke asked if the Career Center was on board to link with the internship. Wyckoff answered that he had discussed it with McRoberts because it would be a summer school internship. Lawrence explained that internships that are required for majors are mostly set up by the disciplines and not the Career Center. She added that Social Sciences discussed the proposal at a discipline coordinators meeting. An outcome of that meeting was that the environmental economics course that was part of the core in the original plan was moved to the list of electives. Wyckoff stated that students must choose a coherent set of courses from a list of 24 elective credits. At least 16 must be from the 3xxx or 4xxx level. This brings it in line with, if not ahead of, other majors.

Burke asked whether having a cap on directed study credits within a discipline was discussed. Certain disciplines have shied away from having all directed studies carried out in one term. Strand answered that there is a limit on the total number of directed studies a student can accumulate. Burke replied that as long as the directed studies are spread out among disciplines it would not be flagged. Since this is an interdisciplinary major, there may be a need for a limit. Guyotte responded that in lifting the 48-credit limit in last week's meeting, the committee has demonstrated that it intends to guarantee students get certain experiences without unduly restricting them. Wyckoff stated that the topic of directed studies had not come up in the discussions of the group. Lawrence added that she had not thought about it either, but some majors allow no more than eight credits in directed studies applied toward the major. Korth stated that he could not find a mention of directed studies being part of the major. The proposal states (on page 8 of the agenda) "Take 24 or more credit(s) from the following: . . ." Wyckoff answered that the intention was to say that the list is pre-approved but other courses may be taken. In the middle of the paragraph under "Other requirements, if applicable:" it reads "A list of electives follows, but other courses may be appropriate to add depth and provide more theoretical context for the environmentally focused coursework." Mullin suggested that the sentence be moved to the *Elective Courses* section.

Ukura asked whether the number of credits required for the major (52 to 54) is higher than most other majors. She based her question on the concern voiced at last week's meeting that the elimination of the 48-credit limit might result in majors raising their required credits. Wyckoff answered that the requirement is more than most, but that some of the required courses also fulfill the GenEd requirements. Since it is an interdisciplinary major, there is a broader section of courses required for this major.

Thoma questioned whether the summer term course listed on the Suggested Course Plan is a requirement for the major. Most students work during the summer to pay for college and may not be able to afford taking a summer course. Wyckoff answered that it is possible for a student to complete the major in four years without a summer school internship.

Ericksen asked for clarification on determining applicable electives. If there is a disagreement philosophically about the kind of course that will fit, e.g., whether the ceramics course is applied or theoretical, who will have the final say? Wyckoff answered that fine arts classes are generally not part of environmental studies majors. Ericksen agreed that in general a ceramics course would not be applicable, but the UMM course taught by Kevin Flicker would fit, so it depends on who is teaching it, rather than the title of the course. Wyckoff stated that the core issue is that this course falls under the arts and letters category while the major would accept a more theoretical course. St. Olaf College has no arts in their major. Ericksen answered that she would argue fine arts is theoretical. She would want to make sure whoever makes the decision includes someone who is open to the argument.

Gooch asked whether the decision on appropriate electives would be made by a person or a group. Wyckoff answered that it would be a group including a program coordinator and faculty drawn from all four divisions who would make the decision. Strand stated that if an elective were rejected by the group, the means of appeal would be the dean as discipline coordinator of interdisciplinary studies.

Strand asked why the Field of Study was listed as Social Science and Human Services. Mullen answered that the number of choices were limited and this was the best fit. Strand stated that the field of study in PCAS is used as a search mechanism and could be relevant in the future when it is linked to Grad Planner. She read the CIP code definition for environmental studies:

A program that focuses on environment-related issues using scientific, social scientific, or humanistic approaches or a combination. Includes instruction in the basic principles of ecology and environmental science and related subjects such as policy, politics, law, economics, social aspects, planning, pollution control, natural resources, and the interactions of human beings and nature.”

Wyckoff asked whether, given the definition of the major that Strand just read, there would be a better choice. It could be argued that all three divisions could be listed, but this was the most likely choice to have it fall under the broad rubric of Social Science and Human Services.

Swanson stated that the senior capstone appeared to be structured as a “what I did on my summer vacation” course. He asked whether it requires the breadth and vigor of a course that caps a major. Wyckoff answered that it was created to be similar to the biology capstone course. Each student will give a 45-minute public seminar on the results of their research during their internship. Students would also come together to work on case studies as a group. The two experiences are very vigorous. Swanson asked how it compares to the capstones in the majors listed at other colleges. Wyckoff answered that he found it to be within the range.

Lawrence asked if students would also be expected to participate in the seminars led by other students in the major. Thoma added that in biology and chemistry students attend the other students’ seminars. She asked how students would earn the two credits if there were only one or two people in the major. Wyckoff answered that it does create a problem in some majors. Swanson stated that it seems to be a substantive capstone course and perhaps worth more than two credits if there are a lot of students in the major and they are expected to participate in all of the seminars and case study workgroups. Wyckoff answered that it was purposely set at two credits to keep the major from getting any bigger and to keep the faculty credit load down. A two-credit course is much easier to staff than a four-credit course. Burke added that a senior seminar is generally a lot more work than the credits reflect because it’s supposed to be a culmination of all that the student has learned. This capstone course is not out of line in comparison to other senior seminars across campus.

Swanson asked whether the elective of Ed 2301 is listed as a result of consultation with the Education Division regarding a commitment of resources and faculty. Wyckoff answered that the course is a current course offered with the Prairie Learning Center in Fergus Falls. Education put the course forward for the new major. Burke added that it’s offered currently as an enhancement for teaching licensure.

MOTION: (Burke/Lawrence) To approve the new environmental studies (EnSt) major, including four new courses (EnSt 1101, EnSt 2101, EnSt 3996, and EnSt 4901), with two editorial changes (correcting the number of past graduates from 8 to 5 in the *Need and Demand* section on page 6 and moving the following sentence on page 8 under *Other requirements, if applicable* to the first line under *Elective Courses* on the same page: “A list of electives follows, but other courses may be appropriate to add depth and provide more theoretical context for the environmentally focused coursework.”)

VOTE: Motion passed (9-0-0)

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