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University of Minnesota, Morris
Scholastic Committee
Minutes #9, December 15, 2004

The Scholastic held its last meeting of the term on December 15th at 4. p.m. in Science 3550. Rich Heyman joined us for discussion of a petition to be exempted from College Writing. Meetings during spring term will be on Tuesday afternoons in Behmler Conference Room, beginning at 3:45 p.m.

Members present: S. Aronson, B. Burke, W. Hunt, J. Kim, N. McPhee (chair), L. Meek, G. Sheagley, K. Strissel, D. De Jager, K. Klinger (coordinator) and R. Thielke.

1. The December 1st Minutes were approved.

2. College Writing Petitions: In spring 2002, the English discipline revamped its criteria for the College Writing course. When acting on petitions to waive College Writing, the Scholastic Committee found that these changes are not reflected in three references to College Writing in the catalog. The Committee recommended that the English discipline work with the Curriculum Committee to bring the descriptions into greater congruence with the current goals of the course which stress argument. Rich Heyman, College Writing coordinator, met with us to discuss proposed changes in the written statements about goals for College Writing as well as for the course description.

Goals for College Writing GER (from page 60)

Old version: To understand the writing process through invention, organization, drafting, revising, and editing, and develop writers who can write about a range of ideas for a variety of readers.

Proposed new version: To understand and demonstrate competence in the conventions of academic writing.

Course Description for Engl 1011 (from page 91)

Old version: Practice in expressive and analytical writing, with special emphasis on the multi-source essay.

Proposed new version: Practice in academic writing, with special emphasis on reading closely and critically for the purposes of scholarly analysis, responding to and making use of the work of others, and drafting and revising texts.

We expressed a wish for greater specificity about what is meant by the *conventions of academic writing*. Heyman explained that students send in papers that don't show what's at the heart of making an argument. We encouraged Heyman to explain that more fully in the descriptions. Before a change can appear in the catalog, it needs to be approved by the Curriculum Committee.

After the meeting, Heyman submitted these changes in GER goals:

To understand and demonstrate competence in the conventions of academic writing, as they relate to argumentation, reading closely and critically for the purposes of scholarly analysis, responding to and making use of the work of others, and drafting and revising texts.

#1132--Waive the College Writing requirement based on portfolio evaluation. **Approved**

3. Report on the Early Alert system: In 2003-04, the Scholastic Committee unanimously supported the development of an early alert system under the leadership of then Chair Leslie Meek. Retroactively, we sanctioned their committee as a sub-committee of the Scholastic Committee. Current membership includes representatives from Counseling, ORL, Education and Athletics, MSP, AAC, Advising, and the divisions. The sub-committee developed a plan to identify students in academic difficulty early and to give them immediate encouragement, along with the tools to succeed. Early alert went into effect in fall

2004. It is the MSP and athletes' alert extended to the full campus community. Thirty one faculty participated.

Meek reviewed the purpose of the early alert. We have an obligation as a college to help those students we have chosen to admit. Students leave UMM when they are not happy with their performance. The early alert focuses on students who need some help, and she will report later after grades have been posted about how they performed. The early alert also is helpful in identifying students in serious trouble.

The process works like this: The note from the faculty goes to Colleen in the Academic Assistance Center and then to Meek. She writes to advisors, explaining what's going on and suggesting interventions. She also offers the support of the Early Alert Committee. The advisor may or may not respond. When an advisor has tried all that can be done, an Early Alert committee member may be asked to intervene. Four difficult cases were sent to Sandy Olson-Loy this fall.

An early alert can be sent any time of the term. Generally, the early alert is used during weeks 3, 4 and 5, the mid-term alert in the middle weeks. However, the early alert can be used after the mid-term alert is no longer available. There is an advantage in identifying whether a student has received more than one alert. Meek noted that students are under considerable pressure. They often carry heavy loads and are single parents. The early alert system allows the broadly representative committee to develop a fuller picture and to respond from several perspectives.

The meeting was adjourned.