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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
2008-09 MEETING #10 Minutes
November 19, 2008, 8:00 a.m., Behmler 130

Present: Cheryl Contant (chair), Brenda Boever, Mark Collier, Janet Ericksen, Van Gooch, Donovan Hanson, Michael Korth, Judy Kuechle, Pareena Lawrence, Axl McChesney, Alex Murphy, Gwen Rudney, Dennis Stewart, Nancy Helsper

Absent: Sara Haugen, Veronica Lei, Clare Strand

Visiting: Dorothy De Jager, Jeri Squier

In these minutes: 32 credit maximum for I.S. internships

Contant announced with no objection that the November 26 meeting is canceled. She also announced that the meeting will end a few minutes early so the Education members and she can make it to the NCATE/BOT exit report meeting. Rudney stated that the NCATE/BOT visit had been going very well. Contant reminded the Committee that the discussion on “same as” courses the previous week had resulted in only an insert to the catalog copy, and not a vote to forward to Campus Assembly.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 12, 2008

MOTION (Kuechle/Rudney) to approve the November 12, 2008 minutes.

Discussion: None.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

2. CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF 32 CREDIT MAXIMUM FOR INTERNSHIPS

Contant began framing the discussion with the questions: Is there and should there be a maximum number of internship credit hours that a student can take toward his/her degree? Kuechle stated that there are prerequisites and conditions already in place on most internships, practicum, and field experiences related to majors or divisions. In the education program there is a required maximum. Rudney added that there would be no way for a student to meet the teacher education program requirements and take a large number of credits in field experiences. Secondary education has a required total of 15 credits of field experiences and elementary education requires 16 credits.

Korth asked how the motion that was approved five years ago is being interpreted. [Minutes of Curriculum Committee, October 15, 2003: “Motion (Korth, Bezanson) to set the maximum credit limit for Internships at 32 cr for the life of the student.”] Contant stated that the 2003 motion was never forwarded to campus assembly for approval. It is being discussed now to ensure the Committee understands what the motion intended to accomplish before it comes before the campus assembly this year. As it is stated, a limit is given, but it doesn’t specify whether it refers only to Interdisciplinary Studies (I.S.) internships or if it includes all other internships and internship-related courses in divisions. The motion may be too broad. The Committee needs to provide a rationale for making the change when it is brought to campus assembly.

Lawrence stated that she would separate I.S. internships from divisional internships because they are much different. The divisional internships are much more scrutinized within the majors. An I.S. internship is not discipline-specific. I.S. internships can carry a broader credit limit than those in a discipline, and credit limits vary across disciplines.

Collier asked for a description of the kinds of activities a Prior Learning Internship includes. Contant answered that the catalog describes it as credit for work experience. De Jager added that prior learning is documented and has to connect with faculty-directed new learning, with credit awarded for both. Contant stated that when I.S. internships come to her for approval her review of them includes looking for specified work hours, the extent of interaction between a faculty member and student, paper requirement, readings, those sorts of things. The experience takes place outside of the classroom, but is intended to have curricular content. Lawrence stated that the management internship (Mgmt 4896) is

rarely taken during a semester. It usually involves a summer internship in a firm. It has a limit of 4 credits and only 2 of the 4 can count toward the major. Kuechle explained that the WSS 3210 internship frequently involves going to a company where sports facilities are available and working with a fitness plan for employees.

Murphy questioned the purpose of the discussion since a problem doesn't appear to exist. Students have to fulfill all of the GenEd requirements, which provide the intended breadth of knowledge, and there are effective limits placed on the existing internships and field experiences. Collier stated that the argument is that we want students at this liberal arts institution to take a variety of electives rather than one activity that uses up nearly all of the elective credits. Lawrence stated that she agreed with the argument, but explained that a single internship can cover a very broad range of experiences. Contant asked if there was a current limit on how many internship credits can come from one discipline. Lawrence answered that there is no broad rule, but some disciplines have a limit.

Rudney asked if there were any examples where this has been a problem, for example students who are always gone from campus. Stewart answered that there may be a problem in the case of a student who has been working, brings in 60 transfer credits, and a large portion of the remaining credits are from internships. Very few of this student's credit hours result from an in-class experience at UMM. Lawrence stated that management/economics has a requirement that half of the upper division courses need to be taken at UMM. This applies to transfer students as well. Ericksen stated that English has a similar explicit statement. De Jager stated that last year the Scholastic Committee approved and sent forward the recommendation [that was not acted on by Campus Assembly] that UMM enforce provision (2) of the all-university residency requirement that states: "Students must complete at least half of upper division major work on the campus from which they are seeking to graduate." A major can determine how upper division course work is defined. Kuechle asked if the coursework had to be from UMM or if the student had to be in residency at UMM while taking the courses. De Jager answered that it does not apply to residency because students can go to the Twin Cities campus and be considered in residence.

Lawrence stated that placing a limit on the number of credits may impact students who intern in cities like Washington D.C. Currently, the number of credits that can count toward the major remains the same, but the student is granted enough credits for the internship to allow them to get financial aid and afford to live in D.C. or other cities. Otherwise it wouldn't be feasible for the student.

Helsper shared the history of why this issue came up in 2003. Before ECAS, repeatability and maximums weren't an issue. Now, ECAS requires that a limit be entered. Without an entry, the system defaults to 999 credits. Squier and Helsper brought the issue to the Committee. The Committee came up with limits. The Twin Cities campus had a maximum of 16 Directed Study credits at the time. Squier added that only Directed Studies and I.S. internships were considered because the disciplines monitor their own internships internally.

Contant asked if internships are given a GenEd designator. De Jager answered that they don't have a category, but they count in the 60 credits of GenEd. Murphy asked what is left after an internship is counted in GenEd. De Jager answered that all of the GenEd categories must be filled to satisfy the 60 credits of GenEd, so other controls kick in.

Ericksen stated that since the majors monitor internally, the discussion is really about how many credits a student can take in combination, plus how to avoid the 999 limit. Contant replied that if UMM is a residential liberal arts college, then surely it is valid to question whether a junior and senior should be allowed or encouraged to take the equivalency of a full year of academic credits while being off-campus and not involved in the classroom, interacting with classmates.

Ericksen asked what might happen if a limit was set at 8 or 12 total credits for internships other than in a major. Several members answered that it would impact a student's financial aid to take so few credits. If it were set at 16 credits a student could take a full semester for the internship without financial aid implications. De Jager added that students who take a full year internship often take an additional semester to graduate. Lawrence stated that the political science internship may take a year because to intern with a senator requires a commitment of a full year. Some have enough political science credits so they sign up for an I.S. internship. Some students also spend a year abroad to work with a non-governmental organization (NGO). De Jager added that reducing the 32 credit limit on Prior Learning internships would cause a problem for the former business men/women from the area who use the Prior Learning internships to formalize their education and complete a degree.

Content concluded that the discussion may result in leaving the 2003 motion as it stands, but stating what it includes may be more direct. She proposed leaving the limit at the stated 32 credits but adding that they are for the I.S. internships. Students can take more credits, but only 32 credit hours will count toward the degree. Kuechle clarified that the change should also include substituting the word “Internships” with I.S. internships 3796, 3896, and 3996, and adding the words “toward the degree requirement” after 32 cr.

Collier stated that there is an argument that 32 credits of internships is too much, no matter how valuable the experiences are. Should a student get a full academic year of credit for doing that? It seems like it’s too much. Lawrence replied that students still have to fulfill all the major and GenEd requirements. Collier responded that it is still an entire semester worth of courses, and in some cases, an entire year of credits. Lawrence responded that a year-long internship has a lot of faculty contact built into it. Collier stated that one course that carries 32 credits for the same thing (but a lot of work) does not provide the variety of several different courses with different faculty and student interaction. The reason for a limit is to ensure students take a variety of courses. That would be the rationale to reduce the limit. Contant stated that the counter argument is that most of what students do on internships probably involves a broader variety of learning experiences than what they would encounter in four courses in a semester. An example of that variety would be a student working at an international firm, speaking a foreign language, and taking part in day-to-day operations of the firm. Collier replied that it could be so, but may not be. Squier asked if anyone knows if the number of credits allowed had ever been abused. She stated that she has seen very few internships come through the Registrar’s Office for more than 12 credits. Contant agreed and stated that she had approved one for 16 credits, but that it was an exception rather than the norm.

Gooch stated that he saw no problem leaving the motion it as it is and not adding a restriction to the catalog. The limit of 999 was avoided and there are many checks and balances to prevent misuse. Lawrence stated that she preferred a slightly modified motion of 32 credits in I.S. internships.

Contant stated that there was a similar motion regarding Directed Studies, setting the limit to 10 credits. That motion also failed to go forward to Campus Assembly in 2003. Because disciplines have limits in place on Directed Studies, there is no longer a need to set a campus-wide limit. The motion from 2003 will not go forward to Campus Assembly.

MOTION (Korth/Lawrence) to set the maximum credit limit for I.S. internships 3796, 3896, and 3996, at 32 credits toward the degree requirement.

VOTE: Motion passed (11-0-0)

Contant stated that there was no time to consider the next item on the agenda regarding the FL GenEd designator on 1001 language courses. Contant handed out a proposed rewording of the catalog copy for the Committee to consider for discussion at its next meeting (on December 3).

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Adjourned 8:50 a.m.

Submitted by Darla Peterson