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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

2008-09 MEETING #18 Minutes

March 25, 2009, 8:00 a.m., Imholte 109

Present: Cheryl Contant (chair), Brenda Boever, Mark Collier, Janet Ericksen, Van Gooch, Donovan Hanson, Michael Korth, Judy Kuechle, Pareena Lawrence, Mike McBride, Gwen Rudney, Dennis Stewart, Clare Strand, Sara Haugen, Nancy Helsper, Jeri Squier

Absent: Axl McChesney, Alex Murphy

Visiting: None

In these minutes: Course changes (in chemistry; computer science; environmental science; geology; social science; sociology; and gender, women, and sexuality studies), Proposal to eliminate Teacher Education Adjunct Committee, Discussion of Student Learning Outcomes.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION (Kuechle/Lawrence) to approve the March 4, 2009 minutes.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

2. COURSE APPROVALS

Division of Science and Mathematics

MOTION (Korth/Ericksen) to approve changes to the chemistry major and Chem 1001.

Revise Major: Chemistry Major (B.A.)

Course Change: Chem 1001—Chemistry for the Curious Citizen: The Role of Chemistry in the Environment and Everyday Life (Sci-L, 4 cr)

Discussion: Korth explained that last year the chemistry discipline split the intro to research course and forgot to change the major requirements in the chemistry major to show the split. This change inserts Chem 2322—Introduction to Research II into the major requirements. The change to Chem 1001 is a revival and alteration of the course for summer session.

VOTE: Motion passed (9-0-0)

MOTION (Korth/McBride) to approve the new course, CSci 4458.

New Course: CSci 4458—Systems: Bioinformatic Systems (M/SR; 4 cr)

Discussion: Korth explained that the course is being taught spring semester 2009 under provisional approval.

VOTE: Motion passed (9-0-0)

MOTION (Kuechle/Korth) to approve two new courses in environmental science: ESci 1131 and ESci 3111.

New Course: ESci 1131—Renewable Energy with Biomass Gasification (Sci-L; 3 cr)

New Course: ESci 3111—Evolution of the Minnesota Prairie (Sci-L; 4 cr)

Discussion: Korth explained that ESci 1131 is a May term course that has been provisionally approved for May session 2009. ESci 3111 is a new course proposed for the environmental science program. It is also available for the environmental studies students and students interested in taking it for general education credit.

VOTE: Motion passed (9-0-0)

[Stewart arrived.]

MOTION (Korth/Ericksen) to approve the new course in geology, Geol 3006.

New Course: Geol 3006—X-ray Diffraction Techniques for the Identification of Clay Minerals in Geologic Environments (2 cr.)

Discussion: Korth stated that this is a new course to teach students how to use the x-ray diffraction equipment that was obtained as a result of an NSF grant. In some ways the course is a fulfillment of promises made in the grant proposal. It is provisionally approved.

VOTE: Motion passed (10-0-0)

Division of the Social Sciences

MOTION (Lawrence/McBride) to approve changes to the GWSS major and minor.

Revise Major: Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies Major (B.A.)

Revise Minor: Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies Minor

Discussion: Lawrence stated that all changes are the result of course changes in sociology. The impact on interdisciplinary majors such as GWSS is the addition of an elective to choose from in the major and minor. The change should also show up in the environmental studies program, and she will see that change is made.

VOTE: Motion passed (10-0-0)

MOTION (Lawrence/Korth) to approve changes to the Social Science major.

Revise Major: Social Science Major (B.A.)

Discussion: Lawrence explained that this change reflects the changes made to sociology courses earlier. The subfield in Social Science is affected by the addition of Soc 3112. Soc 3103 and 3403 should replace 3101-3102 and 3401-3402, respectively. The first two courses will be deleted. Soc 3103 will be in its place and the second two courses will be replaced by 3403.

VOTE: Motion passed (10-0-0)

MOTION (Lawrence/Ericksen) to approve changes to the sociology major and minor.

Revise Major: Sociology Major (B.A.)

Revise Minor: Sociology Minor

Discussion: Lawrence explained that the change is in required courses and the addition of Soc 3112 to the electives to both the major and minor.

VOTE: Motion passed (10-0-0)

3. PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE THE TEACHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MOTION (Kuechle/Ericksen) to discontinue the Teacher Education Committee as an adjunct committee of the Curriculum Committee.

Discussion: Contant stated that the proposal was submitted from the Education Division and asked Kuechle to present the proposal. Kuechle explained that the committee had been in existence and in the campus bylaws since the UMM constitution came into existence, or at least for decades. It was created because liberal arts faculty and education faculty worked together to prepare for a review of programs by accrediting agencies who wanted to be sure faculty who taught the content within the subject matter would have an understanding of what teacher education was all about. Accreditation and Board of Teaching (BOT) has since changed the structure of how we have to be accountable. A much broader type of committee is needed now, in the form of an advisory council. The council helps Education gather information and have an understanding of what needs to be done. The current advisory council was in place during the last accreditation and licensing visit and helped us remain in good standing. The BOT and the accreditation agency

would prefer we use the advisory council. The Teacher Education Committee is a redundant set of actions. In fact, they did not even meet with the Teacher Education Committee when the accreditation visit occurred this year.

VOTE: Motion passed (10-0-0)

3. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Contant suggested that this conversation will begin this week and continue on into the next week. One of the topics that has come up repeatedly since she has been at Morris is the issue of student learning outcomes. This is now a common and, in some cases, required set of standards that we set for ourselves about what we expect students will know by the time they graduate. UMTC proposed a set of learning outcomes last year that are now implemented and a formal part of policy structure for TC campus only. They have not been adopted at UMM. ECAS forms will start asking new courses to link to learning objectives. Last year a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee, chaired by Lawrence, was asked to look at the UMTC set of learning outcomes and see if they fit our campus. Contant stated that she would like the Curriculum Committee to propose a set of learning outcomes for UMM. We can accept the UMTC list temporarily or create our own. Contant asked Lawrence to give a brief report of the work of the subcommittee. Lawrence explained that the subcommittee consisted of Lawrence, Burke, and Swanson. They looked at the UMTC learning outcomes, as well as other schools, including the Morris 14.

Following are the UMTC Learning Outcomes:

At the time of receiving a bachelor's degree, it is the University's goal that its students:

1. Can identify, define, and solve problems.
2. Can locate and critically evaluate information.
3. Have mastered a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry.
4. Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies.
5. Can communicate effectively.
6. Understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression across disciplines.
7. Have acquired skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning.

Following are the five learning outcomes that were proposed by the subcommittee to the Curriculum Committee last year:

1. Understanding multidisciplinary modes of inquiry
2. Social responsibility
3. Cross-cultural competency/multiple perspectives
4. Master of a body of knowledge
5. Skills-based outcomes—FL/AP, quantitative skills, information/technical literacy, written/oral communication, critical thinking

Contant stated that when she maps the two versions, they are different in structure, but the content is much the same. Lawrence replied that the difference is that the UMTC version has skills mixed in, but the proposed version separates them. In preparing these the subcommittee also thought about evaluation and how to measure the outcomes. Ericksen noted that these are a lot easier to measure than the others.

Strand stated that the UMTC criteria appear to focus on the courses that the students are taking. As a result of taking courses the end result will have those outcomes. The courses have to justify how they meet a specific or combination of learning outcomes which is why they are now a part of the ECAS form. It appears that UMM is more focused on the learning experience of the students and not so much the specific courses. Those are huge differences.

Ericksen responded that the UMTC version refers to the time of receiving a bachelor's degree, so they are focused on the overall experience as well. Strand answered that she knows, from presentations and meetings she has attended on the Twin Cities campus, their learning outcomes are tied to an accreditation visit they are anticipating. Kuechle stated that is why ECAS is asking to track if a student has had courses that fit outcomes.

Strand stated that what the TC is doing is acceptable and she did not understand why the UMTC learning outcome process, which has taken place over several years, is seemingly being dismissed by our campus. Lawrence answered that we have not dismissed it. Interim vice chancellor Guyotte asked the subcommittee to look at the learning outcomes that the UMTC developed to see if we should accept them or if we contribute anything uniquely at UMM. The conversation isn't over on that. Strand responded that a full report was provided by the UMTC and she was curious who had read the full report.

Collier, who was not on the Curriculum Committee last year, asked if it is the responsibility of the Curriculum Committee to decide the Student Learning Outcomes. Contant answered that it is the Curriculum Committee's responsibility. It will go from here to the Campus Assembly for action. Collier stated that it is tied to the goals of a liberal arts education at this institution, and tackling it would mean first settling on a mission statement. Contant stated that this is the closest we're going to get to the goals of the liberal arts education by saying what it is we want our students to have when they walk out the door. When you look at the lead report, it really does address that. Stewart stated that we need to know the mission statement and philosophical statements and this should agree with that. Boever asked at what point the learning outcomes will be tied to our assessment process. Contant answered that we might disagree with the way the UMTC is tying the learning outcomes to courses, but she would like to assess the outcome through the major programs rather than courses. For example, how has major program accomplished this through the general education requirements? That is done in PCAS, not in ECAS.

Helsper added that after the subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee met last year, the Assessment of Student Learning Committee met to look at the UMTC learning outcomes and those of the subcommittee, in terms of measurability and overall ease of assessment. One of the concerns they had was the use of the word "master." How do you assess whether an area has been mastered? Also, "communicate effectively" is broad and perhaps needs more detail.

Strand announced that the UMTC undergraduate program covers a much broader scope. That might explain why they measure with courses. Still, tying to programs is brilliant, but assessing courses is still important. Strand asked if learning outcomes that are program-based or major-based can be met within the major. Contant answered that she had meant to include general education, encompassing the degree.

Ericksen asked if the next step would be to match the new list of learning outcomes to the UMM mission statement. Contant answered that we could look at our current mission statement and map it. McBride asked if there has been and could be student input. Contant answered that student membership on the Curriculum Committee provides student input. Lawrence added that Nate Swanson was a student on the subcommittee that worked very hard to put together the new learning outcomes.

Contant concluded that the topic will be put on the agenda again next week for continued discussion. In the meantime, she and Lawrence will prepare the link of the mission statement and learning outcomes to consider at the next meeting. A good draft of the proposed learning outcomes needs to be taken back to the divisions, to MCSA, and to a broader constituency of students for discussion. It should be old news by the time it gets to Campus Assembly.

Adjourned 9:03 a.m.
Submitted by Darla Peterson