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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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4-15-2009

### Curriculum minutes 04/15/2009

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## **UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

### **2008-09 MEETING #20 Minutes**

**April 15, 2009, 8:00 a.m., Behmler 130**

Present: Cheryl Contant (chair), Mark Collier, Janet Ericksen, Van Gooch, Michael Korth, Judy Kuechle, Pareena Lawrence, Mike McBride, Dennis Stewart, Sara Haugen, Clare Strand, Nancy Helsper

Absent: Brenda Boever, Donovan Hanson, Axl McChesney, Alex Murphy, Gwen Rudney

Visiting: Jayne Blodgett

*In these minutes: EDP Subcommittee Recommendation; Continued discussion of Student Learning Outcomes.*

### **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** (Kuechle/McBride): to approve the April 1, 2009 minutes.

Motion passed by unanimous voice vote with one correction noted.

### **2. EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (EDP) SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

Contant noted that seven proposals were submitted with a total request of \$13,648.68. The EDP budget had \$12,000 available to allocate, and the subcommittee recommended funding six proposals. The Subcommittee members were Gooch (chair), Kuechle, and Hanson. Kuechle stated that the Subcommittee read the criteria and looked at the primary focus of the EDP grants. They read the applications, rated them, and met to discuss them and decide whom to award. They recommended all but one. As in the past, the Dean's letter to the person who will not receive a grant includes an offer by the chair of the subcommittee to meet with the person to discuss the proposal, if they wish.

**MOTION** (Lawrence/Kuechle): to approve the recommendation of the EDP Subcommittee.

**VOTE**: Motion passed (7-0-0)

### **3. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (Continued Discussion)**

Contant stated that at the last meeting the committee discussed the UMTC learning outcomes, those proposed last year by the Curriculum Committee subcommittee, and the LEAP outcomes. The discussion resulted in proposing a preamble to add to modified outcomes from the LEAP, with small changes made to adapt them to the UMM campus. The intent is to establish a set of learning outcomes, followed by a review of the general education program.

Kuechle asked if majors will be compelled to meet a learning outcome that the GERs fail to supply. Contant replied that this is not a set of degree requirements, but the curriculum is designed to accomplish the goals, with the addition of co-curriculars. An individual student could sneak through without an understanding of environmental stewardship, for example. Gooch stated that he hoped the liberal arts can evolve over time from the traditional liberal arts to including environmental stewardship. Collier stated that it is questionable that environmental stewardship should be a learning outcome. It doesn't fit into UMM's goals. Contant answered that it is in the UMM mission statement that was approved at the last Campus Assembly meeting. Collier replied that it is a contested claim that it is UMM's responsibility to teach environmental stewardship. It is a value statement and not something that should be pinned down in each program. People might not share those values in that particular way. Ericksen noted that some of the learning outcomes would not be tracked to curriculum, but on this campus there are so many environmental stewardship initiatives, that students will at least understand it as a concept and be aware of it. Programs won't necessarily have to address all the learning outcomes; some will be addressed by co-curricular activities.

Lawrence stated that the Twin Cities campus is tracking student learning outcomes, so it is possible to do it. Strand stated that APAS is used to certify licensure as well as the degree requirements being met. Its purpose is to be more than just a degree-check, so if Morris wants to track learning outcomes through APAS, she will make it happen.

Contant answered that the intent is not to provide a checklist for each graduate. UMM will not promise that every graduate will achieve every learning outcome, but they will at least be aware of them.

Lawrence asked if “mastering a body of knowledge and its modes of inquiry” should be included in the learning outcomes. Kuechle stated that by acquiring a major, a graduate has achieved it. Contant stated that it is woven into #4, which mentions specialized studies. Strand read from page 56 of the 2009-2010 catalog about how UMM defines a major:

. . . .The purpose of the major is to ensure that each student pursues a particular field of knowledge in depth, investigates advanced theories and schools of thought, and becomes competent in using the language and methods of inquiry of the field. It is through such concentrated study that a student begins to master a body of knowledge and comes to understand the nature of expertise in the chosen field, including both its power and its limitations.

Strand stated that the Twin Cities version of learning outcomes includes the words “master a body of knowledge,” which fits the Carlson School, a more focused undergraduate education than UMM’s liberal arts undergraduate education. McBride stated that when he graduates, he certainly does not intend to have mastered a body of knowledge. He will have made the intended steps towards mastering it.

Korth stated that he never liked the global village grouping in the general education categories because although skills have a place in learning outcomes, an institution needs to be careful about teaching values to students and trying to teach them what to believe and how to behave. Collier voiced the same concern when considering environmental issues. It is important to teach students to reflect on values, but it goes a step too far to say here is a concrete value the student will be taught. Lawrence asked isn’t it the purpose of higher education to teach civic responsibility? Korth answered that students do not come to UMM for that purpose. Contant stated that the hallmark of a liberal arts education is to ask students to think about value systems and ultimately come up with their own understanding. Stewart noted that values are always pushed at some level. He stated that he would be more comfortable with the wording of #3 if it was knowledge-based and refers to what students will learn. Korth stated that ethical reasoning and action are listed. What kind of ethical reasoning will be tracked? Contant answered that UMM will not define which ethical choices a student should make. Lawrence added that the hallmark of a liberal arts education is that students are not taught *what* to think but *how* to think. Korth argued that in some of the categories it appears students really are being told what to think.

Collier stated that the first item suggests that a student ought to be engaged and implies that action is expected. If you insert the words “understanding of,” that could help, but it still suggests action. Kuechle answered that the use of the word “understanding” appears less measurable. Ericksen stated that using the word “understanding” mimics the Twin Cities version. To imply learning about it, as opposed to acting on it, it becomes vague. Kuechle added that it also becomes a set of goals rather than outcomes. Strand stated that the Twin Cities campus requires that proposed courses include a statement describing what will occur in the course to demonstrate the expected learning outcome. Korth replied that saying that someone took a course is not assessment. Contant stated that passing a course does say that the student met the minimum requirements of the course. Korth noted that the modular portion of the course where the outcome aspect was taught could have been the portion of the course the student failed, while still passing the course. Strand said that is nitpicky. Helsper answered that is exactly what assessment is all about.

Korth stated that it might be a good idea to solicit a broader campus reaction. Contant answered that if passed by the committee, the UMM learning outcomes will be open to campus discussion before going to the Campus Assembly for a vote.

Contant stated that she will prepare a revised version, based on the discussion at this meeting, to present for a vote at the April 22 meeting.

Adjourned 9:00 a.m.

Submitted by Darla Peterson