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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
2009-10 MEETING #1 Minutes
September 10, 2009, 8:00 a.m., Behmler 130

Present: Cheryl Contant (chair), Talia Earle, Janet Ericksen, Michael Korth, Pareena Lawrence, Mike McBride, Dave Roberts, Dennis Stewart, Elizabeth Thoma, Tisha Turk, Clare Strand, Nancy Helsper

Absent: Mark Fohl, Gwen Rudney, Brenda Boever, Sara Haugen

Visiting: Jayne Blodgett, Michelle Page, Jeri Squier

In these minutes: Introductions and discussion of the committee's charge and process, one request for a general education designator on a directed study, and Student Learning Outcomes – next steps.

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Contant welcomed the members of the committee, described its membership make-up and asked members to introduce themselves. Contant read the committee's charge as defined in the campus bylaws, and listed the three adjunct committees that report to the Curriculum Committee. The Teacher Education Committee was eliminated last year at the request of the Division of Education.

2. COMMITTEE PROCESS

Last year was a catalog year, when the committee reviewed all of the proposed course and program changes. This is a lighter year, but there are a number of items that will require the committee's work this year. In April, an Educational Development Program (EDP) review committee will be formed to review proposals for course development.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 6, 2009

MOTION (Lawrence/Ericksen) to approve the May 6, 2009 minutes with one minor correction. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

4. REQUEST FOR GENERAL EDUCATION DESIGNATOR ON DIRECTED STUDY

Hist 3993-Historical Perspectives. (Hist)

MOTION (Lawrence/McBride) to approve the proposed directed study GenEd designator, as requested.

Discussion:

Contant stated that a directed study course does not have an assigned GenEd designator unless it is requested. The Curriculum Committee approves requested GenEd designators. This procedure came about as a result of a request by the Scholastic Committee that was approved by the Campus Assembly. In the past, The Scholastic Committee received petitions from students requesting GenEd designators. Now, the student can fill out a form to request a GenEd designator at the time they apply for a directed study. If the directed study is approved, the GenEd designator request is forwarded to the Curriculum Committee for approval.

Contant mentioned that the directed study they are considering was for summer 2009. Since the Curriculum Committee does not meet in the summer, it is going before the committee at this time. The form mentions that if it is submitted after April 15 it will not be acted on until the fall.

Roberts asked if this was a new procedure, since he did not recall the Curriculum Committee having this duty the last time he served on the committee. Contant answered that the change was approved by Campus Assembly in 2006. Roberts stated that it is not a good idea for the entire committee to deal with individual cases. It would be more appropriate for a subcommittee or administrator to have that responsibility. This body should be more focused on policy. Lawrence stated that the committee gets very few requests. Although it isn't an enormous task to create a

subcommittee, it is more easily dealt with by the full committee. Strand stated that one reason the Scholastic Committee asked the Curriculum Committee to take on the task was because the Curriculum Committee approves the general education category for every new course. In that light, the Curriculum Committee should also approve GenEd designators for directed study courses. The Scholastic Committee didn't think it was appropriate for them to make that decision. Ericksen asked if there were any other summer courses offered with that general education designator. Lawrence stated that the student was not going to be at UMM in the summer and was planning to take an online course that was later canceled.

VOTE: Motion passed (9-0-0)

5. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES – NEXT STEPS

For the benefit of new members of the committee, Contant gave a quick review of the process the committee went through last spring regarding Student Learning Outcomes. The plan now stands for the committee to present them to the campus for greater conversation.

Contant explained why learning outcomes are necessary. For at least thirty years, higher education has suggested that having well-qualified faculty, good courses, adequate facilities and resources, etc., would result in students' learning. The assessment of effectiveness has been on inputs. In the last eight-to-ten years there has been a movement (not unique to higher education) to shift the focus from assessing inputs to defining the learning outcomes of students in the educational process. Eighty percent of U.S. institutions have learning outcomes in some form. UMM does not have them. The Curriculum Committee was charged last year to develop a set of learning outcomes. A small subcommittee looked at the Learning Outcomes from the Twin Cities campus. The TC outcomes were broken into two groups: learning outcomes (academic) and student development outcomes (growth/responsibility/roles in society). At UMM, we don't see them as separate entities and chose last year to integrate those two sets of outcomes. At UMM we try to capture curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular, as a base to our learning outcomes. We have chosen to use a set of learning outcomes that were prepared by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). In 2001, shortly after this process began in higher education, AAC&U took this on as a significant charge with various groups. AAC&U represents colleges and universities that are most like UMM. We started with the current LEAP (Liberal Education America's Promise) learning outcomes, which essentially identify learning outcomes in liberal education in the 21st century. The committee discussed the outcomes and their approach, made some modifications to them, and had a long discussion. The area that resulted in the greatest conversation was topic #3. It was tailored to look more like UMM in capturing our mission and approach to education. The general framework is very much like the LEAP outcomes.

The committee took a vote at the end of its May 6, 2009 meeting to approve these Learning Outcomes as a draft to be sent forward for campus conversation. A variety of ways in which the conversations could take place were discussed. It was decided that the best set of outcomes could be obtained by holding six events to get comments from a broad group of people: three committees (Student Support Services, Scholastic, and The Assessment of Student Learning), Morris Campus Student Association (MCSA), and at least two public forums. After getting feedback, the Curriculum Committee would have a broader group of people who understand Learning Outcomes who can further discuss them at Campus Assembly.

Contant asked for volunteers for a subcommittee to organize and publicize the discussions and bring the results back to the Curriculum Committee for review and revisions before sending them forward to Campus Assembly, hopefully this semester. The subcommittee should consist of at least one student to help organize and publicize the discussions among students, at least one or more *ex-officio* members, and one or more division chair and faculty member. A minimum of 4 people are needed. No one volunteered.

Contant noted that there will be other alternatives for subcommittee service this semester to work on first-year experience, and general education requirements. These three topics will be the major focus of our time this academic year. Ericksen suggested that someone from the Education Division be on the Learning Outcomes subcommittee because Education faculty members have the most experience working with learning outcomes. Page answered that,

although she could not volunteer an Education member without their consent, she agreed that it does make sense. Because the language in K-12 has focused on learning outcomes for many years, the Education Division is comfortable with the concept.

Volunteers for the three subcommittees were:

1. *Learning Outcomes:*

Division Chair: Rudney (volunteered by Ericksen)
or Ericksen (if Rudney chooses not to serve)
Staff: Helsper
Student: McBride

2. *General Education:*

Division Chair: Korth or Lawrence (or First Year Experience)
Faculty: Turk
Staff: Strand
Student: Thoma

3. *First Year Experience:*

Division Chair: Ericksen (if not on Learning Outcomes) or Lawrence (or Gen Ed), Faculty: Roberts and Stewart
Student: Earle

Three absent members have yet to volunteer for a subcommittee: Boever, Fohl, and a yet-to-be-named student.

Contant stated that assistant dean Jeff Ratliff-Crain will be invited to the next meeting to review the First-Year Experience and General Education programs. Then, at the subsequent meeting, the subcommittees will receive their charges. The full Curriculum Committee will then begin meeting every other week, and the subcommittees can use the time to meet every other week.

Ericksen asked if it had been decided that the course catalog would continue to be issued on alternate years, rather than every year. Contant answered that it would be too difficult to work on the full curriculum every year. Disciplines should plan to bring catalog changes the Curriculum Committee next year. Strand stated that conversations need to take place to determine how newly proposed courses fit into existing majors and minors. Contant answered that the details of how it should be done will not need to be discussed, but it has been an issue and now when disciplines bring forward courses, they have to be reviewed not just as separate courses, but we will also need to look at how they affect major or minor requirements or electives.

Contant stated that there are currently two ways in which a course can be approved. One is through the full Curriculum Committee/Campus Assembly process. The other way is called "provisional approval," a process in which short-lived courses can be quickly approved by a majority vote of the four division chairs. Our current full course approval process includes everything from the development of a brand new course to changing the title of a course. To ensure that this group spends more time on policy and less on the details of a course, Contant is planning to bring a proposal to the committee that it spends less time on minor changes and more on the actual structure and general content of new courses. She will present the proposal for discussion in a couple of weeks.

Adjourned 8:59 a.m.

Submitted by Darla Peterson