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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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10-29-2009

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**UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**  
**2009-10 MEETING #5 Minutes**  
**October 29, 2009, 8:00 a.m., Behmler 130**

Present: Cheryl Contant (chair), Janet Ericksen, Mark Fohl, Sara Haugen, Nicholas Johnson, Michael Korth, Pareena Lawrence, Mike McBride, Dave Roberts, Gwen Rudney, Dennis Stewart, Elizabeth Thoma

Absent: Talia Earle, Jeri Squier, Clare Strand, Tisha Turk

Visiting: Dorothy De Jager, Jeffrey Ratliff-Crain

*In these minutes: Learning Outcomes Subcommittee Progress Report; First-Year Experience Curricular Component Subcommittee Progress Report; Program Review Proposal*

Student representative Nicholas Johnson was welcomed to the committee.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 8, 2009**

MOTION (McBride/Thoma) to approve the October 8, 2009 minutes. Motion passed by voice vote of 9-0-1.

**2. LEARNING OUTCOMES SUBCOMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORT**

Contant reported that the subcommittee had a productive meeting as well as smaller meetings to present and note feedback regarding the learning outcomes that came out of this committee last spring. Subcommittee members will go to the Student Support Services Committee, the Assessment of Student Learning Committee, the Scholastic Committee, and Morris Campus Student Association. Two forums will be held: one designed for students and one for staff. Learning outcomes will also be discussed at divisional faculty meetings. The subcommittee prepared a document that will help to set the stage for the discussion by explaining what learning outcomes are, why we need them, the history of assessment of learning outcomes at UMM, and the specific proposal. Then there will be a time for comments and suggestions. The input will be noted and brought back to the committee. The process should be completed before Thanksgiving. If the Curriculum Committee approves a final revised document, it may go before Campus Assembly for information on December 1, and for approval spring semester. Ericksen stated that she presented learning outcomes to the Assessment of Student Learning Committee recently and will send her notes to the Dean's Office for distribution to the full committee. Contant added that the Student Support Services Committee has reviewed the learning outcomes and has suggested adding 11 words to make it clear that the Student Development Outcomes from the Twin Cities version are incorporated as part of UMM's learning outcomes, rather than listing them separately. In summary the subcommittee is making great progress.

**3. FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE (FYE) CURRICULAR COMPONENT SUBCOMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORT**

Ratliff-Crain reported that the subcommittee only had the opportunity to meet twice, and continued the conversation of the larger committee. They opened their first meeting with the question of whether having no curricular component was an option. It was affirmed that was not the route the subcommittee wanted to go. The first year course has two basic sets of objectives: 1) adjusting to college, and 2) critical thinking. It was the desire of the subcommittee to focus on number 2. The co-curricular aspect of #1 can be done by involving others rather than have a curricular component that is a one-size-fits all. The subcommittee realizes the short-term concern of teaching assignments for next year. During its second meeting, the subcommittee discussed what might be done with transfer students.

Ratliff-Crain stated that the five approaches to consider are:

- 1) Keep the basic FYS structure as-is for now, changing aspects within that structure, and continue to work on the full revision while the course continues.  
\* The FYE Disappearing Task Force provides some guidelines for doing this including altering the "human

diversity” theme or offering multiple themes; adding “workshop” sessions outside of the seminar, etc.

- 2) Put FYS on hiatus while a new curricular component is being developed.
  - \* One possibility would be to retain faculty who may be teaching the course/component, providing a course release to fully develop the course. This would keep resources with FYE.
- 3) Plan on us having a curricular component developed by spring registration.
  - \* This will require having faculty identified to teach an as-yet unidentified first-year course.
- 4) Blended approach: Pilot + existing. Have more than one FYS course students can enroll in—some that are continuations of the existing seminar sections, but then alternatives that may have different themes and/or different core requirements (that still fit the spirit of the gen ed requirement).
  - \* We would still need to identify who would develop the new courses (call for proposals?)
- 5) Eliminate a separate FYE course and instead identify existing “common” First-Year courses and connect the FYE more closely to these.
  - \* This could be clusters of classes with groups that meet outside to discuss, Orientation Group Leader (OGL)-led groups of students who share classes; or other approaches.

Ratliff-Crain stated that the subcommittee discussed all five of those choices, the possible merit of each, and the possible overlap amongst them. They determined that they first needed to be clear on the goals and objectives of a first-year experience curricular component before they could endorse any one approach yet. Colleagues need direction soon to plan for next year, but the process should not be rushed. In setting goals and directions, the subcommittee will keep in mind the new financial aid requirement of a 15-credit load, the staffing problems created if a spring-semester sequence course is proposed, and issues regarding transfer students or those who fail or miss the course. It all goes back to setting the goals and objectives of the course.

Korth agreed that it is important to identify objectives. One common theme that came up in discussions was the importance of a small class that helps first-year students form a sense of community. It would be helpful to narrow the focus to one objective and not get other things pulled in. Turk replied that her sense, in general, is that the current focus of FYS needs to be scrapped. Ratliff-Crain agreed, and stated that he did not hear any endorsement of continuing the current theme. Korth added that if one objective is identified, courses could be identified or created that meet that objective. It would open the course up to people to continue what they are doing with FYS and would allow others to try different things. As long as we’re not pretending to be the same course, we don’t have to say they are equal. They must just have the same objectives. Pareena agreed that the first step should be to get the objective nailed down. Ratliff-Crain stated that goals and objectives will be discussed at the next meeting of the subcommittee.

Stewart stated that we should not ignore transfer students. Transfer students resent FYS because they are more focused on getting their degree done. If we add in a FYS, we should think about the fact that they will be bothered by that more than a first-year student. De Jager stated that the subcommittee had discussed the fact that almost every institution has a version of the FYE. The transitional component shouldn’t drive the curricular part. Haugen stated that 30 transfer students are coming in January, but maybe five will show up for orientation. Ratliff-Crain noted that interest and motivation play a role there. The label of “First-year” to a course that looks like an add-on is resented by first-year students and by transfer students.

Contant stated that this group could use two weeks, back-to-back, and suggested that the meetings on November 12 and 19 flip so that the subcommittees meet on Nov 5 and 12, and the Curriculum Committee meets on the November 19. There will be some curricular proposals that will need to be acted on at the November 19 meeting in order to get them on the December 1 Campus Assembly agenda.

#### **4. PROGRAM REVIEW PROPOSAL**

Contant stated that program review has a long, but interrupted history at UMM. It was started initially in 1994 and took place in 1994-95 and 1995-96, but was interrupted by semester conversion. It is important to routinely look at academic programs to identify program goals, objectives, and success. Historical program reviews can help make decisions in

terms of directions of particular programs. Last academic year this committee participated in two weeks of discussion about program review and its purposes and criteria. Contact then worked with Division Chairs to prepare a Proposal for Academic Program Review. It is now coming back to this committee for comments and endorsement. It will go to Campus Assembly for information from this committee, as well as the academic leadership team of Division Chairs and the Dean.

The Proposed Program Review consists of a self study to identify of strengths of programs, links to mission, and significant weaknesses. In addition to helping inform hard decisions, it really is about continuous improvement. It will give programs an opportunity every number of years to look at their programs and suggest improvements.

Specific programs will be contacted near the beginning of each academic year to prepare a self-study document that describes, analyzes, and interprets data and information about their unit. This document will be used by that program's review committee, along with interviews with appropriate discipline faculty or unit staff, in conducting its review. The review committee will prepare its report to be given to the program, the appropriate division chair, and the Dean. A summary of the report and its recommendations will be presented to the Curriculum Committee for its information. If curricular changes are proposed by the program, they will be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee and, if necessary, taken to Campus Assembly for approval.

A program review committee will be named for each program under review. The committee will consist of: 1) two faculty members from within the division of the program under review (or from allied disciplines); and 2) two members from outside the program's division. Final determination of committee membership is made by the Dean, in consultation with the appropriate division chair. Programs are welcome to submit recommendations for committee membership to their division chairs.

Stewart asked if the membership could be reduced to three members, with 1 from inside the division, and two from two other divisions. Ratliff-Crain stated that he would be comfortable with a group of three with the provision that at least one is from within the division, and that "allied disciplines" would not have to be from the division. For example, psychology would look more towards statistics or biology as an allied discipline than it would history. Also, going to three members would reduce the number of faculty who would be tied up in review committee work in a given year. Lawrence stated that she preferred four members, but if there are concerns about staffing and workload, three is doable. Korth stated that if there are only three members, he would prefer having two from within the division. They would have more familiarity with the program because they attend division meetings where curriculum has been discussed, and they are tenured faculty who would have participated in tenure reviews. Ericksen suggested changing the number to a range of 3-4. Stewart suggested that we try with the proposed number of four members this year and review the option to reduce it next year.

Roberts stated that the proposal is a great document. But, #4 should include the name and comments. Turk suggested fixing a typo on 5.E: *Investment* should be *invest*.

**MOTION** (Lawrence/Ericksen) **to endorse the Program Review Proposal.**

**VOTE:** Motion passed (11-0-0)

Adjourned 9:02 a.m.

Submitted by Darla Peterson