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UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
2009-10 MEETING#8 Minutes
January 27, 2010, 8:00 a.m., Behmler 130

Present: Cheryl Contant (chair), Janet Ericksen, Mark Fohl, Sara Haugen, Nicholas Johnson, Michael Korth, Pareena Lawrence, Mike McBride, Gwen Rudney, Jeri Squier, Dennis Stewart, Clare Strand, Elizabeth Thoma, Tisha Turk

Absent: Talia Earle, Dave Roberts

Visiting: Jayne Blodgett, Dorothy De Jager, Nancy Helsper, Jeffrey Ratliff-Crain

In these minutes: Approval of general education designators on two directed studies, Intellectual Community (IC) course revisited

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 10, 2009

MOTION (McBride/Rudney) to approve the December 10, 2009 minutes with one minor correction. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

2. REQUESTS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION DESIGNATOR ON DIRECTED STUDY

IS 3993-Human Diversity. (HDiv)

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

Discussion: None

VOTE: Motion passed (9-1-0)

Engl 4993-Historical Perspectives. (Hist)

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

Discussion: Ericksen stated that she had consulted with the discipline coordinator of history before bringing this form forward. Lawrence added that she had a conversation with the history discipline coordinator as well.

VOTE: Motion passed (9-1-0)

3. INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY (IC) COURSE - REVISITED

Contant stated that the IC course proposal that received an e-mail vote by the Committee would be difficult to implement. She had asked the division chairs to poll the faculty to see how many sections of the IC could be offered. That poll did not result in the necessary number of sections needed to offer the proposed IC courses. Her intent is to bring forward to the Campus Assembly a strong, proposal that can be implemented.

Contant shared her attempt at defining the implications of the proposal:

Current language places constraints on IC courses:

1. 2 to 4 credit hours
2. Content and teaching approach
3. If fail, must retake (assume 10 retakes)
4. Required of all entering students to UMM (new high school and transfers)
5. Class size at 15 students maximum

To serve Academic Year 2010-2011 students:

Number of sections based on number of students:
405 NHS+105 NAS= 510 students in fall;

Incoming transfer students in spring = $35 + 10$ retakes = 45
Yields need for 34 sections in Fall; 3 sections in spring = 37 sections total

This academic year: 20 sections offered at 21 students each

But, NO NEW RESOURCES!!!!

Options:

1. Deliver 37 sections of IC courses
 - a. Revise 20 sections of old course into new IC and add 17 new sections
 - b. Transition some courses, develop new ones =
2. Relax some of the constraints above
 - a. Not required of transfer students = $405 + 10$ retakes = 415 students @ 15 per section = 28 sections
 - b. Not required of transfer students and class size at 18 = 415 students @ 18 students per section = 23 sections
3. Keep current number of sections (20 sections and 21 students per section) but change content
4. Get rid of first-year curricular component entirely
5. Keep old FYS approach – please no
6. Something new – please not now....

Contant stated that the current year included two sections with twenty-one students in each section. Next year there will be no new resources. The committee needs to decide which option is doable. This discussion should be done before it is brought to the Campus Assembly so that they have a proposal to consider that will work. She added that the division chairs had agreed that Option 2b would work. Option 4 could also include a hiatus for a year, but there is a fear that resources will be permanently reallocated. If a proposal is brought the Campus Assembly and fails without another motion on the floor, then Option 5 would be the result.

Korth stated that as long as Option 4 is on the list, it seems there is another option, which is to not make it a mandatory requirement. Contant asked how we could have a GER that isn't mandatory. Korth replied that special concerns could be addressed in the curriculum but the course would not be required. Lawrence stated that, given resource constraints, if it's not mandatory, why do it?

McBride stated that the First-Year Seminar that he took as a freshman was a key moment when he figured out what it meant to be in college. If class sizes are increased, four of the five points outlined in the proposal will be lost. There must be a way to keep sizes small without having to shut down the rest of school to provide them. He concluded that he would be much more in favor of Option 1 and/or Option 2, rather than sacrifice it for all incoming freshman.

Ratliff-Crain stated that another constraint is that we currently treat it as a separate GenEd category. In essence, the new course would cover a process and way of learning and interacting, with the content open. Most of our current GERs are focused on areas of content. An optional course would only fly if they were also going to get a GER to go along with it. Resource-wise as well, having it as an additional GER is one of the constraints. He asked if it would add any new sections to faculty workload. Ericksen answered that in English a course for non-majors could be capped at a much smaller number and taught as an IC course. There is not a shortage of Humanities courses. In some areas it would work, but not in all disciplines.

Fohl asked if it would help to exempt transfer students. One semester at another institution would exempt transfer students from a first year requirement. That eliminates almost all transfers from the get-go. Ratliff-Crain answered that there is an issue on how different a PSEO student is from a transfer student, and what logic is used in applying that exemption. Fohl stated that, although McBride's FYS experience was a good one, he has heard from many students who thought it was a waste of time and didn't get the same value out of it.

Contant stated that if the class size increases from 15 to 18, the four purposes could not be met. She asked Rudney whether any evidence in teaching literature supports the small class size claim. Rudney answered that class sizes below 20 do make a difference. Every student added is more work and thus less possible interaction. She added that she supports the proposal as it is. Faculty were more interested in this kind of course. This is our goal, and although we

can't meet it right off the bat, we could move forward in phases.

Stewart asked what happens if we raised the requirement for transfer students that they need a full year of college instead of 12 credits of residence. Contant stated that about 70% of 105 would still meet the exemption. Stewart replied that it would gain about 30% or 2 sections. Strand stated that would increase by exempting PSEO students who have had an on-campus college experience. Stewart replied that the underlying goal is transfer high school students to college. That transition takes a year and not a semester. They should have a full year of experience at the college level to exempt out of it. Contant cautioned that every time we add more students to the pool, they need to be served by more sections.

Squier stated that if class sizes increase from 15 to 18, we lose 5 appropriate classrooms for this course. Strand asked if seminar rooms on this campus are designed for 15 students. Squier replied that they are designed for 17 (including the instructor), but 16 would be optimal.

Ratliff-Crain asked how the proposed addition of 4-credit sections would affect the classroom availability. Ericksen stated that there are Humanities faculty who are not interested in teaching two 2-credit sections. Students don't take it very seriously, and it works better to develop material for a 4-credit course. Strand asked if this would have an effect on credit hours. Contant answered that we need sections to offer to 415 students registered for it. Faculty will work out workloads with disciplines and division chairs. No one will be teaching more credit hours. Strand also stated a concern about the impact this would have on the availability of other 1000-level classes.

McBride stated that if it was phased in, with larger classes the first year, it might take a year or two to get the number down to 15, as more faculty become interested in teaching it. Turk stated that faculty interest may be irrelevant. It may not matter if people want to teach it. We might think we will transition and discover there is no place to transition to. Ratliff-Crain added that he had to go door-to-door to find people to teach FYS this year. It is certainly not desirable nor is there a plan to move the class size to 22 students. This year we had a bumper crop of incoming freshmen and needed to put them in FYS sections. Offering more sections was not financially possible. We had to put them in existing sections. The subcommittee was concerned about the viability of a class size goal of 15 and what will happen in practice. We have to be prepared to say if we get an extra 20 students someone will open a new section.

Strand stated a list of concerns that offering the proposed IC course will cause for the Registrar's Office: 1) there are constraints in terms of timing that would impact information available for students and advisors; 2) the form would have to be changed; 3) the system that holds courses has to be changed, 4) all PCAS sample plans have FYS in them currently and would have to be changed; and 5) the search function for classes with GER attributes would have to be changed. Contant stated that she interpreted Strand's comments to suggest that we stay with FYS based on logistics and implementation issues. Strand answered that staying with FYS for 2010 is the most logical approach. Squier added that more lead time is needed to get the systems changed. 2011 would be much more doable. Contant answered that it can be done. It's not easy, but we can do it. De Jager stated that in 1996 a hiatus was put on the old first year course and it went well. Contant answered that she has serious concerns with putting this on hold. It would be the death of a first-year curricular component because of budget considerations. Strand agreed that we did not have the financial risks that we have now.

Rudney suggested that we raise the enrollment maximum for a 4-credit course and stay small with a 2-credit course. Strand stated that we have to provide an opportunity for students to register for it if we offer it. Fohl stated that from what he has heard so far, he wonders whether the problems that exist in offering the proposed IC course would outweigh its value.

Contant answered that she is hearing a variety of different options. It appears that one more meeting is necessary to come to a final proposal to send forward to Campus Assembly.

Adjourned 9:03 a.m.

Submitted by Darla Peterson