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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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4-28-2010

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## **UMM CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

### **2009-10 MEETING #18 Minutes**

**April 28, 2010, 8:00 a.m., Behmler 130**

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

Absent: Talia Earle, Nicholas Johnson

Visiting: Jayne Blodgett, Jeffrey Ratliff-Crain

*In these minutes: Discussion of Study Abroad Course Approval Review*

#### **1. Approval of Minutes – April 21, 2010**

MOTION: (Thoma/McBride) to approve the April 21, 2010 minutes. Motion passed by voice vote.

#### **2. Study Abroad Course Approval Review**

Contant explained that in past years, study abroad courses were proposed to the Center for International Programs. The process used was not clear to her. With the closing of that unit, the Dean's Office will now take on the responsibility for that process. Today a call for proposals will go out for academic year 2010-11 and summer 2011. She will set up a review group that includes two members of the Curriculum Committee and two members of the International Programs Committee. Proposals will come in around May 15. The review group will begin looking at the proposals a week or two after Commencement. She would expect it to be a simple, straight-forward, quick review to determine whether the courses have the appropriate content. Ericksen asked if the group will only look at the curricular component or if it will also look at other concerns such as several proposals for the same country. Contant answered that the review group will not be limited to the curricular component. Ericksen asked if study abroad courses would be financed by divisions or disciplines. Contant answered that financial implications will fall on the campus, not the actual discipline.

Contant stated that after the review group has made its recommendation, the courses will go to the Learning Abroad Center on the Twin Cities campus for final approval. We are hoping to use their services to help us with the logistical, financial, and administrative concerns of the program. They have a team of folks who can help with the planning and programming or will refer us to professionals who will do it for us. We insisted that we retain curricular control of the courses (i.e., concepts, course numbers, and credit hours). It is possible that a course we approve and send to the Twin Cities will not be offered or will be put on the schedule for future offering.

Lawrence asked if proposals need to go through the formal process of discipline and division approval. In the past, disciplines weren't aware of what was being submitted for study abroad. Contant answered that, because of the time frame we are working with this year, we won't do formal discipline and division approval. Once courses are approved as study abroad courses, they will go through the regular discipline and division approval. In subsequent years, we will have them go through disciplines before coming to the committee. Ericksen stated that this has always been one of the dispute points in the past—that disciplines can't decide whose proposal goes forward when there are a number from a single discipline. In some disciplines every faculty member wants to run one.

Contant asked for two volunteers. Ericksen volunteered. McBride volunteered, but did not know for sure whether he would be in town at the time of the review. If he could not be in town, Thoma volunteered to do it electronically from Washington DC.

#### **3. Plan for Next Year**

Contant stated that the work of the 2010-11 Curriculum Committee will consist of two major projects: approval of the changes to the 2011-13 catalog, and the beginning of a general education review.

## Catalog Changes

The catalog changes have a pretty well-established process. Next week Contant will provide a proposed calendar of deadlines for course change submission by division. There is a relatively straight-forward process in terms of getting materials to this committee and having a two-week schedule for each division, with a discussion the first week, followed by a continued discussion and votes the second week. The fall semester committee meetings will be scheduled in a room that has projection equipment so that everyone doesn't have to print out all of the forms for each meeting.

Contant stated that it is her desire to use the committee and the Campus Assembly's time more effectively, yet without a sense of obfuscating what might be important details. Many catalog changes could be regarded as editorial. She would much rather the committee looks at new course proposals and curricular changes than minor modifications to course descriptions. Another concern she would like to see the committee address is the lack of information required when new courses are proposed. The ECAS form requires a 30-60 word course description. What we see are registration details for the course and not the content of the course. She would like to see a course outline, a syllabus, and learning objectives as well. We are in a position where it is unlikely we can devote more resources to teaching, so we need to be mindful of that when we add a new course, by stating what course is going away, whether the course will be added to a rotation, or how the course will be managed in terms of workload.

Stewart asked if it would be possible to make all course approvals provisional to begin with. After the first year the course could come back to the committee with the information that was developed throughout the course. McBride stated that the new directed study form requires an outline of course materials, so it doesn't appear out of the question to request it of new courses. Also, concerning the elimination of a review of editorial changes: who will decide what is a substantive change? Contant answered that everything would be available for everyone to look at, but time would not be spent debating the wording of the course description. That would be caught by editors.

Roberts asked Contant whether other institutions bring all curricular changes to the governing bodies of the institutions. Contant answered that in all the institutions she has been with, all changes come to the committee, but minor changes are not discussed with the broader group. Her intent is to make ownership real rather than a paper-pushing process. Her objective is to clarify, streamline, and focus attention on things that matter. The Campus Assembly needs to own the curriculum, as well as the faculty who teach it, students who learn it, and staff who support it. Roberts answered that he has always found it bizarre that he as a math professor would have anything to add to a conversation about how theatre arts faculty should divvy up their time. At each level up and away from the discipline, the expertise becomes less.

Dingley stated that it would be valuable to find ways to inform the entire campus about courses that are being proposed or eliminated, since oftentimes majors require courses from other disciplines. Also, she suggested that the committee consider course changes through ECAS first and program changes through PCAS second. That way majors can know what has been eliminated or changed and can update their programs accordingly. A third concern she voiced was that degree requirements to clear students for graduation should be accurate in the catalog, and not just in APAS.

Contant stated that Dingley's suggestion to consider ECAS forms before PCAS was interesting. With our current process, we go through course changes by division. In each discipline we see their PCAS (major and minor requirements) and then ECAS (course changes). Doing them in concert with each other makes it hard for other majors to keep their PCAS updated. Do we go through ECAS first and then PCAS once we've seen that list? That would be an ominous amount of work for committee members to get that information back to the disciplines.

Squier added that unless it's a new course, PCAS doesn't reflect the change until the course is fully approved. So there is a lot in PCAS that's incorrect. Dingley added that she would encourage the use of PCAS as documentation that comes to this committee and goes to Campus Assembly. PCAS is designed to be extracted as the approved online catalog. That's not the way we did it last time. Her hope is that we can do it differently this time.

Contant will bring something forward for discussion at the next meeting. If the process is to change, that has to happen this semester, not in the fall. Lawrence suggested that when Contant frames her suggested process of requiring more information for new course proposals, it would be good to address a possible concern that more layers of bureaucracy are being added instead of trusting the faculty. Contant agreed that she would stress the importance of ownership in the

process.

Dingley stated that the timeline we have followed in the past was driven by the printed catalog. We could allot ourselves more time if the printing was based more on extraction from PCAS than something that has to be heavily edited. Contant answered that she would think about that.

### **General Education Review**

Contant stated that she would like the Curriculum Committee to spend the first year in discussion, a second year in planning, and a third year implementing changes, including transitions from old to new requirements. She proposed starting next year by identifying the issues and an approval process that puts courses into categories to see if requirements and criteria are met. Dingley cautioned that we intentionally moved from a criteria-based to a goal-based program when we last changed our general education program. Contant stated that she would like to begin with a general discussion about general education. The phrase itself is antiquated and belongs to the 1960s and 1970s. We might want to change the name. The work will begin around November, after the catalog changes are done.

Rudney stated that she received a box of surveys regarding content analysis. People will receive a letter with a deadline of April 20 or April 30. She encouraged people to fill out the survey, if interested.

Adjourned 8:57 a.m.

Submitted by Darla Peterson