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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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University of Minnesota, Morris  
Morris, Minnesota

MINUTES 1999-00 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING #7  
February 9, 2000; 10:30 AM; Behmler Conference Room

Present: Carlson, Evans, Farrell, Finzel, Gooch, Kissock, Kollé, Korth, Neuharth, Thielke, Urness, VanEps  
Guests: Gary Donovan, Karen Ellis, Anne Farrell, David Fluegel, Tom Mahoney, Carol McCannon, Mooney, Engin Sungur  
Absent: Busch, Lee, Richardson

[In these minutes: discussion of service learning at UMM and IS 2021 - UC: Service Learning and Mentoring.]

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Finzel requested that the minutes reflect the question raised regarding the general education designator assigned to the IS 2021 course proposal. Korth asked for a voice vote to approve the amended minutes.

MOTION: (Understood) To approve the amended minutes of the January 26, 2000 Curriculum Committee.

VOTE: Unanimous in favor (9-0-0)

DISCUSSION OF SERVICE LEARNING AND IS 2021: Korth mentioned that the CC members had expressed a need for broader discussion regarding service learning before they made decisions on approving specific courses. To facilitate this discussion, Korth invited David Fluegel, Karen Ellis, Tom Mahoney, Anne Farrell, Engin Sungur, Carol McCannon, and Gary Donovan to discuss service learning. Specifically the CC members wondered about its place in the UMM curriculum and whether it should be granted academic credit. Judy Kuechle, Roger McCannon and Tom McRoberts were unable to attend this meeting due to previous commitments. Korth noted that the CC members had received a packet of documents related to service learning that had been sent from some of the guests

The discussion began with a description from the guests of what service learning is and an example of its use on the UMM campus. Service learning was described as being integrated with the course; it is not a course in and of itself. It is designed to take the theory of the course work as taught in a classroom and apply that theory to a real world setting. It is a form of experiential learning where the fixed learning objectives related to the course are not impacted. Service learning is simply a method used to teach the objectives. The objective is not the service learning.

The service learning that takes place in a statistics course at UMM was given as an example. The theory taught in the statistics classroom is applied in a community setting. An organization that cannot afford a professional consultant is selected for a statistical study. The student collects data from the community organization, which gives the student the benefit of using real data. If the student has a problem with the data, he is able to contact the organization for clarification. If the research brings up further questions, they are able to return to the organization for more information as needed. The students are very motivated to learn the theory since they relate to the data and they know that the work they are doing is useful to the community.

When the project is complete, the students must present their findings to the community. This provides the student the opportunity to improve their communication skills. Service learning also benefits to the faculty since the service to the community enables the student to gain real data sets that may apply to faculty research. This assists the faculty members who may lack sufficient time to gather the data sets themselves. It also benefits the organization by providing valuable information from the analyzed data.

Various guests mentioned the role service learning could have in fulfilling the mission statement of UMM, which includes outreach and service to the community. At this point, there is no requirement that reflects service learning in

the GER. If outreach is important to the mission of UMM, service learning should be included. A CC member responded that the outreach mission at UMM did not mean UMM should offer credit for outreach, but like the outreach of the extension service through research, 4-H, and enhanced ag services, UMM would provide educational and cultural resources to the community.

There was discussion regarding the difference between service learning and an internship experience. A CC member noted that both experiences take place in a community setting. It was noted that there is a parallel to these experiences and those of the study abroad experiences in that there was a question of what made the study abroad experience worth academic credit that is part of a degree program. The CC member felt this was still an issue regarding service learning. Another CC member pointed out that in an internship, credit is not given for work assigned. Instead, the faculty member gives the credit for the related academic work assigned to the student. The internship helps them learn, but the studying and the research papers are what earn the student the academic credit. The same is true for the service learning; the student earns credit for the academic content of the course.

A guest pointed out that the proposed course, IS 2021, is not service learning per se, but is an education course designed to teach students the process of service learning. The important parts of this course, the reflective components, were co-taught with Judy Kuechle. In this course, the UMM students would be mentoring fifth-grade students in a community school setting. The UMM students would come back to the UMM classroom to discuss their experience with others. They would discuss what benefited them, what benefited the fifth-grade students, and what benefited the community.

A CC member wondered if IS 2021 would have been more acceptable to the CC if the course description were "analysis of service learning." It would be clear that credit would be earned for analyzing service learning, not for doing the service learning itself. A guest stated that that is what the definition of the course is. The course should get credit because of the academic content; the service learning should only be a method to help the students learn the academic content of the course.

A CC member suggested that the CC return the course proposal to the instructor for rewriting. A guest suggested that perhaps the CC could wait to make a decision regarding returning the form until after Roger McCannon, Judy Kuechle, and Tom McRoberts had an opportunity to discuss the proposed course with the CC. Others CC members wondered if further discussion with guests about service learning was necessary. A CC member felt the CC needed to see the IS 2021 course description rewritten to reflect the new understanding of the course.

MOTION: (Kissock, Farrell) To send IS 2021 back to Judy Kuechle to rewrite to conform to the new understanding of service learning.

VOTE: Unanimous in favor (10-0-0)

Meeting adjourned 11:10 a.m.  
Submitted by Melody Veenendaal

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