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MINUTES--1996-97 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING #18
April 1, 1997; 3:00 p.m.; Behmler Conference Room

Present: Ballou, Bauer, Ellis, Farrell, Frenier, Hansen, Kissock, Korth, J. Lee, Schuman, Whelan

Absent: Barbour, Imholte, M. Lee, Thielke, Vickstrom

Guest(s): Fischer, Wuolu

FORM C FOR GEOL 1002:

Schuman asked CC members to consider the curriculum change proposal for Geol 1002. This is a somewhat unusual proposal because it takes a 3-credit summer course and makes it a 5-credit regular course with E9. He wondered if the Curriculum Committee had approved this course as a summer UC/CEE offering. Mooney said that the course had been offered once with provisional approval only and so the Curriculum Committee had not approved it. Whelan said that Brugger was the instructor for the summer offering.

Lee asked if the course was primarily content oriented. Whelan said that it was. The course will focus on the geology of preserved areas of the U.S. It would be nice to have students visit a national park, but that cannot be assured. Schuman thought the course sounded fascinating.

MOTION (Farrell, Understood): To approve the proposal to add Geol 1002 as a regular course offering with E9.

VOTE: Unanimous in favor (7-0-0).

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF THE COMMON EXPERIENCE PROPOSAL:

Lee distributed copies of a handout on a possible information literacy component for the Common Experience. Schuman assumed that the handout had been prepared by Fischer and Wuolu, who were guests at the meeting. Lee expressed appreciation for the report on information literacy. He noted that he had given an introduction to the Common Experience proposal at the last CC meeting. He reminded CC members of the common experience survey results which had been distributed previously.

[Korth arrived at the meeting at this point.]

Lee said the Common Experience Task Force (CETF) had started its discussions with the premise that the common experience would be a 4-credit module. The group quickly realized that it would be physically impossible to find 36 classrooms in one term nor could we recruit 36 faculty to teach that many sections. The campus needs to accept the proposal with the modifications included or else not have a common experience at all. The modifications include reducing the course to a 2-credit module with 15-18 faculty needed to teach it. The CETF feels that proposal is feasible.

Lee highlighted some of the issues which have been discussed:

- The theme needs to be broad enough to attract 15-18 volunteer faculty.
- Course readings and convocations early in the term should be common to all students and the remainder of the term would go into individually developed syllabi.
- A course length of 100 minutes once a week was criticized as being too long and breaking the rhythm of the week. We need to keep the 100-minute meeting length, however, in order to have enough classroom space.
- The grading was controversial. The CETF decided to compromise and let students choose the grading system, as they do with most courses. It was felt that a majority of freshmen will choose the A-F grading system.
- The common minimum components for a satisfactory grade will need to be worked out later.

Lee commented that the Curriculum Committee should vote on a framework only. Schuman agreed; if this proposal is successful, then interested faculty will work out the details later. He suggested that the CC discuss the four major components of the Common Experience proposal: (1) theme; (2) format; (3) staffing; (4) structure.

Theme Discussion

Farrell asked if the instructor would choose the type of diversity to be discussed--ethnic, cultural, or gender. Lee said that was the proposal. Farrell thought that gave too much choice. How would students know which section to take? Lee said that adjustments would have to be made. Hopefully, we will have more faculty volunteers than we need. All of those details still have to be worked out. Schuman thought that a paragraph describing each section would be provided to freshmen before registration. Not all students will get their first choice for a common experience section. Farrell said it wouldn't be a common experience, in that case. Lee said that depends on how one defines "common." There will be common readings and common convocations.

Hansen did not think it would necessarily be bad if students don't get the sections they want. The quality of the instructors is more important. Lee agreed that the quality of faculty is essential to the success of the program.

Kissock said this proposal is close to being workable. He thought the topic should be simply "diversity" and broadened to include more than social diversity. He noted that the second paragraph of the proposal talks about common skills. The common element for students is the small course in the first year. The emphasis should be on skills, including the literacy component. The topic is secondary.

Lee said the CETF was initially concerned about the diversity theme for Science and Mathematics faculty and wanted to include environment as a topic as well. Science and Math faculty said they would be able to do diversity sections. The CETF considered adding a service learning component and writing skills to the common experience. The compromise is to strongly encourage writing in the common experience. We cannot do everything in one course.

Ballou said the interest level in courses seems most important for attracting faculty to teach the sections. Students are not necessarily best served by being in a course that is their first choice.

Whelan wondered if there will be honors sections of the common experience. Lee did not see why not. Whelan wondered if there will be an honors program under semesters. Schuman assumed that there would be. Whelan strongly encouraged the inclusion of honors sections in the common experience. He also wondered if collaboration among faculty would be allowed. Lee said that faculty could do team-teaching. Whelan said he was thinking about faculty collaborating on a related group of courses. He also mentioned splitting time slots so that each section could use a 50-minute slot twice a week. Korth thought there would be problems with that idea. Frenier wondered why there should be honors sections. Whelan said there need to be more honors courses for students to take.

Whelan wondered if the CC was willing to consider a broader interpretation of the diversity theme. Kissock said he would advocate for a broader interpretation. Schuman said there is a pivotal question here. The CETF definitely wanted to focus on human diversity; the proposal would have to be modified to include all diversity. Farrell thought the proposal was too narrow to attract faculty. The current theme would attract mostly Social Science faculty. Hansen suggested that a focus on "Diversity of Humanity" would broaden the theme. Whelan said he would prefer "Diversity" without constraints.

Schuman said he thought the issue about the theme had been made quite clearly. He asked Lee to communicate the issue to the CETF and see how they respond.

Ballou added that one of the positions which came out of Campus Assembly was that Inquiry provided an interaction which promoted understanding of diversity on campus. Schuman said that argues for a theme focusing upon human diversity.

Schuman said this discussion would be continued at a later meeting.

SCHEDULE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE QUARTER:

Schuman said he did not think the CC would be able to get through all of the materials needing action this quarter with one meeting per week. The group decided to meet twice a week rather than extending the meeting time to two hours once a week. Mooney was asked to gather spring quarter schedules so that two 1-hour meeting times could be determined.

NEXT MEETING:

Schuman indicated that the next meeting would be a joint meeting of the General Education Committee and the Curriculum Committee on Tuesday, April 8, at 3:00 p.m. in Behmler Conference Room. After discussion of the General Education proposal, the CC would resume discussion of the Common Experience proposal.

Meeting adjourned 4:00 p.m.

Submitted by Nancy Mooney

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