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MINUTES--1996-97 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING #25

May 9, 1997; 9:00 a.m.; Behmler Conference Room

Present: Ballou, Farrell, Frenier, Imholte, Korth, Schuman, Whelan

Absent: Bauer, Davis, Ellis, Hansen, Kissock, J. Lee, M. Lee, Thielke, Vickstrom

Guest(s): Jenny Nellis, Studio Art, and Tap Payne, Theatre Arts

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF HUMANITIES DIVISION SEMESTER PROPOSALS:

Schuman indicated that there were two guests at the meeting to explain the semester proposals in studio art and theatre arts. He suggested that questions begin with Nellis on the studio art proposal, since she has a class, and then move on to Payne on the theatre arts proposal. Mooney distributed copies of a memo from Clyde Johnson about the music proposal.

Questions for Nellis on the Studio Art Proposal

Whelan said his assumption has been that, no matter what the number of credits, we are adhering to the per-credit standard. For instance, his syllabus says students are expected to work 15 hours per week for a 5-credit class. Nellis said that ArtS faculty adhere to the same standard that is in the bulletin. Whelan said his assumption is that it would take 9 hours per week for the 3-credit ArtS classes. Is that what the faculty in ArtS expect? Nellis said yes. She also assumes that students will come to the studio each week. Studio art classes do not usually have tests along the way (Ceramics is an exception). She expects a 3-credit ArtS class to be based on 9 hours of work: 6 hours in the studio and 3 hours on their own every week. Students cannot put off the studio work; this is a difference between skills courses and non-skills courses. Also, many students come in unprepared for a 3-hour class. If the ArtS courses were increased to 4 credits, the classes would be even longer. The courses which are meant to be taken concurrently could be thought of as a 5-credit block. It is better to list the segments separately so the titles appear on the transcript. Then it is clear that students have had 2-D design, etc.

Schuman thanked Nellis for coming to the meeting.

Questions for Payne on the Theatre Arts Proposal

Schuman indicated that the issue for theatre arts has to do with requiring more credits for the major from one discipline than was approved by Campus Assembly last spring.

Farrell asked to preface Payne's responses. He said the issues in the Humanities Division arise with studio art, music, and theatre arts. The requirements for the major in ArtS total 52 credits, with 12 of those credits coming from ArtH. The structure of disciplines needs to be taken into consideration. In music and theatre arts, the history components are not separated into new disciplines. Because of that structure difference, we question music and theatre arts credit totals, but not studio art.

Schuman said, in other words, the requirements for the music and theatre majors are well under the Science and Math majors, where more than one discipline is involved, because music and theatre arts have no related fields at UMM.

Payne said the concept that we don't have a "theatre history" department is true, but there are design courses, etc., that are also disparate areas. It makes no sense, for instance, to combine costuming and stage lighting in the same course. The major comes to 42-44 credits, which is one course over the limit. To subtract the senior project or any other requirement would be a serious loss to the major. Currently, we have a requirement in dramatic literature. There is a prerequisite for the Shakespeare course, so that is a hidden requirement for the major. For the semester major, the

discipline did not take that approach; there are no hidden requirements. The semester major would not involve more work than the quarter major; in fact, the semester major is very similar to the quarter major.

Whelan said he was more empathetic to these arguments now than he was earlier. Will theatre majors still have to take 80 additional general education credits, for a total of 124 credits, to graduate? Are we still beholden to the liberal arts? He felt Payne was saying yes in his response. This is a general question for the CC: Are we going to require 80 credits outside the major to assure breadth?

Payne said that almost all majors graduate with more than 60 credits in theatre under the quarter system. That is not unusual in studio art, music, or theatre. In many of the sciences, students take courses in allied fields. We assume the chemistry courses are also general education courses, but they are actually required for the Science and Math majors.

Schuman wondered why the requirements for the major specify five particular courses and at least three from a range of other courses. Why specify three other courses instead of two or four? [Later: Schuman realized he was looking at the minor, not the major requirements.] Payne said the major breaks down to a requirement for two courses in each of the fields of theatre. Requiring fewer courses takes away from the symmetry of the major. Farrell commented that we should expect students to have more than an introductory course in the areas covered.

Imholte asked Mooney about the number of double majors at UMM. Mooney thought the average was about 25% of each graduating class. [Later: Mooney checked percentage of students with more than one major: 1995-96--20%; 1994-95--23%; 1993-94--27%; 1992-93--25%; 1991-92--27%. The 5-year average is 24.4%.] Imholte thought the total credits required for the major was a minor problem alongside the number of double majors.

Korth thought the requests for an exemption from the major credit limit should get at the root of the problem of how to achieve breadth. A lot of disciplines could come in and say more courses are needed to provide sufficient background in the discipline. His concern is that the reason for the standard is honored. Other disciplines have made difficult decisions to maintain the standard. Schuman wondered how the natural science faculty explain that the combinations of requirements for many Science and Math majors total much more than the 44 credits that theatre is requiring. Korth said he could bring in biology and chemistry faculty who would say that those two disciplines are wildly different.

Farrell commented that CC members seem to be comfortable with ArtS counting 12 credits outside the major because those 12 credits are "administratively" counted in art history. They are certainly closely related disciplines. It seemed to him that the "odd bird" is studio art, not music and theatre.

Schuman said a way around this for the theatre major would be to require the drama courses in English. Payne said that was true; they could also put the senior project under the humanities rubric (Hum). But why play politics? The English courses do not teach the precise literature that theatre faculty want majors to study. For instance, English does not include Sam Shepherd. It would be unreasonable for English faculty to teach their courses to meet theatre major needs. Schuman thought there was some value in theatre majors getting the English perspective.

Whelan thought there were greater differences in the geology major than in theatre. He feels comfortable coming to the CC and asking for 90 credits in Science and Math requirements. The major is important, but general education and breadth is also important. In Theatre, he hopes that they encourage students to take half of their work in something other than theatre. Payne said it is not unusual for theatre majors to have double majors with computer science.

Schuman thanked Payne for attending the meeting.

Limit on Credits Required for a Major

Schuman asked if everyone got a copy of the memo from Clyde Johnson about the music semester proposal. The CC should make a decision either to allow these exceptions to the Campus Assembly standard or to send them back to the disciplines and require that they come in with 40-credit majors.

Ballou said, if we do that, we are making exceptions to the standards. Schuman said the CC would be recommending to

Campus Assembly that there be exceptions. Ballou said that she would have no objection to approving these exceptions if we agree that there should be exceptions. She thought there would be a lot of discussion on the floor of Campus Assembly about making exceptions. Schuman noted that, if we approve 44-credit majors, some other disciplines will want to come back to the CC with enhanced majors.

Korth agreed with Schuman's last point. He was not sure that the campus should have made the 40-credit rule. If the discipline structure is arbitrary, maybe it should have been a 60-credit major rule, not related to disciplines. Farrell said that faculty remember hearing last spring that 40 credits was a guideline or a target, not an absolute maximum. Imholte said Korth's point was well taken. In terms of whether the 40-credit limit was a law or a guideline, he thought the limit was a strict one. But it was never said that there could be no exceptions. When there are too many exceptions, then the rule becomes a fraud. Perhaps part of the CC discussion should be to re-examine the 40-credit limit.

Whelan referred to Johnson's memo about the Music proposal, especially the last sentence. All disciplines feel their proposals are reasonable. There is a tension between the majors and general education. We are looking for faculty to tell us what the major needs to be. If music and theatre have 44-credit majors, Whelan would feel better if the discipline also made it clear that general education is important. Farrell said that was not the question asked of the disciplines. Whelan said he understood that, but he wanted to hear from the campus about adhering to the 80-credit general education standard.

Schuman said, if push comes to shove, and it should soon, he thought we should stick to the 40-credit limit. There is some virtue to having theatre majors get their literature classes from English. If the major requires more than one-third of the degree credits, at least getting it from a different discipline's perspective is helpful. It wouldn't bother him to allow the exceptions, but if he had a vote, he would send them back to the disciplines to meet the 40-credit limit.

Farrell noted that studio art requires 42 credits in the discipline. We are willing to say that is okay because of the way art is structured. That is an administrative structure. It is not fair to have music and theatre restricted, but not studio art.

Ballou said she was persuaded by Farrell's argument. She was confused when she got to UMM about discipline-based majors that include other areas. She is becoming convinced that this does not tell the whole story. Let's recommend these exceptions to the Campus Assembly. She liked the idea of written amendments in Assembly. Imholte noted that there is a groundswell against the requirement for written amendments.

Frenier wondered if the 40-credit limit on majors was more important than the point about double majors. Schuman said students choose to take a second major. Frenier was also concerned that there were no students present at the meeting. Imholte noted that there was not a quorum at the meeting. Schuman said he did not want the CC to repeat this discussion at the next meeting. There was agreement to defer the vote until the next meeting on May 14, but to have people read the discussion in the minutes and not repeat the arguments.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 14, 3:00 p.m., Behmler Conference Room, to continue the discussion of Humanities semester proposals, exceptions to the 40-credit limit, and begin discussion of Social Science semester proposals.

Meeting adjourned 9:55 a.m.
Submitted by Nancy Mooney

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