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University of Minnesota, Morris

Morris, Minnesota

MINUTES 1998-99 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING #09

February 17, 1999; 8:00 a.m.; Behmler Conference Room

Present: Cerar, Farrell, Frenier, Haugen, Korth, Lee, Leroux, McIntosh, Neuharth, Taylor, Thielke, Woll

Absent: Busch, Kissock, Utoft

Guests: Mooney, Sungur

[In these minutes: Engin Sungur's report on the Assessment of General Education subcommittee; provisional approval process on Forms C.]

MISCELLANEOUS: Veenendaal handed out copies of the Honors Program item for the catalog; Sungur handed out copies of the General Education Assessment Subcommittee report.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Korth asked for additions or corrections to the February 3, 1999 minutes.

Veenendaal mentioned that Lee requested a correction on page three, in the 17th line from the bottom. His statement should be changed to "~~..he has never encountered a complaint regarding student TAs~~ he has occasionally but not too frequently encountered complaints regarding student TAs." The corrected minutes were approved by a voice vote.

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

ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL EDUCATION (ENGIN SUNGUR): Korth introduced Sungur who was present to report on the activity of the General Education Assessment Subcommittee.

[Neuharth arrived at this point.]

Sungur stated that his handout consisted of three parts: a history of what has been done regarding the Assessment of Student Learning Plan, the response of NCA to the plan, and a list of things that need to be done for the academic year 1998-99. Sungur also pointed out the availability of three related websites for further information: one containing the plan, the General Education Assessment Report, and the surveys taking place at this time.

Sungur mentioned that before they sent a report to NCA they needed to develop an assessment plan. The General Education Assessment Committee and the Curriculum Committee created a subcommittee that produced a pilot survey carried out with graduating seniors. Some of the student responses suggested that the assessment be done only for the general education requirements in semesters. Since all the disciplines could not be assessed at once, the subcommittee selected four areas to focus on; foreign languages, college writing, historical perspectives, and abstract systems. These four were selected because they were deemed of highest priority by the General Education Assessment Committee and because each of the four areas required different assessment instruments. This was an opportunity to develop and test the assessment tools. Priority was determined by student rating of importance; faculty rating of importance; similarity between quarter and semester requirements; degree to which stated objectives are measurable; size of faculty involved and the extent to which students and faculty felt that the current practice lacks success.

Sungur stated that foreign languages was eliminated from this initial phase and the subcommittee focused on the remaining three areas. The procedure they followed was to contact the faculty and discipline coordinators that actually

teach the courses involved. The faculty created the assessment tools and the plan for their area.

Sungur pointed out the three detailed general education assessment plans as recorded in the handout. The measures for the initial three components are a Writing Portfolio, the Historical Perspectives Assessment Test (HPAT) and the Abstract Systems Assessment Test (ASAT). All other components will have a detailed plan and an assessment process in effect by June of 1999.

Sungur stated that the overall assessment was done last year. This year the General Education Exit Survey/Test has been integrated with the institutional NCA accreditation process which was unified with three other surveys. This is in progress with the results expected next week.

McIntosh wondered how an assessment can be developed for a course that is still being developed and will not be taught until next fall with semesters. Sungur stated it was still necessary to test first, then the course could be changed. McIntosh wondered if the tests were standardized or local. Sungur said they were all local. They felt it was important to stay away from standardized tests. The committee did not want to compare UMM to other institutions and they did not want to change the teaching in order to pass a standardized test. None of the assessment instruments were nationally standardized tests.

Sungur referred the CC members to the NCA Staff Analysis of Institutional Report. The NCA listed a number of items that need to be addressed including development and implementation across the general education program, utilization of the results of assessment across the disciplines, analysis of how the information obtained has led to change, and of how assessment results inform the institutional planning and budgeting process.

Sungur mentioned that the NCA has accepted the report focused on implementation of the assessment of student academic achievement plan and that no further reports are required. The University's next comprehensive evaluation is scheduled for 1999-00.

Farrell wondered how much time was required of students in assessing. He was able to think of nine instances - including course evaluations - where students are asked to assess courses taken. Was this in addition and, if so, could it be integrated? He finds that students who spend too much time assessing respond perfunctorily. Sungur agreed it could be a time problem, but steps have been taken to unify the surveys into one survey. They are also attempting to make the surveys more attractive and less time consuming with some surveys done electronically. Another change is that some of the surveys are done with a small random sample so the students can easily be contacted to complete their survey, resulting in a more accurate sampling.

Farrell wondered why the foreign languages were dropped from the initial phase. Sungur said one of the reasons was that they had difficulty getting responses from the faculty. Possibly the difficulty here was that there was more than one discipline involved. They decided foreign languages would need to be done at a later time.

Sungur mentioned that initially he had the impressions that this process would not last long; that the requirement would disappear. He is now convinced that it won't go away, that this is something that UMM will have to do. He believes it will help UMM since it will show what is working and what is not. Sungur believes this will not disappear once UMM is accredited. UMM will continue to gather information to become more effective.

Sungur referred the CC to the last page of the handout that lists things that need to be done for the academic year 1998-99 which includes the possibility of forming a subcommittee to assess the assessment process. Korth wondered if the CC should wait for a formal request to set up this committee. Sungur said the chair of the committee would contact the CC if and when they would like this committee set up.

REVISION OF CURRICULAR CHANGE FORM: Korth referred the CC members to the Forms C attached to the agenda. He pointed out that one version was for University College and the other was for semester curricular changes. The primary difference on the two forms occurs on page three, where a section has been added to allow for a provisional approval process for course offerings. The regular approval process section is for permanent approval. This provisional approval would be for one-time course offerings only. Korth mentioned that it is hoped faculty would submit the course for the regular approval process at the same time. The provisional process would allow rapid approval for the one-time

offering and then the forms would proceed through the regular process for the permanent approval.

Frenier mentioned that step 2 requires the division chair approval. She wondered how that will be handled for inter-divisional courses? Mooney stated that nothing has changed for the approval of the IS courses; the Dean acts as Division Chair for Interdisciplinary Studies and approves them, as always.

Thielke wondered if step 5 of the provisional approval process required the approval of the joint body of division chairs or only the division chair affected. Korth said it requires the approval of the joint body, as it states "with concurrence of the Division Chairs...." This does not necessarily require the concurrence of all the chairs; the decision is in the hands of the Vice Chancellor if there isn't unanimous approval. The intent is for approval from the group.

Mooney pointed out the one added question on the University College Form C, "Should course be listed in day school catalog?" The CC will want to look at the course and decide if they want it listed.

Frenier suggested that maybe this would be an appropriate time to look at Form C, specifically the placement of the title. She suggested the possibility of placing Part A above the effective date area and then reordering the information of Part A so the title would appear first. Frenier feels the form is confusing for faculty and would be less so with these changes. Mooney mentioned the importance of the effective date appearing first since it could easily be overlooked. She also stated that the course level and number appear in this order because that is how they appear in the catalog. Frenier then suggested simply ungraying the "title" line so it would stand out.

[Lee arrived at this point.]

Farrell stated that he does not know or care about course numbers since they change so frequently. Frenier agreed and stated she doesn't look at lines one or two on this form. Thielke mentioned the importance of the discipline and course number and supports the idea that they appear before the title. Frenier agreed with the importance and understands Mooney's desire to place it as it appears in the catalog. She would, however, like to see "title" highlighted in some manner so it stands out.

Korth mentioned that all the information in the Part A is in the course description near the bottom of the form. It has occurred in the past that the course description is incomplete in this area so it is helpful to have it available in Part A. Mooney agreed with this and stated she uses the two areas as a double check. If the areas do not agree she calls for clarification.

Korth mentioned the importance of having complete and clear information on the forms. He stated that some changes have been coming without the original text written with strikethrough and new courses have arrived with incomplete course information. He will not bring the forms to the CC for approval if the forms are not complete.

[McIntosh left at this point.]

Korth suggested leaving the form as is except unshading the title line. He then requested a vote on approval of the revised Forms C.

MOTION: (Understood) To approve the revised Forms C allowing a provisional approval process for one-time course offerings.

VOTE: Unanimous (10-0-0)

Mooney wondered if the approved Forms C would be forwarded to Campus Assembly. Korth agreed the forms would need to go to Campus Assembly because of the addition of the provisional approval process.

Meeting adjourned 8:50 a.m.

