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Curriculum Committee Minutes

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5-26-1999

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**MINUTES-1998-99 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING #14**

May 26, 1999; 8:00 a.m.; Behmler Conference Room

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

Guest(s): Mooney

Absent: Busch, Kissock, Leroux, Utoft,

[In these minutes: Interactive television course and meeting report; curricular changes for French 1021, 1022H, 1302, 1352H, 3060, and 3070H; variable topics courses; and provisional approval.]

**MISCELLANEOUS:** Korth handed out a summary of the provisional approval requests received to date.

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Korth asked for additions or corrections to the minutes of the 5/12/99 meeting. There were none.

**MOTION:** (Understood) To approve the minutes of the 5/12/99 Curriculum Committee meeting.

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

Korth mentioned that this was the last CC meeting for this academic year. He wondered if the CC would agree to a process of approving the minutes without holding them over until the next CC meeting next year. Korth suggested approving the minutes through an e-mail approval process. If anyone has corrections to make to the draft, send the corrections to Veenendaal by e-mail. If corrections are not sent, the assumption will be that the committee member approves the minutes.

**INTERACTIVE TELEVISION COURSE AND MEETING REPORT:** The report from Karen Johnson shows the use of ITV courses for undergraduates has decreased. In fact, for the 1998-99 academic year, there were no UMM undergraduate students registered for ITV classes. The UMM enrollment consisted exclusively of graduate level students.

[Farrell arrived at this point.]

McIntosh wondered if the CC was considering doing away with the ITV lab or the UMM support of the ITV Lab. Korth said he didn't believe so since it was still used for courses and meetings. He noted there were 126 hours of meetings, such as PeopleSoft training, held there during this current academic year.

Korth mentioned it has been several years since the CC adopted a policy on ITV His question now is whether the CC would like to do anything about ITV at this time? He wondered if there was anything the committee would like to recommend to the next year's committee; or were they content to leave things as they are. McIntosh said he was on the subcommittee that recommended the CC review the ITV policy. The concern of the subcommittee was how the ITV courses would affect the UMM curriculum. He is not concerned about an impact at this time. McIntosh suggested that the CC should review this again in another 2-3 years. Farrell agreed with that recommendation, stating that he saw no need to make any changes at this time.

**FRENCH CURRICULAR CHANGES:** Korth referred the committee to the French curricular change forms that were sent with the agenda. These include changes in the major and minor requirements and also new course proposals. Haugen wondered if the last line under the narrative summary should read "French minors in line with other minors..." instead of "French majors in line with other minors...". Farrell agreed it should be corrected as Haugen suggested. Korth said the change would be made. Farrell wondered if the CC was making this change in the narrative as an editorial change. Korth said yes, the narrative isn't actually adopted.

McIntosh asked about the method for determining the course number for an Honors course. Was there any convention? How are the Honors course numbers related to the regular course numbers? He pointed out that the regular French course numbers were 1021, 1302 and 3060, while the corresponding Honors course numbers were 1022, 1352, and 3070 respectively. He did not see any consistency in the course numbering. Mooney stated she attempts to put the course numbers together, but there are other factors that come into play. She pointed out that French 3060 and 3070 were repeatable and repeatable courses have to end with a zero. Consequently a span of ten is the closest she could come. Also, if a course is a specific topic under an umbrella course, it must fit within the 50 number span reserved for that umbrella heading. McIntosh stated that you would

not be able to determine a course is an Honors course from the number. Thielke agreed, but mentioned you could determine if a course was an Honors course by looking at the title. Farrell said the numbers don't mean much to most people. Thielke said it was surprising how much they did mean when UMM switched to semesters.

McIntosh pointed out that the course descriptions for French 1302 and French 1352 include the statement that the course is offered as regular and as Honors. This is the only one of the three that includes that statement. He wondered if it is included as standard language. He suggested either leaving that statement out or include it consistently. Farrell recommended that the statement be left out. Korth felt it was important information for students and for advisors. McIntosh asked if it was part of the course description. Mooney said the information is in the course description now. It cannot be in the parenthetical information any longer. Korth said there was a suggestion to remove the language. Mooney said her concern is that if she deletes one course she may not remember to delete the statement in the other. She feels there is no harm in leaving the statement in. Farrell wondered why not have the statement in all course descriptions then? Mooney stated there are many things that occur that are not consistent. Farrell recognized that, which is why he suggested removing the statement so there would be consistency.

Farrell suggested the CC vote to approve the course proposals, amended by removing the questioned sentences. Korth said this brought another question to mind. Since two of the courses are listed as not repeatable, can they take the course two times; once as a regular course and once as an Honors course? The course is not repeatable, but they are different course numbers, so what would prevent a student from repeating the course? Thielke said the Registrar's office does have a repeat table that ties the Honors and regular classes together so they are recognized as the same. McIntosh mentioned that the language "same as" would indicate the courses are identical. There is no way of knowing which are and which aren't Honors courses. Farrell questioned what terminology Mooney wanted. "Same as" would suggest there is no difference between the two courses. Thielke agreed there might be a better way of saying this. Farrell suggested using the statement "course is similar." Mooney said the course is equal; one can be substituted for another. Farrell agreed, but reiterated that it is not the same course. Frenier suggested that something could be included in the course description for the Honors course that would cover it. Mooney said there is no language for it. Korth said this is something that should be addressed next year. He requested a vote on the amended Form C 1302.

**MOTION:** (Farrell, McIntosh) To approve the French curricular change forms as amended.

**VOTE:** Unanimous (8-0-0)

**VARIABLE TOPICS COURSES:** There are two questions concerning variable topics courses that Korth would like the CC to consider.

a) Shall full course descriptions be required of all variable topics courses? Korth mentioned that the catalog is inconsistent on this issue, also. Many topics courses do have full course descriptions, but some do not. Thielke said it is helpful to have full course descriptions if a student transfers and needs to use a course as a GenEd requirement. If there is no description, the Registrar's office needs to use a course syllabus. UMM does not keep a copy of the syllabi on file, so this can be difficult to obtain

Frenier wondered how a course description could be given for a course when someone new is being hired to teach a variable topics course and the new hire is unknown. How could they produce a course description? Thielke said the description could be somewhat general. Korth said the prospective faculty member would need to submit something to set up the course, so he believes a person can put together a course description. Frenier wondered if this wasn't an attempt to fit a round peg in a square hole. Korth disagreed. Frenier said the umbrella is already there. Mooney said some of the courses under the umbrella don't have descriptions. Farrell said UMM tends to stick close to the rules and then finds other campuses are not doing so. He sees no purpose in having a description in the catalog if the course is offered only one time.

[Lee arrived at this point.]

Korth stated the CC could ask for or insist on course descriptions from now on. McIntosh felt this should be a minimal expectation. He felt students would want a course description before they sign up for a course. The CC has approved a GER designation based on a course title in the past, "Facing West." McIntosh voted against this because of inadequate information, but it was approved by the CC and Campus Assembly based on two words. A course description would give more information on which to base decisions.

Frenier was concerned a course description would lock the faculty in and would eliminate flexibility. She would argue for flexibility to utilize faculty research.

Woll said a course description would be helpful when a student registers, especially when registering for electives. Woll wondered where a student would access this course description information for a course that is not included in the catalog. Thielke said courses are listed in the class schedule with changes to the class schedule on the Registrar's web site. The course description is not included on the web site, however. Thielke stated the Registrar's office may need to add that.

Mooney mentioned that PeopleSoft won't allow her to leave the course description field empty, so she fills it with blank spaces when a course description is not provided. Her concern is that the Twin City campus may soon discover what she is doing and require her to use actual descriptions. Frenier wondered what the Twin City campus does. Thielke said they use course descriptions; their faculty must submit a detailed

course syllabus. Mooney mentioned that UMM is the only campus that does not require course descriptions. The positive aspect of this is the flexibility it offers.

Farrell commented that LAAS, for example, is not informative. It is not what is really done in a substantive way. He feels this requirement is a bureaucratic need. Korth disagreed. Frenier felt it was both a bureaucratic need and a student need.

Lee said he is for flexibility and less bureaucratic red tape, but the issue may be critical for students. Perhaps it would be nice if the CC did require a course description. He felt there should be a trust for the faculty. The topics courses should remain flexible and open, but he did not feel it was too much to come up with a title and brief description. Thielke gave an example of a topics course that includes a course description: "British Fiction 1900-1930. The development of modernism in British fiction in such writers as Conrad, Woolf...." She pointed out that it is helpful for a student or advisor to know exactly what the course entails and what authors will be studied.

Lee mentioned that sometimes the division doesn't know who the instructor will be, so the flexibility in topics courses is a real blessing to division chairs. However, he felt a brief course description was not a bad idea. Farrell said eventually UMM will be told there is too much to print in the catalog. Mooney said we can print what we want. Farrell said divisions aren't allowed to print all the course information now. Thielke said divisions select which courses they plan to teach for the next biennium to include in the catalog. Every course in the data base can be seen on the web. Thielke felt that with more information, the students would be more likely to enroll in the class.

Lee said the Social Science division would try to come up with course descriptions as proposed. Farrell said, if possible, the Humanities division will also

Korth wondered how impossible it would be for faculty to write a one sentence description of a course. They can keep this description as flexible as it needs to be. Korth said if there is an umbrella course, submit the topic and a brief description. If there is no umbrella course, submit the course through the provisional approval process. Neuharth agreed. He felt a short description would be very helpful for the CC, the students and the advisors.

**MOTION:** (Neuharth, McIntosh) A short, flexible course description will be required on variable topics courses.

**VOTE:** Unanimous (9-0-0)

b) Korth felt that item b, individual topics courses and their approval process, would require long discussion. He recommended skipping that issue for this academic year and addressing it next year.

**PROVISIONAL APPROVAL:** Korth stated there have been 12 provisional approval requests submitted at this time. He pointed out an error in the second sentence of the agenda. It should read "at least one minor change..." rather than "Most have concerned very minor changes."

Korth asked what the CC envisioned as the changes to be made through the provisional approval request process? For example, did the CC envision using the provisional approval process for changes in the prereqs? Neuharth thought the intent was to approve a new course rapidly for a one time offering and send the course through the regular process if it is to be offered again. Mooney said this was what she envisioned, also. Currently the provisional approval process has become a record keeping nightmare for Mooney. Korth referred to the requests to add a GER designation to courses retroactively for quarters. Ruth wondered if this request originated with the Scholastic Committee. Korth said that was the rumor he heard. Thielke said even if the course is not offered again, the students currently taking the course are still enrolled. If the Scholastic Committee gets several petitions to add a GER designation for a certain course and the faculty supports this change, the Scholastic Committee will send it forward to the CC for retroactive approval. Mooney said probably for provisional approval, not for retroactive approval. Korth agreed. Mooney pointed out that the Pol Sci course was offered twice and the provisional approval process was for one-time offerings only.

Taylor wondered how this was handled before? Korth said it went through the regular approval process: the division, the cc, and the Campus Assembly. Frenier recommended approval of the GER designation addition since the CC attempts to be lenient in semester conversion switches.

Lee recalled two courses where the students felt there was an oversight from the faculty that the GER wasn't included. They felt the courses should be given credit for the additional GER designation. He wondered if there was time to go through the regular approval process. He felt a quicker approval was needed since quarters were going out of existence, so he used the provisional approval process.

Korth felt that if the CC approved these two courses, then anything would go. Mooney agreed that it would set a precedent. Lee recommended making an exception and approving this provisional approval for this time. Korth said the CC was apparently divided on this issue. It was time to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned 8:50 a.m.

